Gender Ambiguity in Early Modern English and French Art, 1530-1630

Alice Blow

Downing College,

University of Cambridge

This thesis is submitted for the degree

of Doctor of Philosophy

June, 2021

Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted before for any degree or other qualification except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the History of Art Degree Committee.

Preface

I first wrote about the *Triple Profile Portrait* that is the subject of Chapter 2 for my undergraduate dissertation in 2016. The frescoes of Hercules and Omphale in Chapter 1 were the subject of one of my MPhil short essays in 2017, and Chapter 4 took my MPhil dissertation on masculine women in early modern English visual culture, 2017, as its starting point. My interpretation of all these objects has changed since these essays, and their treatment in this thesis is significantly different.

Abstract

Gender Ambiguity in Early Modern English and French Art, 1530-1630
Alice Blow

In early modern England and France, diverse literature, from pamphlets to poetry, links gender ambiguity to its ability to evade categorisation, blur boundaries or deceive. While previously gender ambiguity in art has often been dismissed as the product of historical distance, or discussed primarily in terms of sexuality, these literary and social contexts suggest that ambiguity was central to how contemporaries considered this subject. Drawing on recent literature on ambiguity in art, this thesis explores the potential of ambiguity as a period-appropriate context for studying early modern images of androgynous figures, cross-dressing, and gender transformation. By exploring, rather than resolving, their ambiguity, this thesis aims to shed new light on objects whose challenging effects have often led them to be oversimplified or set aside.

The first chapter places Francesco Primaticcio's complex and ambiguous frescoes of *Hercules Cross-dressing*, c.1535, in the context of fascination with ambiguous images and their potential to spark learned discussions, feeding the socially competitive court of François I. The next two chapters use French renaissance and English Ovidian poetry to explore how two understudied depictions of androgynous sitters in the *Triple Profile Portrait* in Milwaukee Art Museum, c.1570, and *The Cobbe Portrait of Henry Wriothesley*, c.1590-1593, paralleled contemporary poetry that admired gender-ambiguous figures for their pleasurable capacity to confound expectations. The final chapter addresses how Jacobean prints and pamphlets targeted masculine women as a cipher for a range of social and political ambiguities produced by the legacy of Elizabeth I. These four case studies examine the possibilities of using cultures of enigmatology, and attitudes towards ambiguity, as a platform for understanding a variety of meanings that images of gender ambiguity could possess for early moderns.

Contents

Acknowledgements

This PhD could not have happened without the generous support of many people. Above all, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Alexander Marr, for his guidance, encouragement, and careful reading of many drafts, not only throughout the PhD, but during my MPhil and undergraduate degree. Thanks are also due to Professor Donal Cooper, Dr Irene Cooper, and Professor Polly Blakesley, especially for their comments on my first and second year reports, which helped to shape and greatly improve this thesis. I would like to thank my friends and fellow early modernists in the History of Art Department for their encouragement and camaraderie, and in particular Fran Hughes and Dr Christina Faraday for their constant support, and for our online group chat, without which research during the pandemic would have been much more isolating. Thanks are also due to Frankie Dytor, for their inspiring research, conversation, and reading recommendations, and Jana Schuster for helping me track down some image measurements when access to books was limited. I would also like to thank my students for Tudor Visual Culture and Display of Art, both past and present, for their enthusiasm, encouragement, inspiring dedication, and wonderful distraction, above all during the past year.

This thesis was supported by doctoral funding from the AHRC DTP, and travel and fellowship funding from the AHRC, Downing College, Cambridge, and the Kettles Yard Travel Fund at the History of Art Department. I am indebted to Dr Alistair Swiffen for fielding practical questions throughout these years. Thanks are due to Valerio Zanetti for generously taking the time to discuss his research with me, and providing a steer with reading for my final chapter. At the Huntington, I am grateful to Dr Steve Hindle for his warm welcome and encouragement, and to the friends and colleagues that I met there, especially Dr James Davey and William Clayton. Parts of this thesis were delivered as papers at a number of conferences and workshops, at Cambridge and further afield. I am grateful for all the illuminating comments and questions that I received, particularly from George Morris and Max Long at the Graduate History Workshop, and for the enthusiasm of the audience at the Brown Bag talk at the Huntington.

I have been helped by a number of people at various institutions throughout this time. Catherine Sawinski at Milwaukee Art Museum was immensely helpful, not only photocopying and sending me a museum file, but also generously showing me around when I visited. I would like to thank Stefan Weppelmann and Anne Campman for making it possible for me to view a painting that was not on display at the Kunsthistoriches Museum, Vienna, and the staff at the Belvedere Museum for showing me drawings. I am also indebted to the staff at the Huntington Library, Warburg Library, and University Library, Cambridge.

Finally, thanks are due to my friends, especially Garance Abdat for her support, and her patience in galleries, from London to LA, as well as for checking some French translations, and to past housemates. Joseph Marchbank and Arthur Romero's calm and consideration greatly lessened the impact of the first days of the pandemic. I am grateful to Josef Valvoda, for weathering three lockdowns with me, for his curiosity and humour, and the comfort that he has brought to this chaotic time. Last, I would like to thank my family for their generosity and support throughout my studies. Above all, I am grateful to my father, David Blow, for encouraging my love of art from as early as I can remember.

Covid-19 Research Impact Statement

The pandemic has impacted the research and writing of this thesis in particular due to difficulty obtaining books and travelling. I have had to rely to a greater degree on books that I could access in Cambridge, and I have not been able to reach other libraries. I was also only able to find Tracy Adams and Christine Adams ed., *The Creation of the French Royal Mistress: From Agnès Sorel to Madame Du Barry* as an unpaginated Kindle book.

As domestic and foreign travel have been restricted, and museums shut, I have only been able to reproduce the official photos of the frescoes of Hercules and Omphale at Fontainebleau, which are black and white and of poorer quality than I would have liked, yet are the only photos I could find that show the whole of these frescoes. I have also not yet been able to see in person the *Cobbe Portrait of Henry Wriothesley* at Hatchlands Park, which is the subject of Chapter 3.

Note on Conventions

Original ornthography has been kept, with the exception of u/v and i/j, which have been modernised. Quotations from modern editions of primary sources, or citations of primary sources by other authors, have retained their modernisation where applicable. All translations from original languages are mine unless stated.

List of Illustrations

15. Francesco Primaticcio and workshop, *Alexander and Campasne painted by Apelles*, restored 1835, fresco and stucco, dimensions unknown, King's staircase, Château of Fontainebleau, Fontainebleau
16. After Michelangelo (?), *Hercules Pomarius*, c.1490-1510, bronze, height 48 cm with base, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
17. Attributed to Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, possibly after Primaticcio, *Fountain*, c.1555-1560, drawing from album, Petit Palais, Paris
18. After Michelangelo (?), *Hercules*, bronze, 16th century, height 33 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
19. Jean Frédéric Maximilien de Waldeck after Marcantonio Raimondi's *I Modi*, based on Giulio Romano, 19th century, drawing, 16.5 × 21.8 cm, British Museum, London
20. Anonymous, 'Terminus', woodcut, in Andrea Alciato's *Emblematum Libellus* (Venice: Aldus, 1546), Glasgow University Library, Glasgow, 33
21. Michelangelo, Detail of one of the *ignudi*, 1508-1512, fresco, Sistine Chapel Ceiling, Vatican City
22. Benvenuto Cellini, *The Nymph of Fontainebleau*, 1543, bronze, 205 × 409 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris
23. Benvenuto Cellini, *Satyr,* c.1542, bronze, 56.5 cm high, Royal Collection, London
24. Benvenuto Cellini, *Satyr*, c.1542, bronze, 57.6 cm high, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles
25. Jusepe de Ribera, *The Sense of Touch*, c. 1615-16, oil on canvas, 115.9 × 88.3 cm, Norton Simon Foundation, Pasadena
26. Rosso Fiorentino, *L'ignorance chassée*, 1528-41, fresco, 100 × 125 cm, Galerie François I, Château of Fontainebleau, Fontainebleau
27. Attributed to Lucas de Heere, *Triple Profile Portrait*, c.1570, oil on slate, 57.15 × 57.15 cm, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee
28. Anonymous French artist, *Portrait of Paul de Stuer de Caussade, Marquis of Saint-Mégrin*, c.1570-80, Watercolour, gouache and gold shell on vellum, mounted on card, then wood, 16.8 × 11.6 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris
29. Lucas de Heere, *English Gentlemen*, in *Théâtre de tous les peuples et nations de la terre avec leurs habits et ornemens divers*, c.1584, watercolour and ink on paper, Ghent University Library, Ghent, fol. 69^{r}

30. Attributed to Lucas de Heere, *Allegory of Tudor Succession*, c.1572, oil on panel, 131.2 × 184 cm, National Museum Wales, Cardiff
31. Attributed to Lucas de Heere, *Portrait of a Woman, thought to be Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald,* 1573, oil on panel, 46.8 × 34.7 cm, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry
32. Anonymous, *Unknown Woman, Once thought to be Anne Boleyn*, c.1560, oil on panel, 25 × 18.5 cm, Musée Condé, Chantilly
33. Franco-Flemish School, *Ball at the Court of Henri III*, c.1581, oil on panel, 184 × 120 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris
34. Anonymous French artist, *Portrait Medal of Henri II*, 1552, bronze, 5.4 × 0.3 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
35. Michelangelo, *Ideal Head*, c.1516, red chalk on paper, 20.5 × 16.5 cm, Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford
36. Studio of François Clouet, *Catherine de Medici and her children: Charles IX, Henry III, the Duke d'Alençon, and Margaret Queen of Navarre*, 1561, oil on canvas, 198.1 × 137.2 cm, Private Collection
37. Master of the Dinteville Allegory, *Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh: An Allegory of the Dinteville Family*, 1537, oil on wood, 176.5 × 192.7 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
38. François Clouet, *Elisabeth of Austria*, c.1571, oil on panel, 37 × 25 cm, Musée Condé, Chantilly
39. François Clouet, *Henri II, King of France*, 1559, oil on panel, 30 × 22 cm, Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles
40. Fontainebleau School, *Presumed Portrait of Gabrielle d'Estrées and Her Sister, the Duchess of Villars*, c. 1594, oil on panel, 96 × 125 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris
41. François Quesnel the Elder, *Henri III*, c.1575-85, oil on panel, 45 × 33.5 cm, Musée Carnavalet, Paris
42. Unknown continental artist, *Queen Elizabeth I*, c.1575, oil on panel, 113 × 78.7 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London
43. Francesco Primaticcio, *One of the Fates Riding on a Tortoise*, c.1542, pencil, grey ink, and watercolour on paper, 32.3 × 23.3 cm, Nationalmuseum, Sweden

44. Anonymous French artist, *Composite Portrait of François I*, c.1545, goache on parchment, mounted on wood, 23.4 × 13.4 cm, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
45. Anonymous French artist, *Portrait Medallion of the Duchess of Savoy*, second half of 16th century, wax and leather, dimensions unknown, Musée de la Renaissance, Château d'Écouen, Écouen
46. Anonymous French artist, *Portrait Medallion of the Queen of Navarre*, second half of 16th century, leather, slate, and wax, dimensions unknown, Musée de la Renaissance, Château d'Écouen, Écouen
47. Léonard Limosin, *Vénus et l'Amour*, 1550, enamel, 19.6 × 26.7 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris
48. Detail, Giorgio Vasari, *The Origin of Pittura and Scultura*, after 1561, fresco, Sala delle Arti, Casa Vasari, Florence
49. Attributed to John de Critz, *Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton*, 1590-1593, oil on panel, 61 × 44 cm, National Trust, Hatchlands, Guildford
50. Unknown English artist, *Diana and her Nymphs* (detail), c.1600, paint on plaster, 320 × 950 cm, frieze, Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire
51. Nicholas Hilliard, *Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton*, 1594, watercolour on vellum on card, 3.25 × 4.1cm, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
52. Hans Eworth, *Mary Wriothesley, Countess of Southampton*, 1565, oil on panel, 43.2 × 33 cm, Welbeck Abbey, Private Collection
53. Attributed to John de Critz, *Anne of Denmark*, c.1605, oil on panel, 113.5 × 86.5 cm, Royal Museums Greenwich, London
54. Nicholas Hilliard, *An Unknown Young Man*, 1590-1593, watercolour on vellum on card, 5 × 4.2 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
55. Nicholas Hilliard, *An Unknown Man*, 1597, watercolour on vellum on card, 5 × 4 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
56. Anonymous, *Sir Walter Raleigh*, 1588, oil on panel, 91.4 × 74.6 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London
57. Master of the Countess of Warwick, *A Young Lady Aged 21, Possibly Helena Snakenborg, Later Marchioness of Northampton*, 1569, oil on panel, 62.9 × 48.3 cm, Tate Britain, London

58. Peter Oliver, *Unknown lady, possibly Venetia Stanley*, watercolour on vellum, on card, dimensions unknown, Private Collection
59. Isaac Oliver, *A Lady, wearing black doublet, black hat with hat jewel and orange sash tied at her shoulde*r, c.1605-10, 5.4 cm high, watercolour on vellum on card, Private Collection
60. Nicholas Hilliard, *Portrait of Henry Percy, Ninth Earl of Northumberland*, 1590-1595, brush on parchment, 25.7 × 17.3 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
61. Nicholas Hilliard, *Sir Henry Slingsby*, 1595, watercolour on vellum on card, 6.3 × 8.4 cm, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
62. Anonymous, *Sir Henry Slingsby*, c.1595, oil on panel, 62.2 × 76.8 cm, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
63. Attributed to John de Critz, *Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton*, 1603, oil on canvas, 104.4 × 87.6 cm, Buccleuch Collection, Boughton House
64. Unknown English artist, *Elizabeth Wriothesley, Countess of Southampton*, c. 1600, oil on panel, 164 × 110 cm, Buccleuch Collection, Boughton House, Northamptonshire
65. Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, *Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton*, c.1603, oil on canvas, 108 × 97 cm, National Trust, Dyrham Park
66. After Daniel Mytens, *Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton*, c.1618, oil on canvas, 88.9 × 68.6 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London
67. Paul van Somer, *Anne of Denmark*, 1617, oil on canvas, 265.5 × 209 cm, Queen's House, London
68. Anonymous, *Titlepage*, woodcut, for *Hic Mulier: Or, The Mannish Woman*, (London: John Trundle, 1620), Huntington Library, San Marino
69. Anonymous English artist, *Portrait of a Lady, Aged 26*, 1619, oil on panel, 104 × 89 cm, Private Collection
70. Attributed to Robert Peake*, Unknown lady, aged 34,* 1623, oil on panel, 91.4 × 73.6 cm, Trustees of Leeds Castle Foundation, Maidstone, Kent
71. Attributed to John Souch, *Lady Lawley*, c.1630, oil on canvas, 211 × 146.2 cm, Private Collection
72. Anonymous, *Titlepage*, woodcut, for *Haec-vir: Or, The Womanish-Man* (London: John Trundle, 1620), Huntington Library, San Marino

73. George Gower, *Elizabeth Littleton, Lady Willoughby*, 1573, oil on panel, dimensions unknown, Wollaton Hall, Nottingham
74. Attributed to George Gower, *Elizabeth Knollys, Lady Leighton*, 1577, oil on panel, 61 × 45.1 cm, Montacute House, Somerset
75. George Gower, *Elizabeth Cornwallis, Lady Kytson*, 1573, oil on wood, 68.5 × 52.2 cm, Tate Britain, London
76. George Gower, *Richard Drake*, c.1577, oil on panel, 91.1 × 71.1 cm, Queen's House, London
77. Isaac Oliver, *Allegorical Scene*, 1590-1595, gouache and watercolour on vellum, pasted on card, 11.3 × 17.4 cm, Statens Museum for Kunst, Denmark
78. Isaac Oliver, *Nymphs and Satyrs*, c.1605-10, black chalk, pen and ink, white heightening, on brown paper, 20.6 × 35.5 cm, Royal Collection, London
79. Robert Vaughan, *Titlepage*, engraving, for Richard Brathwaite, *The English Gentleman*, 2e (London, 1633), Huntington Library, San Marino
80. Martin Droeshout, *To this grave doctor millions do resort..., or Dr. Panurgus curing the follies of his patients*, c.1620, engraving, 34.8 × 40.8 cm, British Museum, London
81. Isaac Oliver, *Portrait of a Lady Masqued as Flora*, 1575-1617, miniature on vellum, 5.3 × 4.1cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, on loan to the Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, The Hague
82. Anonymous, 'Embleme', woodcut, in John Taylor, *The World Runs on Wheels, Or Oddes, betwixt Carts and Coaches* (London: E.A. for Henry Gosson, 1623), British Library, London
83. Anonymous, *Titlepage*, engraving, for Richard Brathwaite, *The English Gentlewoman* (London, 1631), Huntington library, San Marino
84. Anonymous, Detail, *Titlepage*, woodcut, for Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's *The Roaring Girle*, 1611, 13.8 × 8.2 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London
85. Anonymous, Detail, *Titlepage*, woodcut, for *Swetnam the Woman-hater, Arraigned by Women* (London: Richard Meighen, 1620), Huntington Library, San Marino
86. Unknown Dutch artist, *Elizabeth I as Europa*, 1598, etching, 21.2 × 26 cm, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
87. Thomas Cecil, *Truth Presents the Queene with a Lance*, c.1622-25, engraving, 27.2 × 29.6 cm, British Museum, London

88. Isaac Oliver, *Portrait of an Unknown Woman*, c.1600, watercolour on canvas on panel, 7.8 x 5.9 cm, Royal Collection, London
89. Simon de Passe, *Frances Howard, Countess of Somerset*, c. 1615, engraving, 16.8 × 11.8 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London
90. Simon de Passe, *Frances Howard, Countess of Somerset*, c.1619, engraving, 22.2 × 15 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London
91. John White, *A Pictish Woman*, 1585-1593, drawing on paper, 23 × 17.9cm, British Museum, London
92. Simon van de Passe, *Pocahontas*, 1616, engraving, 17.2 × 11.8 cm, Royal Collection, London
93. Anonymous*, Fill Gut and Pinch belly*, 1620, woodcut, printed by Edward Allde and sold by Henry Gosson, dimensions unknown, Society of Antiquaries, London
94. Reynold Elstracke, *Bulchin and Thingut*, later impression by Robert Pricke, first issued 1620, engraving, dimensions unknown, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York
95. Jan Barra, *Taste*, c.1623, engraving, published by Thomas Jenner, dimensions unknown, Library of Mellerstain House, Berwickshire, Private Collection
96. Jan Barra, *Sight*, c.1623, engraving, 18.2 × 13.2 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London
97. Unknown artist, *Fragment of a Wall Painting, originally for Park Farm*, 1632, painted plaster, 88 × 128.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
98. After Jacques de Gheyn II, *The Archer and the Milkmaid*, c.1610, engraving, 41.4 × 32.8 cm, The Metropolitan Museum, New York
99. Anonymous, Detail, woodcut, from *The complaint of the Shepheard Harpalus*, 1611-1640?, University of Glasgow Library, Euing Collection
100. Renold Elstrack, *While maskinge in their folleis all doe passe, though all say nay yet all doe ride the asse,* 1607, engraving, printed by John Garrett, 29 × 42.3 cm, British Museum, London
101. Anonymous, *The Lamentation of a new married man, briefely declaring the / sorrow and griefe that comes by marrying a young wanton wife* (London, 1630), woodcut, Magdalene College, Pepys Collection
102. Anonymous, *Mans Felicity and Misery: / Which is, a good Wife and a bad: or the best and the / worst, discoursed in a Dialogue betweene / Edmund and Dauid* (London, 1632), woodcut, British Library, Roxburghe Collection

103. Anonymous, Detail from *A Pleasant new Ballad you here may behold, / How the Devill, though subtle, was guld by a Scold* (London, 1601-1640), woodcut, British Library, Roxburghe Collection
104. Anonymous, *A Pleasant new Ballad you here may behold, / How the Devill, though subtle, was guld by a Scold* (London, 1601-1640), woodcut, British Library, Roxburghe Collection
105. Anonymous, Detail from *The Batchelors Delight, / Being a pleasant new Song, shewing the happiness of a single life, and / the miseries that do commonly attend Matrimony* (London, 1623-1661), woodcut, Houghton Library, Huth
106. Anonymous, *A pleasant new Song, betwixt / The Saylor and his Loue* (London, 1624), woodcut, Magdalene College, Pepys Collection
107. Anthony van Dyck, *Queen Henrietta Maria with Sir Jeffrey Hudson*, 1633, oil on canvas, 219.1 × 134.8 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington
108. Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, *Anne Fanshawe*, 1628, oil on oak panel, 111.5 × 98 cm, Valence House Museum, London
109. Anonymous, *English Civil War print*, c.1642, woodcut, Private Collection
110. Anonymous, woodcut, c.1620, reused in *The Resolution of the women of London to the Parliament wherein they declare their hot zeale in sending their husbands to the warres in defence of King and Parliament…*, 1642, British Library, London

Introduction

The art historian and curator John Pope-Hennessy used to encourage visitors to sit rather than stand in front of the cast of Donatello's bronze *David* in the Victoria and Albert Museum. His aim was to recreate the experience of a fifteenth-century viewer seeing the sculpture on its plinth from below in the Palazzo Medici's courtyard, for which it was designed.[1] Publishing the conclusions of this experiment in 1984, he argued that, from this angle, the sculpture's often noted androgyny receded, allowing the body's proportions to take on 'a more vigorous, more masculine presence'.[2] For Pope-Hennessy, the 'introverted and withdrawn' aspect of the sculpture was a 'misleading impression', encouraged by museum conditions.[3] Indeed, art historians and curators have often tried to decide the dominant or correct aspect, or 'view', of gender-ambiguous figures in art. While this issue is demonstrated most literally by sculpture, a number of renaissance portraits similarly present androgynous sitters who have switched between male and female in museum labels and academic texts, often without mention of the trouble encountered while making this determination.[4] In other cases, difficulty characterising gender has impeded the study of art works entirely, especially when a canonical artist's name is not attached. Gender

---

[1] For more on this statue *in situ*, see Francis Ames-Lewis, 'Donatello's Bronze David and the Palazzo Medici Courtyard', *Renaissance Studies* 3 (1989): 235-251.

[2] John Pope-Hennessy, 'Donatello's Bronze David', in *Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Federico Zeri*, ed. Mauro Natalee (Milan: Electa, 1984), 125. It is worth noting that from a window of the *palazzo*, the sculpture would have been seen at eye-level, undermining these optical corrections. See Bonnie Bennett and David Wilkins, *Donatello* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1984), 89. Adrian Randolph argues that the figure's youthful, feminised appearance was designed to appeal to a homosexual context in renaissance Florence, in Adrian Randolph, *Engaging Symbols: Gender, Politics and Public Art in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 139-192. For Robert Williams, the figure's effeminacy was due to its subject, as David is described in the Bible as a 'delicate youth', in Robert Williams, ''Victus Perfictur': On the Meaning of Donatello's Bronze 'David'', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 53, No. 2 (2009): 220.

[3] Quoted in Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, 147.

[4] See Michelangelo, *Idealised Head*, Windsor Castle, Windsor; Michelangelo, *Idealised Head*, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. For more on the gender ambiguity of Michelangelo's *Idealised Heads*, see Victor Coonin, 'Beyond the Binary: Michelangelo, Tommaso de' Cavalieri, and a Drawing at Windsor Castle', *Artibus et Historiae* 78 (2008): 259; Lorenzo Pericolo, ''Donna bella e crudele': Michelangelo's 'Divine Heads' in Light of the *Rime*', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 59, No. 2 (2017): 202-233.

ambiguity in past art highlights certain assumptions implicit in art historical methods, such as the singular meaning of art, or the search for stable identities behind portraits, that have hindered its study. This thesis seeks new approaches to these works, in which, previously, gender ambiguity was resolved before interpretation began—dismissed as an accident of historical distance, or museum display, as seen in the case of *David*—or explained through reference to sometimes anachronistic definitions of sexual or gender identity.

The central question of this thesis is how did early moderns use and consider gender ambiguity in art? Yet this deceptively simple question raises a number of further questions that this thesis will address. Firstly, what constituted gender-ambiguous appearance, clothing or behaviour in the early modern period and how does this differ from today? How can we distinguish the meanings and interpretations of gender ambiguity in art from reactions to androgyny or cross-dressing in the street or at court? Did different media and genres of art vary its meanings? How did its use, and reactions to it change both over time and with different audiences? In order to answer these questions, this thesis seeks period-appropriate definitions of gender ambiguity. This aims to address why androgynous fashions and subjects in art became popular across early modern Europe at a time when cross-dressing was forbidden in the Bible and criticised in moralising literature.

This task is complicated by the scarcity of surviving early modern accounts of direct engagement with gender ambiguity in art, especially beyond Italy, in regions where traditions of art writing were less developed. While medical and legal accounts of gender ambiguity, inversion, hermaphroditism and cross-dressing survive, these are not necessarily reflective of the meanings ascribed to these themes in art, or the opinions of patrons and artists.[5] Art viewers were often aware of the fictional nature of art, and discussed its

[5] For examples of historical accounts of hermaphrodites, see Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, 'The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature: Sexual Ambiguity in Early Modern France', *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly* 1, No. 4 (1995): 419-438; Sarah-Maria Schober, 'Hermaphrodites in Basel: Figures of Ambiguity and the Early Modern Physician', in *Site of Mediation: Connected Histories of Places, Processes and Objects in Europe and Beyond, 1450-1650*, ed. Susanna Burghartz, Lucas Burkart, Christine Gottler (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 306-7. For masculine women in early modern England, see David Cressy, 'Gender Trouble and Cross-Dressing in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies* 35, No. 4 (1996): 464; David Cressy, *Agnes Bowker's Cat: Travesties and Transgressions in*

mimetic, idealising, or fantastical relationship to life.[6] It is therefore necessary to look beyond accounts of cross-dressing or gender ambiguity in real life to assess its meaning in art. Early modern literature and poetry, as parallel fictions, are particularly revealing sources.

While the associations of gender ambiguity were diverse, early modern literature highlights its ability to thematise or stand for blurred boundaries, confusion, hybridity, or ambiguity itself. Many scholars, such as Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, have explored how the early modern hermaphrodite became an emblem not just of gender transgression, but of the perceived erosion of many other distinctions, in a period of marked social and political change.[7] Literature hints at how other forms of gender ambiguity were also associated with appealing indeterminacy, novelty and difficulty. Elizabethan and Stuart literature explores androgynous idealisation, from Shakespeare's 'master-mistress' of *Sonnet 20* to Christopher

---

Tudor and Stuart England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 94-6; Rudolf Dekker and Lotte van der Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe* (London: Macmillan, 1988). Recently, Simone Chess and others have turned to many of the same plays, pamphlets and poetry, to reveal 'premodern trans histories', in a special issue on early modern trans studies: Simone Chess, Colby Gordon, Will Fisher ed., *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 19, No. 4 (2019).

[6] Early modern understanding of the fictional status of art has particularly been discussed in reference to portraits. See Harry Berger, 'Fictions of Pose: Facing the Gaze of Early Modern Portraiture', *Representations* 46 (1994): 87-120; Joanna Woodall, 'Introduction: Facing the Subject', in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), esp. 17.

[7] Daston and Park, 'The Hermaphrodite', 424; Jenny Mann, 'How to Look at a Hermaphrodite in Early Modern England', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 46, No. 1, (2006): 74. For Guy Poirier, writing on the French renaissance, for example, 'l'hermaphrodite portrait en lui l'image de l'étrangeté', in Guy Poirier, *L'homosexualite dans l'imaginaire de la Renaissance* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1996), 77. As Ann Jones and Peter Stalybrass have argued, the hermaphrodite recurs 'as the site of fixation where there is an imperative to categorize without one single normative system by which such categorization can be made', in Ann Jones and Peter Stallybrass, 'Fetishizing Gender: Constructing the Hermaphrodite in Renaissance Europe', in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York, NY: Routledge, 1991), 106. For more on hermaphrodites in premodern Europe, see Kathleen Long, *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Ruth Gilbert, *Early Modern Hermaphrodites: Sex and Other Stories* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Leah DeVun, 'The Jesus Hermaphrodite: Science and Sex Difference in Premodern Europe', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69, No. 2 (2008): 193-218. This perception was likely aided by association between hermaphrodites, as well as Amazons, and faraway lands, including the Americas. See Schober, 'Hermaphrodites in Basel', 306-7.

Marlowe's Leander, who 'some swore he was a maid in mans attire, / For in his lookes were all that men desire'.[8] In early modern France, Pierre de Ronsard flattered his mistress, Cassandre, as a gender-ambiguous beauty: 'When her hair, gathered above her ears/ Imitates the style of Venus? / When with a cap she makes her head resemble Adonis, /And no one knows (so well does she disguise/ Her indeterminate head) whether she's a girl or a boy?'.[9] These authors echo classical conceits, drawn especially from Ovid, that praise gender ambiguity as a particularly intriguing form of beauty, due to its changeability or unknowability.

These concepts are also found in early modern Italian art writing, which commends gender-ambiguous subjects for their difficulty, novelty, and ability to keep the viewer guessing. As Ludovico Dolce wrote of Titian's Adonis in *Venus and Adonis* in 1554, 'I mean that in a woman it would embody a certain something of manhood, and in a man something of beautiful womanhood: a difficult mixture…'.[10] Working between disciplines, this thesis combines close attention to literature on gender ambiguity with art historical analysis, based on early modern artistic genres and conventions, to construct the cultural and artistic apparatus through which an original audience would have viewed these images. As these literary examples suggest, ambiguity forms a context in which early moderns beyond Italy may also have understood gender confusion, androgyny and cross-dressing in art. This suggests a new body of literature that can be brought to bear on visual depictions of gender ambiguity.

---

[8] William Shakespeare, *The Sonnets*, ed. William Burto (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), 20; Christopher Marlowe, 'Hero and Leander', in Christopher Marlowe, *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe, I: All Ovids Elegies, Lucans First Booke, Dido Queene of Carthage*, *Hero and Leander*, ed. Roma Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 190.

[9] 'Quel plaisir est ce, ainçois quelle merveille, / Quand ses cheveus troussés dessus l'oreille/ D'une Venus imitent la façon? / Quand d'un bonet son chef elle Adonise, / Et qu'on ne sait (tant bien elle deguise/ Son chef douteus,) s'elle est fille ou garçon?', Pierre de Ronsard, *Les Amours, Leurs Commentaires: Texte de 1553*, ed. Christine de Buzon and Pierre Martin (Paris: Didier érudition, 1999), 128.

[10] Quoted in Philip Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 190.

Early Modern Terms for Ambiguity

During the early modern period there was a growth in concern with ambiguity among poets, writers, and philosophers, as well as in its artistic use. This period established many vernacular terms for ambiguity, and forged new meanings that were as applicable to visual ambiguity as ambiguity of words. A range of art terms also developed in this period, from the *je-ne-sais-quoi* to *grazia*, that can be linked by their appreciation of vagueness, ability to spark doubt and attempts to indicate inexpressibility – characteristics that were central to early modern definitions of ambiguity. These terms testify to the significance of ambiguity in this period, provide a period-appropriate vocabulary with which to elucidate early modern understandings of gender ambiguity in art, and in part account for its past neglect.[11]

The most common Latin terms for ambiguity were 'ambiguitat, ambiguitas' (ambiguity), 'perplexi' (entangled, or ambiguous), 'amphibologia' (double meaning) and 'dubitas' (doubt).[12] In classical Latin, 'ambiguitas' meant the ability to be understood in two or more ways or equivocation. These meanings were transmitted in classical texts, especially on rhetoric, and remained in usage into the early modern period. Various Middle English spellings, from 'ambiguyte' to 'ambyguite', borrowed from Latin and also the French, 'ambeguite', which became 'ambiguité' in Middle French.[13] This formed part of the pan-European development of vernacular written languages to rival Latin from the fourteenth century onwards.[14] In the sixteenth century, these were superseded in English by the most popular spelling, 'ambiguitie'.[15] John Baret, in *An Alveary or Triple Dictionary, in English, Latin, and French*, 1574, gives 'Ambiguitie or doubtfulnesse in woordes', 'Aequivocatio', 'perplexi' and the French, 'ambiguitè', as parallel definitions, demonstrating the interwoven

[11] For the importance of tracing lexical histories, see Alexander Marr, Raphaele Garrod, Jose Ramon Marcaida and Richard J. Oosterhoff, *Logodaedalus: Word Histories of Ingenuity in Early Modern Europe* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018), 2; Neil Kenny, *Curiosity in Early Modern Europe: World Histories* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 24-5.
[12] 'ambiguity, n.', *OED Online* (March 2021: Oxford University Press): https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/6144?redirectedFrom=ambiguity.
[13] Ibid.
[14] First use of the Italian, ambiguità, is also cited as c. 1342, in Ibid.
[15] Ibid.

history of this word in English and French, and their mutual reliance on Latin.[16] Drawing on their classical origins, early examples of vernacular terms for ambiguity can be found most commonly in reference to unwanted legal or rhetorical ambiguity in both England and France. The *Rolls of Parliament of Henry VI*, 1445-6, for example, cites a desire for the 'Eschewyng of all manere ambiguitees and inconveniences' which may allow for later disagreement.[17] This sentiment was echoed in French royal and legal documents, which similarly express the wish 'to not leave any doubt or ambiguity about the interpretation of our edict'.[18]

As these sources suggest, the term ambiguity first —and most frequently —was employed to refer to ambiguity of words. Rhetorical discussions of ambiguity, particularly those that draw on Aristotle and Quintilian, most commonly treated ambiguity as a negative quality that hindered clear and persuasive argument, whether spoken or written. For Aristotle, 'not to have a single meaning is to have no meaning'.[19] This tradition formed the basis of many

---

[16] 'Ambiguitie', in John Baret, *An Alvearie Or Triple Dictionarie, in Englishe, Latin, and French: Very profitable for all such as be desirous of any of those three Languages* (London: Henry Denham, 1574).

[17] 'Henry VI: February 1445', in *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, ed. Chris Given-Wilson, Paul Brand, Seymour Phillips, Mark Ormrod, Geoffrey Martin, Anne Curry and Rosemary Horrox (London: Woodbridge, 2005), *British History Online*: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/february-1445.

[18] 'pour ne laisser aucune doute ou ambiguité sur l'interpretation de nostredict Edict…', in Henri III, *Édict du Roy, par lequel Sa Majesté octroye aux officiers de ses eauës & forests droict de chauffage, pour eux & leurs successeurs, suyvant le reiglement porté par iceluy* (Paris: Federic Morel, 1578), 15. See also, 'Nous à ces causes desirants iceluy nostre-dict estre edict gardé & entretenu, & ne laisser aucune ambiguité sur L'intepretation d'iceluy', in Charles IX, *Édict du Roy, par lequel il érige et institue en tiltre d'offices formé des gardes des seaulx en toutes ses cours* (Paris: Jean Dallier, 1572), 20.

[19] Quoted in Anthony Ossa-Richardson, *A History of Ambiguity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 31. In Aristotle's *Categories*, ambiguous objects are even impossible, since no object 'is qualified in contrary ways at one and the same time', in Aristotle, 'Categoriae', in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York, NY: Random House, 1941), 17. Ambiguity and equivocation are cited as ways to refute an argument by creating 'false illusion' in Aristotle*, On Sophistical Refutations, On Coming-to-be and Passing-away, On the Cosmos*, transl. Edward Forster and David Furley (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 17-25. 'Aristotle and Stoic writers regarded multiple meanings of words as a problem needing careful dialectical analysis so that the confusion that it caused could be avoided', in John Chamberlin, *Medieval Arts Doctrines on Ambiguity and*

historical attacks on ambiguity, as Aristotle and Quintilian continued to be referenced and used in rhetoric and logic, from Melanchthon to Erasmus.[20] Imitation of classical rhetoric in the early modern period resulted in more direct discussions of ambiguity, popularising these themes, including related classical concepts, such as 'paradox' (a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement in logic that cannot be true but also cannot be false), and 'aporia' (an unsolvable contradiction or logical disjuncture).[21] Richard Sherrey's *A Treatise of the Figures of Grammar and Rhetoric,* 1555, summarises the dominant interpretation of ambiguity in rhetoric as a 'faulte of composicion' which causes 'doubt'.[22]

The association of ambiguity with its effect of hesitation expanded in this period, to the extent that they were often used synonymously.[23] John Rider in the *Bibliotheca Scholastica*, 1589, for example, gives 'doubtfulness' as a synonym for 'Ambiguitie'.[24] This definition could encompass not only rhetorical ambiguity, or that of words, but of meaning across various media, although, following rhetoric, this was typically considered a hindrance to effective communication. Indeed, art writing, which often drew terms and inspiration from rhetoric, usually translated this stance towards ambiguity into visual art, seeing it predominantly as an inversion of the ideals of *claritas*, *evidentia*, and *ratio*, which ought to be avoided.[25]

Their Places in Langland's Poetics (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 25.

[20] For more on the impact of Aristotle in shaping a negative conception of ambiguity, see Ossa-Richardson, *A History of Ambiguity*, 28; 45.

[21] For more on paradox in early modern art and culture, see Rosalie Colie, *Paradoxica Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); Peter Parshall, 'Some Visual Paradoxes in Northern Renaissance Art', *Wascana Review* 9, No. 1, (1974): esp.101-2.

[22] Richard Sherrey, *A Treatise of the Figures of Grammar and Rhetoric* (London: Robert Caly, 1555), vii.

[23] The OED therefore lists 'uncertainty' or 'doubt' as an obsolete definition for ambiguity, beginning in the fifteenth, and in frequent use by sixteenth century. 'ambiguity, n.', 2, *OED Online*.

[24] 'Ambiguitie', in John Rider, *Bibliotheca Scholastica. A Double Dictionary* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1589).

[25] Marianne Koos, 'Dosso's Ambiguity', in *Renaissance Love: Eros, Passion, and Friendship in Italian Art around 1500*, ed. Jeanette Kohl, Marianne Koos, and Adrian Randolph, (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2014), 46; Ulrich Pfisterer, 'Akt und Ambiguität: 1552, 1559, 1640', in *Erosionen der Rhetorik? Strategien der Ambiguität in den Künsten der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Valeska von Rosen (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2012), 46-54; Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory*, 5-12.

Perhaps for this reason, these ideas echo through later assessments of ambiguity in past art. While ambiguity has always been integral to the discipline, until recently, its relationship to art history could best be defined as the first impetus to enquiry, or a challenge to be overcome through interpretation. The influential twentieth-century art historian, Ernst Gombrich defined the discipline's role as 'the forging of master keys' to unlock a painting's meaning.[26] Common metaphors of unlocking doors or breaking codes suggest that it was the task of the art historian to find the correct sources and interpretations to solve the puzzle of a work's long-obscured meaning.[27] These methods rest on the assumption that ambiguity is only ever the product of historical distance and that what is unclear to us must have been clear to the original audience, even if narrowly defined. Layers of meaning were admitted into iconographic interpretations, for example, using a Neoplatonic framework to relate immediate meanings to deeper ones, yet these were rarely in conflict or ambiguous.[28] Visual ambiguity also has been considered part of an artist's visual repertoire from its first use and its study expanded to interpret abstraction in modern art. Yet, for those like Gombrich, although sketches or visual lacunae could be indeterminate, subjects, themes and sitters were only ever yet to be discovered.[29] For Gombrich, echoing Aristotle, a 'picture

---

[26] Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, 6e, (London: Phaidon Press, 2002), 304.

[27] Erwin Panofsky famously described Hieronymus Bosch as a 'locked room', the door of which he had only 'bored a few holes through' in Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character* I (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953), 357-8.

[28] For an exception, see Erwin Panofsky's 'disguised symbolism', drawing together 'sacred and profane' meanings, and the resultant controversy. Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, 137; Otto Pächt, 'Panofsky's 'Early Netherlandish Painting'-I', *The Burlington Magazine* 98, No. 637 (1956): 110-16; Otto Pächt, 'Panofsky's 'Early Netherlandish Painting'-II', *The Burlington Magazine* 98, No. 641 (1956): 267-79; Susie Nash, 'Erwin Panofsky's Early Netherlandish Painting. Its Origins and Character', in *The Books that Shaped Art History*, ed. Richard Shone and John-Paul Stonard (London: Thames and Hudson, 2013), 94-5.

[29] For Gombrich, drawing on Gestalt psychology, Leonardo's use of *sfumato*, for example to blur the corners of the Mona Lisa's 'smile', produced effects that mimicked a viewer's experience of the visible world, often grasped in fragments or in motion. Ernst Gombrich, *The Story of Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1971), 219. For criticism, see Christopher Wood, 'E.H. Gombrich's 'Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation', 1960', *The Burlington Magazine* 151, No. 1281 (2009): esp. 837; Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), xii.

has not several meanings but one'.[30] This is particularly true of the early modern period, as he argues that 'to my knowledge neither Vasari nor any other text of the fifteenth or sixteenth century says that any painting or sculpture is intended to have two divergent meanings or to represent two distinct events through the same set of figures'.[31]

Yet there was also a parallel tradition that explored the witty, entertaining and enriching potential of double meanings and doubt. Humanists praised ambiguity in the form of word play, puns or *double-entendres*.[32] Exemplifying this learned admiration for certain kinds of verbal ambiguity, Baldassare Castiglione has a character claim that *ambiguitá* is central to *arguzia* or wit in *The Book of the Courtier*, which was a key representation of, and reference point for, elite conversation in this period.[33] Art historians have drawn attention to the capacity for early modern artists not only to reference word play and puns, but to create visual equivalents in art.[34]

Language could equally facilitate gender play in ways that were translated visually. Early moderns often mis-matched pronouns or, in gendered languages like Latin and French, masculine and feminine agreement to humorous or witty ends, as seen in the English

---

[30] Ernst Gombrich, *Symbolic Images: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (London: Phaidon, 1975), 16.

[31] Ibid., 19.

[32] For more on this kind of early modern humour, see Conal Condren, 'The Study of Past Humour: Historicity and the Limits of Method', in *The Palgrave Handbook of Humour, History, and Methodology*, ed. Daniel Derrin and Hannah Burrows (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 19-42, esp. 26-7.

[33] Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, transl. George Bull (London: Penguin Classics, 1976), 166. See Paul Barolsky and Andrew Ladis, 'The 'Pleasurable Deceits' of Bronzino's So-Called London 'Allegory'', *Notes in the History of Art* 10, No. 3 (1991): 34. Paul Barolsky has similarly drawn attention to how paradox could fulfil as similar role in *cinquecento* Italian art and literature, in Paul Barolsky, *Infinite Jest: Wit and Humour in Italian Renaissance Art* (London: University of Missouri Press, 1978), 65, 68, 117-8.

[34] For definitions of wit in the early modern period and their visual counterparts, see Barolsky, *Infinite Jest*, esp. 3-8. For wit, word-play and ingenuity, see Peter Parshall, 'Some Visual Paradoxes in Northern Renaissance Art', *Wascana Review* 9, No. 1, (1974): esp.101-2; Alexander Marr, 'Ingenuity and Discernment in The Cabinet of Cornelis van der Geest (1628), *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 69, No. 1 (2020): 106-145; Marr, 'Pregnant Wit: *Ingegno* in Renaissance England', *British Art Studies* 1 (2015): https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-01/amarr.

satirical pamphlet, *Hic Mulier: Or, The Man-Woman*, Shakespeare's label of 'master-mistress', and the Huguenot poet and propagandist Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné's parody of Henri III as ' a female King or a male Queen'.[35] Images could also encapsulate this conceit, whether to mock or to flatter, as will be seen in the anonymous *Composite Portrait of François I,* c.1545, which uses a similar clash of masculine and feminine attributes to depict the King as a 'Roy femme', combining the virtues of both sexes (fig. 43). Whether verbal or visual, however, this conceit relies on the recognition of gendered binaries, rather than any ambivalence or doubt between them. While playing with gender in surprising ways, this kind of gender play is not usually ambiguous in the early modern sense of raising doubt or creating double meanings, as the result is a recognisable gender hybrid. It is worth noting that the term 'hermaphrodite', used to describe this kind of gender hybrid, had a stable definition from the classical period onwards and was as capable of representing a category in itself as confusion between genders.[36] While morally ambivalent, hermaphrodites or gender hybrids could be depicted or described either unambiguously or in ways that highlighted their capacity to blur boundaries and prompt hesistancy in the viewer.

Similarly, the rhetorical strategy of inversion was often applied to gender as part of world-turned-upside-down imagery from the classical to the early modern period, in both its classical and carnivalesque forms.[37] Most commonly, gender inversion has been studied in the form of cross-dressing during early modern festivities and in satirical prints.[38] This also

---

[35] 'un Roy femme ou bien un homme Reyne', quoted in Long, *Hermaphrodites*, 204; Anonymous, *Hic Mulier: Or, The Man-Woman* (London: John Trundle, 1620).

[36] 'hermaphrodite, n. and adj.', in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, March 2020): https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/86249?

[37] For more on inversion and the world-turned-upside down, see Stuart Clark, 'Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft', *Past & Present* 87 (May, 1980), 98-127; Vincent Robert-Nicoud, *The World Upside Down in 16th-Century French Literature and Visual Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2018). For the carnivalesque, see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, transl. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

[38] For ritual inversions and gender, see Natalie Davis, 'Women on Top: Symbolic Sexual Inversion and Political Disorder in Early Modern Europe', in *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and* Society, ed. Barbara Babcock (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 147-190; David Underdown, 'The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England', in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 92-115. For the world-turned-upside-down in

breaks with gendered conventions to provoke surprise, yet also relies on the recognition of gender binaries or hierarchies in order to understand their reversal.[39] When gender inversion attracted multiple interpretations, or signaled moral ambivalence, this was usually due to how it was depicted, described, or experienced, rather than due to its inherent ambiguity. This will be explored in the chapters on the ambiguous frescoes of Hercules cross-dressing at Fontainebleau and English printed satires of masculine women.

This thesis focuses on particular instances of gender play that would once have seemed ambiguous to early modern viewers. Due to their relative subtlety and the loss of their historical gendered and costume associations over time, these forms of gender ambiguity, in which a figure's gender is cast into doubt, or where the image prompts multiple interpretations, raises ambivalence, or thematises ambiguity, have been comparatively overlooked in scholarship. These cases can be particularly enlightened by drawing on early modern literary parallels that explore ambiguity. Like other forms of ambiguity, these images could be valued for their poetic richness, beauty and potential to entertain.

While the OED cites William Empson's literary study, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, as the first positive use of ambiguity as productive and poetic openness, commentators from Augustine and Boethius onwards praised ambiguous rhetoric, most notably metaphor, for its figurative, skillful effects in poetry using related terms.[40] Drawing especially on Catullus and Ovid, humanist poets beginning with Petrarch thematised ambivalence, ambiguity and impossibility as metaphors for inner conflict, replicating the murkiness of human emotion and thought. While not directly employing the term 'ambiguity', which may have had

---

popular prints, see David Kunzle, 'World Upside Down: The Iconography of a European Broadsheet', in *The Reversible World*, 39-94; Malcolm Jones, *The Print in Early Modern England: An Historical Oversight* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 268-314.

[39] While Bakhtin's saw the carnivalesque as fundamentally transgressive, using laughter to challenge official institutions, others have demonstrated how inversion underscored the status quo. As Stuart Clark summarises, 'misrule necessarily pre-supposes the rule that it parodies', in Clark, 'Inversion', 103.

[40] 'ambiguity, n.', 1d., *Literary Criticism*. A nuance which allows for an alternative reading of a piece of language; (as a mass noun) the fact or quality of having one or more such nuances, in *OED Online*. William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (Middlesex: Chatto & Windus, 1956). See Ossa-Richardson, *A History of Ambiguity*, 39-40; Chamberlin, *Medieval Arts Doctrines*, 29.

connotations that were too negative, a range of words, like 'grazia', 'vaghezza' and 'non so che', entered usage across Europe to indicate characteristics such as grace, charm, irrational attraction, charisma, or beauty that defied description, with direct application to visual ambiguity. These terms were promoted in Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*.[41] This positive tradition drew productively on the inexpressibility of ambiguity or doubt in order to communicate flattering traits, or used double meanings to show wit or humour.

This is epitomised by the *je-ne-sais-quoi*. Reaching its pinnacle in the latter half of the seventeenth century in France, the French equivalent of *non so che*, the *je-ne-sais-quoi*, was described by Dominique Bouhours as a form of teasing indirectness, capable of enriching its subject, like veiled beautiful women who are 'all the more admired the less they are exposed to sight'.[42] As Richard Scholar has argued, the appeal of the *non so che* or *je-ne-sais-quoi* lay not only in flattering those to whom the term was applied, but in demonstrating the taste of the one who is able to discern this certain something.[43] Indeed, Quintilian had noted the potential for ambiguity to nourish precocity, as many people enjoyed the challenge of ambiguous phrases, 'exulting and delighting to decipher them by their own lights, as if they had not heard but devised them themselves'.[44] Perhaps unsurprisingly, given its capacity for entertainment, flattery and competitive interpretation, renaissance courts seized upon the *je-ne-sais-quoi*, wit, and enigma. It is in this capacity that complexity and ambiguity have long been central to discussions of sixteenth-century courtly art.[45] In one of the most influential characterisations of the art of this period, John

---

[41] Federico Fregosos describes how 'veiled subtlety' in writing allows the reader to 'more deeply enjoy the skill and message of the author'. See also discussions of grace and *sprezzatura*. Castiglione, *The Book*, 72; esp. 60-68.

[42] '…il est du je ne sais quoi comme de ces beautés couvertes d'un voile, qui sont d'autant plus estimées, qu'elles sont moins exposées à la vue', Dominque Bouhours, 'Le je ne sais quoi. Cinquième entretien', *Les Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène*, ed. Bernard Beugnot and Gilles Declercq (Paris: Champion, 2003), 288. For a detailed account of the transmission of *non so che* from antiquity, via Italy, to France, see Richard Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe: Encounters with a Certain Something* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 25-38.

[43] Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi*, 186-7.

[44] Quoted in Ossa-Richardson, *The History of Ambiguity*, 103.

[45] Henri Zerner and Rebecca Zorach attribute the visual complexity and self-reflexive themes in French renaissance art, and especially the gallery at Fontainebleau, to the desire to forge interpretative hierarchies in a hierarchical court setting (with the King and artist usually triumphing).

Shearman argued that *terza maniera* art was designed to stimulate 'obscurity', in order to flatter 'the connoisseur who can interpret it'.[46] For Bret Rothstein, similarly, early modern puzzles, or puzzling images, provided prolonged entertainment due to their difficulty and allowed viewers to demonstrate interpretative talent, or sometimes an artist's intellectual status, especially in elite, courtly settings.[47]

Early moderns therefore had diverse terms for discussing ambiguity in art, transformed by each author and over time. Van Mander used the term 'gheest' in the *Schilderboec*k to denote those pictorial subjects that must be captured 'uyt den gheest' (from the spirit), since they are too elusive or numerous to be depicted 'nae t'leven (from life).[48] As revelations 'of 'gheest', or individual style, these parts of a painting display something like the *non so che* of Italian art theory. For the art collector and theorist Franciscus Junius, connoisseurship aimed at identifying the elusive quality that marks out great art, which he described explicitly as a *non so che*, since 'incredible things finde no voice'.[49] The breadth of this fascination with ambiguity is reflected in the diverse artists in whose work iconographic complexity, ambiguity, and paradox have been recognised, including Leonardo da Vinci, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Hieronymus Bosch, Albrecht Dürer, Titian, Dosso Dossi, and

---

Henri Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France: The Invention of Classicism* (Paris: Flammarion, 2003), 91; Rebecca Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold: Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2006), 47-8.

[46] John Shearman, *Mannerism: Style and Civilization*, (London: Penguin Books, 1967), 162.

[47] 'Designed to defy easy resolution by the viewer, such objects gauged intellectual and visual skill', Bret Rothstein, 'Making Trouble: Strange Wooden Objects and the Pursuit of Difficulty ca. 1596' *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 13, No. 1 (2013): 97. See also, Bret Rothstein's discussion of Brueghel's *Elck*, in Bret Rothstein, 'The Problem with Looking at Pieter Bruegel's Elck', *Art History* 26, No. 2 (2003): 164. Mitchell Merback, by contrast, sees the iconographical complexity of Durer's *Melencolia I* not as a competitive exercise in interpretation, but as encouraging the viewer to enter into a meditative state of trying to uncover its meaning, with 'therapeutic' effect, in Mitchell Merback, *Perfection's Therapy: An Essay on Albrecht Durer's Melencolia* I (New York, NY: Zone Books, 2018), 28.

[48] See Claudia Swan, *Art, Science, and Witchcraft in Early Modern Holland: Jacques de Gheyn II (1565-1629)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 12.

[49] Franciscus Junius, quoted in Thijs Westeijn, 'The Sublime and the 'Beholder's Share'': Junius, Rubens, Rembrandt', *Journal of the Historians of Netherlandish Art* 8, No. 2 (2016): 4.

Giorgione.[50] These concepts were discussed throughout the period and remained as important for Karel van Mander as they had been for Castiglione. Ambiguity therefore forms a key cultural and aesthetic category throughout the early modern period. Despite being subtly different, these terms and descriptions all possess the ability to raise doubt, or resist definition, which early moderns saw as one of the defining characteristics of ambiguity.

Early modern literary accounts also highlight how ambiguity of gender was experiential and visual, whether characterised as a trick of the eye, or an inexpressible form of androgynous beauty. As Pierre de Ronsard's description of Cassandre suggests, gender ambiguity may have been thought of as a particularly visual phenomenon, based on fleeting appearances, like her 'douteux' (doubtful or indeterminate) head. Visual signs of gender in early modern stories of gender confusion are often described as misleading, while true gender is usually discovered by touch.[51] These sources highlight how gender ambiguity was a pleasurably

---

[50] See Alexander Nagel and Lorenzo Pericolo ed., *Subject as Aporia in Early Modern Art* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 2. For 'delight in ambiguity' in early modern pictures of collections, see Alexander Marr, 'Ingenuity and Discernment in The Cabinet of Cornelis van der Geest (1628), *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 69, No. 1 (2020): 106-145. For 'paradox' in Bruegel, see Bret Rothstein, 'The Problem', 143-173; Parshall, 'Some Visual Paradoxes', esp. 101-2. For contradiction and enigma in Bosch and Brueghel, see Joseph Koerner, *Bosch and Bruegel: From Enemy Painting to Everyday Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016). Dürer's *Melencolia I* has often been approached as an epitome of enigmatic art. See Philip Sohm, 'Dürer's 'Melencolia I': The Limits of Knowledge', *Studies in the History of Art* 9 (1980): 13-32; Merback, *Perfection's Therapy*, 50, 30. For ambiguity in Dosso Dossi's paintings, see Koos, 'Dosso's Ambiguity', 45-66; in Titian's art, see Christopher Nygren, 'Stylizing Eros: Narrative Ambiguity and the Discourse of the Desire in Titian's so-called Salome', in *Renaissance Love*, 23-44; in Caravaggio, see Valeska von Rosen, *Caravaggio und die Grenzen des Darstellbaren: Ambiguität, Ironie und Performativität in der Malerei um 1600* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009). Tom Nichols explores ambiguity as Giorgione's defining quality in Tom Nichols, *Giorgione's Ambiguity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2020); Joost Keizer has similarly studied how paradoxes and contradictions were a continued impetus to Leonardo's thought and art in Joost Keizer, *Leonardo's Paradox: Word and Image in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (London: Reaktion Books, 2019), esp. 16.

[51] As one popular pamphlet argued, 'there is no great difference', between men and women in masculine clothes, and certainly not when viewed quickly, 'out of a Coach', Thomas Adams, *Mystical Bedlam, or The World of Mad-Men* (London: George Purslowe, 1615), Sig. H1^{v}. Lorenzo Ghiberti, for example, wrote on the discovery of a hermaphrodite statue in Rome, 'in this statue there were a great many delicacies displayed, the sight discerned nothing if the hand by touching did not find them'. Mary Pardo argues that this appeal to touch was intended to heighten the account's eroticism, and by extension to demonstrate the artist's skill through their ability to move a viewer.

doubt-inducing and visual experience, sometimes even referencing how contemporary fashions, like Cassandre's hat, caused these effects. This suggests that, whether written about or depicted visually, often these subtler forms of gender ambiguity were considered particularly visual. Their identification and meaning rested on contemporary fashions, and knowledge of artistic traditions and genres, or their subversion. While language therefore presents some barriers to the direct comparison of gender ambiguity in English and French written sources, due to the gendered nature of the French language, its visual depiction often relied on contemporary fashions and artistic knowledge that were experienced differently from lexical ambiguity. This thesis therefore argues that the appreciation and the distrust that gender-ambiguous figures in art could provoke often hinged on this central characteristic of doubt and how it was culturally received. In this way, this thesis offers an alternative to previous interpretations, that have usually looked at gender ambiguity as evidence of sexuality.

Previous Studies of Early Modern Ambiguity

Gender ambiguity in art has often been assumed to speak primarily to sexual or gender identity. Due to the presence of androgynous figures and beautiful boys in classical and renaissance art, art historians have formed approaches to gender ambiguity since the discipline's inception. Classical texts, and sexually explicit works of art surviving from ancient Greece and Rome, make it clear that young boys, often described as feminised, represented objects of desire for men as well as women, and were a particular beauty ideal in some classical cultures.[52] This context forged strong associations between the depiction of

---

But the specific case of gender ambiguity also demonstrates a relationship between sight and touch (or *paragone*), in which visual impressions mislead, but touch reveals. Mary Pardo, 'Artifice as Seduction in Titian', in *Sexuality and Gender in Modern Europe: Institutions, Texts, Images*, ed. James Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 62. See also Benvenuto Cellini's story about dressing his young neighbour as a woman to accompany him to a banquet, and his subsequent discovery by touch, in Benvenuto Cellini, *The Autobiography*, transl. George Bull (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 48-50. For how this story draws on the *paragone* and art-writing themes, see James Turner, *Eros Visible: Art, Sexuality and Antiquity in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), 279.

[52] Classical literature and mythology are full of instances where youth blurs the lines between sexes. In Horace, *Odes*, 2.5, the youth Eyges is described in these terms: 'if you put him in a group of

gender-ambiguous youths and sexual licence or homosexuality. Johannes Winkelmann, often described as the founding father of art history, drew attention to a 'playful and sensuous ideal of androgynous beauty' in ancient Greek sculpture as well as the Italian renaissance, which he saw as representative of an artistic and social freedom from which his own age could learn.[53] This association with sexual freedom and homosexuality, as a sexual and social identity, deepened in the twentieth century as the discoveries of the emerging discipline of psychology were brought to bear on art.[54] Whether in the form of Sigmund Freud's pathologised and repressed homosexual interpretation of beautiful boys in Leonardo's art, or Winckelmann and others' treatment of androgyny as a sign of a sexually enlightened society, the earliest history of gender ambiguity was intricately tied to homosexuality.[55] This link has persisted into the present, although more historicising studies

---

dancing girls, discerning strangers would, to their amazement, be tricked; for the distinction would be blurred by his flowing hair and equivocal looks', in Horace, *Odes and Epodes*, ed. and transl. Niall Rudd (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 107. Similarly, in *Imagines*, young Achilles successfully disguises himself among the Lycomedian women, in Philostratus the Younger, *Imagines, Callistratus, Descriptions*, transl. Arthur Fairbanks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 286-291. For youthful, androgyny in classical sculpture, see Elizabeth Bartman, 'Eros's Flame: Images of Sexy Boys in Roman Ideal Sculpture', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome, Supplementary Volumes, The Ancient Art of Emulation: Studies in Artistic Originality and Tradition from the Present to Classical Antiquity* 1 (2002), 249-271; Caroline Vout, 'Antinous, Archaeology and History', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 95 (2005): 80-96.

[53] 'There is but one way for the moderns to become great, and perhaps unequalled; I mean, by imitating the Greeks', Johann Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks*, transl. Henry Fuseli (London: A. Millar, 1765), 2.

[54] This androgynous and ephebic Greek ideal continued to be commended in nineteenth-century art and literature. Walter Pater describes Leonardo's *John the Baptist*, for example, as an alluring combination of masculine and feminine, 'whose delicate brown flesh and woman's hair no one would go out into the wilderness to seek', echoing Winkelmann's praise of antique sculptures, in Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry, The 1895 Text*, ed. Donald Hill (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980), 93. This played a role in the 'modern emergence of homosexuality as social identity' in this period, in Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 4. See Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980); Frank Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981); Martha Vicinus, 'The Adolescent Boy: Fin de Siecle Femme Fatale?', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, No. 1 (1994): 90-114. Yet it also came to be criticised. See Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality*, 24-26.

[55] Sigmund Freud, *Leonardo Da Vinci: A Memory of His Childhood* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1999), 83. This influenced many later accounts of androgyny in Leonardo's work. See, for example, Raymond de Becker, who believed Leonardo's homosexuality was expressed through his 'hidden and

have emerged, which have productively highlighted the fundamentally different social and sexual mores of the past.[56] Art historians such as Adrian Randolph and Patricia Simons consider androgynous boys in renaissance art as appealing to a permissive, Florentine context of homosexual attraction, in which they formed a classically-inspired beauty ideal, and were painted as beautiful objects of desire.[57] In cultures where artists and writers revived rhetoric from antiquity, however, gender-ambiguous presentation is described as having homosexual and heterosexual appeal.[58] Treating androgynous portraits only as a document of homosexual desire oversimplifies the broad appeal that these portrayals could

---

obstinate quest for hermaphroditism', in Raymond de Becker, *The Other Face of Love* (London: Neville Spearman, 1967), 115. According to Martin Kemp, for example, Leonardo's youths become 'both more exaggerated and more ambiguous in… emotional resonances' over time, as he develops a ''late Roman' air of incipient decadence… his beauty has become more fleshily sensual', quoted in Maya Corry, *Masculinity and Spirituality in Renaissance Milan: The Role of the Beautiful Body in the Art of Leonardo da Vinci and the Leonardeschi* (PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2013), 21-22.

[56] For fracture in gay and queer scholarship over the extent to which the past can or should be seen as continuous with the present, and whether scholarship should naturalise or denaturalise sexualities, see Chris Bartle, 'Gay/Queer Dynamics and the Question of Sexual History and Identity', *Journal of Homosexuality* 62, No. 4 (2015): 531-569. For homosexuality in renaissance Florence and broader Italy, see Michael Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Leonard Barkan, *Transuming Passion: Ganymede and the Erotics of Humanism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991). For similar work on renaissance England, see Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London: Gay Men's Press, 1982); Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992).

[57] Patricia Simons, 'Hercules in Italian Renaissance Art: Masculine Labour and Homoerotic Libido', *Art History* 31 No. 5 (2008): 632–664; Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, 139-142.

[58] Raymond Waddington argues that bisexuality was common in early modern artistic circles, in Raymond Waddington, 'The Bisexual Portrait of François I: Fontainebleau, Castiglione, and the Tone of Courtly Mythology', in *Playing with Gender: A Renaissance Pursuit*, ed. Jean Brink (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 119. James Turner extends this argument to suggest that this could also mean that sixteenth-century Italians adopted a 'bisexual pose' as part of a daring persona, in Turner, *Eros Visible*, 290-4.

have, as well as the role of art.[59] Moreover, a primarily or exclusively homosexual meaning is unlikely in societies where sodomy was still criminalised.[60]

In the sixteenth century, sexuality, gender ambiguity and transgression intersected in surprising ways. Effeminacy, for example, was usually considered the product of too much heterosexual attraction or indulgence, or excessive desire in general. As the product of inferior reason and lack of moderation, this was considered a womanly flaw.[61] This lies behind the surprising but common early modern assertion that heterosexual love 'turns a man into a woman'.[62] It was only towards the end of the sixteenth century that effeminacy started to be linked to allegations of sodomy.[63] Before this, early modern gender ambiguity therefore had different connotations, capable of communicating desirability or weakness and the blurring or confluence of other gendered binaries. New contributions to the subject of gender ambiguity have drawn attention to broader cultural factors that influenced its depiction and reception in art, including how gender ambiguity could appeal to fundamental

---

[59] As Marjorie Garber argues, 'to restrict cross-dressing to the context of an emerging gay and lesbian identity is to risk ignoring, or setting aside, elements and incidents that seem to belong to quite different lexicons of self-definition and political and cultural display', in Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (London: Routledge, 1992), 5.

[60] Stephen Orgel argues that the legal definition for sodomy was narrow, allowing homosexual acts to escape greater censure, in Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 58. See also Bruce Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1991), 49. Nonetheless, as Robert Matz suggests, 'it would be an exaggeration to claim that there was no policing of sexual desire in male same-sex friendships, including by those within them' since this was a time when even sex licit within marriage was still viewed with suspicion', in Robert Matz, 'The Scandals of Shakespeare's Sonnets', *English Literary History* 77, No. 2 (2010): 481.

[61] For early modern effeminacy as addiction or subjugation to women, or subjection to passions, see Susan Shapiro, 'Sex, Gender, and Fashion in Medieval and Early Modern Britain', *Journal of Popular Culture* 20, No. 4 (1987): 113-4; Rebecca Bushnell, 'Effeminacy in Early Modern England', in *Reconsidering the Renaissance*, ed. Mario Di Cesare, (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1992), 339-54; Katharine Crawford, 'Love, Sodomy and Scandal: Controlling the Sexual Reputation of Henry III', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 12, No. 4 (2003): 518.

[62] Robert Burton, quoted in Orgel, *Impersonations*, 26.

[63] See, for example, the link between effeminacy and sodomy in attacks on Henri III, in Crawford, 'Love, Sodomy and Scandal', esp. 532. For growing associations between hermaphroditism, transvestitism, and sodomy in late sixteenth-century France, see Daston and Park, *The Hermaphrodite*, 419-438.

early modern aesthetic criteria, art criticism and poetics.[64] This thesis roots gender ambiguity in its broader culture, without reducing it to illustration or an uncomplicated reflection of sexual attitudes or identity. It employs contemporary written sources that highlight the ambiguity of these subjects, as tense mixtures, or surprising combinations, that come closer to how certain early moderns might have perceived these themes in art.

In order to historicise gender ambiguity and to explore its meanings in an early modern context, this thesis draws on recent literature on ambiguity in art. From the 1990s onwards, driven by challenges to iconographic methods and grand narratives, and the growing appreciation of ambiguity in contemporary art, traditional resistance to ambiguity of theme or subject has been treated increasingly as an oversight, and one that particularly distorted historically distant art.[65] James Elkins, for example, argues that while ambiguity is often assumed in modern art, it is foreclosed in the study of older art, with the result that 'when the interpretive apparatus of art history runs up against premodern paintings that intentionally work against unambiguous primary meanings, it can generate a potentially incoherent literature.' [66] Targeting past assumptions and methods, art historians have

---

[64] Maya Corry places Leonardo's androgynous youths in the context of admiration for androgynous, youthful beauty in Milan, commended by Neoplatonic philosophy, and humoral theory in Corry, *Masculinity and Spirituality*, 107. Elisa de Halleux has similarly interpreted androgynous figures in the work of diverse northern and Italian artists, such as Parmigianino, Tintoretto, and Spranger, as relating to philosophical or rhetorical concepts, like harmony or Plato's allegory of the hermaphrodite as the 'complete' couple, in Elisa de Halleux, 'Androgynie, Erotisme et Ambiguïté de l'image picturale à la renaissance: un example paradigmatique', *Seizième Siècle* 7 (2011): 42; Elisa de Halleux, 'Poiesis et androgynie: ambiguïté, activité imageante et sens de l'oeuvre dans Angélique et Medor de Bartholomeus Spranger', in *Poiesis: Uber das Tun in der Kunst*, ed. Andreas Beyer and Dario Gamboni (Berlin and Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2014), 115; 189.

[65] James Elkins has dated acknowledgment of ambiguity in art history to the mid-twentieth century, in James Elkins, *Why Are Our Pictures Puzzles?: On the Modern Origins of Pictorial Complexity*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 1999), 88. For more on ambiguity in contemporary art, see Verena Krieger, 'Modes of Aesthetic Ambiguity in Contemporary Art: Conceptualizing Ambiguity in Art History' in *Ambiguity in Contemporary Art and Theory*, ed. Frauke Berndt and Lutz Koepnick (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2018), 59-106. Ambiguity has drawn attention as a strategy for disrupting power structures and grand narratives, for example in Surrealist, feminist and anti-colonial art and art history. For Hal Foster, the objects on display at MoMA's 'Primitivism' exhibition of 1984 contained an implicit challenge to the western modernist canon, due to their 'ambiguous' status, in Hal Foster, 'The 'Primitive' Unconscious of Modern Art', *October* 34 (1985): 45-70.

[66] James Elkins, 'On Monstrously Ambiguous Paintings', *History and Theory* 32, No. 3 (1993): 227.

therefore distinguished unintentional ambiguity—a condition of all visual expression, or all historically distant artworks—from intentional forms.[67] While methods for studying ambiguity in art were first borrowed from literary theory, such as Elkin's exploration of the potential of William Empson's 'seven types of ambiguity', subsequent art historians have shown that new methods are required to approach visual and artistic ambiguity.[68] For Valeska von Rosen and Marianne Koos, working on early modern art, ambiguity relies on viewers' and artists' knowledge and expectations, governed, for example, by artistic genre or purpose.[69] Historicising expectations and artistic practices allows contextually dependent, artistic forms of ambiguity to be recognised, such as ambiguity surrounding the identity of figures, of their attributes, or between the sacred and the profane.[70] Similar methods that highlight cultural and artistic context, and which attend closely to visual detail, can also be used to recognise and study ambiguity of gender—which early moderns described as a particularly visual experience—without necessitating its dismissal or resolution.

Building on this scholarship, this thesis argues that gender-ambiguous figures in art may generate ambiguity due to costume or compositional effects that, even if temporarily, give pause to question a depicted figure's gender, or even make reaching a definite conclusion impossible. These strategies include subverting or multiplying gendered iconographies or attributes, removing attributes or elements of costume that typically reveal gender, or appealing to literary or artistic constructs usually employed to depict the opposite gender.[71] In other cases, subjects like gender inversion, cross-dressing or androgyny in a work of art,

---

[67] For intentional ambiguity, see Rosen, *Caravaggio*, 12.

[68] Elkins, 1999, 97-103, 105; Dario Gamboni, *Potential Images; Ambiguity and Indeterminacy in Modern Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), 13-18.

[69] For Rosen, ambiguity can signal 'calculated deviation from the rule' ('der kalkulierten Abweichung von der Regel'), in Valeska von Rosen, 'Erosionen der Rhetorik? Strategien der Ambiguität in den bildenden Künsten, Dichtung und Musik. Einleitende Überlegunden', in Rosen ed., *Erosionen der Rhetorik?*, 3; Koos, 'Dosso's Ambiguity', 45-66.

[70] See Koos, 'Dosso's Ambiguity', 46; Rosen, 'Erosionen der Rhetorik?', 6-7.

[71] See the dual function of arrows as emblems of love, sight, and religious martyrdom, in Dossi Dosso's *Saint Sebastian*, in Koos, 'Dosso's Ambiguity', 45-66. Christopher Nygren argues that by not including standard attributes, like the Judith's sword, and adding a maidservant, usually seen with Judith, Titian alluded to the iconography of both Salome and Judith simultaneously in his so-called *Salome*, as a meditation on the relationship between love, excess and punishment in both stories, in Nyrgren, 'Stylising Eros', 23-44.

alongside other iconography and compositional effects, may be used to provoke or thematise confusion and ultimately produce an ambiguous image. Yet this thesis also brings literary sources to bear on images of gender ambiguity, which, alongside evidence of early modern visual traditions, demonstrate not only how the ambiguity of these objects is central to difficulty interpreting them today, but also to how they once would have been understood. In order to establish this, it is necessary to work not only across literary scholarship and art history but to turn to other disciplines.

Gender and queer history, for example, demonstrate how sexuality, objects of desire and beauty ideals have changed over time, destabilising ideas about natural or trans-historical gender performance.[72] Judith Butler influentially drew attention to the historically situated and constructed nature of gender, created through its performance and repetition over time, as distinct from biological sex.[73] These conclusions have since been used to study gender performance in various time periods. Thomas Laquer argued that the modern binary gender was predated by a Galenic 'one-sex' model of the human body, lasting from antiquity to the renaissance.[74] This placed all people somewhere on a sliding and unstable humoral spectrum from masculine to feminine. While the popularity of this Galenic model, and its relevance for lived experience, have been challenged, this scholarship drew attention to the constructed nature of gender and its performance and introduced new methods for recognising and interpreting normative and transgressive gender in the past.[75]

---

[72]Joan Scott influentially insisted on the importance of historically situating gender, against notions of biological stability, in Joan Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review* 91, No. 5 (1986): 1068.

[73] For Judith Butler, drawing on Simone de Beauvoir's argument that 'one is not born, but, rather, becomes a woman', 'gender is in no way a stable identity… rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time — an identity instituted through a 'stylized repetition of acts' in Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', *Theatre Journal* 40, No. 4 (1988): 519.

[74] Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

[75] See Winfried Schleiner, 'Early Modern Controversies about the One-Sex Model', *Renaissance Quarterly* 53, No. 1 (2000): 180-191.

Fashion history is also vital for uncovering and contextualising the ambiguous connotations that certain clothing would have once possessed for an early modern audience. Janet Arnold, Aileen Ribeiro, Charles Breward and Ulinka Rublack have noted the popularity of partially cross-dressed and androgynous fashions across Europe.[76] Many of these transgressive styles, such as certain hats or doublets on women, do not seem cross-dressed according to modern definitions, but would have once held clear cross-gendered connotations. Fashion historians, informed by theoretical ideas about gender construction, have shown how this borrowing subverted gendered conventions and performance. For David Kutcha, for example, the new emphasis on *sprezzatura* in men's clothing in the sixteenth century challenged traditional masculinity due to its emphasis on artifice—traditionally seen as the purview of women.[77] These works have highlighted how fears of the gender-obscuring effects of certain clothing often stemmed from other concerns, including anxiety about the growing accessibility of fashions across classes in this period.[78] This thesis turns to fashion history for what constituted normative and transgressive fashions, styling, and decorum, who wore and condemned these styles and for what reasons.

Drawing on recent literature on ambiguity, gender, and sexuality, this thesis argues that gender ambiguity in art, like other forms of ambiguity, was also sometimes valued for the

---

[76] Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (Wakefield: Maney, 1988), 142, 144; Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress and Morality* (London: Holmes and Meier, 1986), 17; Charles Breward has also noted a 'fluidity between male and female styles of dressing from the 1580s onwards' in Charles Breward, *The Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 42. Ulinka Rublack has noted the emergence of masculine beret-wearing among bourgeois German women, as seen in Clara Praun's portrait, 1589, in Ulinka Rublack, *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 231-2, 248-252.

[77] David Kuchta, *The Three-piece Suit and Modern Masculinity: England, 1550-1850* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), esp. 10-11, 26-34, 68.

[78] Evelyn Welch's work on accessories demonstrates how early modern suspicion of fashions was attached above all to those items that changed especially quickly, or were most affordable to the greatest range of people, in Evelyn Welch, 'Art on the Edge: Hair and Hands in Renaissance Italy', *Renaissance Studies* 23, No. 3 (2009): 242. For more on the dispersal of fashions across social classes, especially in cities, see Linda Peck, *Consuming Splendour: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2-3; Rublack, *Dressing Up*, 4; Elizabeth Currie, 'Introduction', in *A Cultural History of Dress and Fashion: In the Renaissance*, ed. Elizabeth Currie (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 10.

challenge that it presented. For artists, ambiguity in art could draw attention to virtuoso performance. Alexander Nagel and Lorenzo Pericolo suggest that 'aporia'—a 'blocked path' causing visual and thematic ambiguity and difficulty—does not just generate confusion, but makes 'indeterminacy part of (the work's) rhetorical structure'.[79] By raising the possibility of a resolution that is never granted, 'aporia' and its resulting uncertainty, 'forces a reconsideration of the approach itself'.[80] In a similar way, the doubt produced by ambiguity often directs attention to authorship, sparking contemplation of media and genre-specific ways in which meaning is usually crafted. For this reason, gender ambiguity also sometimes demonstrated artistic virtuosity and spurred discussion, often in courtly settings. Fredrika Jacobs, for example, charts how androgynous figures in Michelangelo and Titian's art could be rooted in an aesthetic, promoted in sixteenth-century art writing, that 'may best be characterised as an artful dissolution of differentiated categories aimed at heightening the viewer's appreciation by myriad means, such as sensorial stimulation and challenging conflations of gender identity.'[81] As Jacobs argues, the 'pleasurable deception' of gender, or the coupling of contrary masculine and feminine elements in one figure, may therefore have appealed to these criteria.[82] The 'virtuosic doubling' of gender seen in figures like Titian's Adonis could demonstrate artistic skill, transforming these images of hybrid or ambiguous figures into 'allegories of artifice itself'.[83] These art historians trace the aesthetic and poetic concerns behind artistic use of gender ambiguity, linking it to a new aesthetic of mixture,

---

[79] Nagel and Pericolo, *Subject as Aporia*, 2.

[80] Ibid., 9. This builds on Victor Stoichita's influential study of early modern meta-paintings—works that use certain conceits, from mirrors and paragone themes, to artists' self-portraits, to thematise the status of the artist or the power of images. As Stoichita writes of the *tableau vivant* in Pieter Aertsen's, *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*, 1553, 'The artist becomes aware of its role, power, language, and impact', in Victor Stoichita, *The Self-Aware Image: An Insight into Early Modern Metapainting*, 2e, ed. Lorenzo Pericolo (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 45.

[81] Fredrika Jacobs, 'Aretino and Michelangelo, Dolce and Titian: Femmina, Masculo, Grazia', *The Art Bulletin* 82, No. 1 (2000): 51-67. See also Sharon Fermor, who suggests that gender confusion could be a calculated strategy to demonstrate skill, as dancers combined rigorous 'masculine' movements with the 'leggiadra' of feminine dances—terms shared by renaissance art theory—in her study of renaissance dance, Sharon Fermor, 'Movement and Gender in Sixteenth-century Italian Painting', in *The Body Images: The Human Form and Visual Culture since the Renaissance,* ed. Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 130-145.

[82] Jacobs, *Aretino and Michelangelo*, 60.

[83] Turner, *Eros Visible*, 277.

tense synthesis and surprise: criteria for which ambiguity is key. This literature suggests that gender ambiguity in art may have been understood not only as pertaining to gender construction or social history, but to aesthetic, artistic and other forms of ambiguity. This thesis explores the potential of this claim to shed further light on depictions of gender ambiguity.

Geographic Scope

In order to assess the impact of fashion trends, literature and attitudes to ambiguity on the depiction of gender ambiguity, it is necessary to compare on a wider geographic and cultural scale. This thesis focuses on England and France, as their long-standing cultural competition forced their artistic and literary products into dialogue in ways that affected the depiction and reception of gender ambiguity. This comparison is necessarily broad and these countries do not always demonstrate the same motivations and understandings of gender ambiguity in art at the same time. While French art and poetry thematised gender ambiguity since the 1530s, these subjects only emerged significantly in late-sixteenth-century English art and culture. Yet England's later treatment of this theme provides a window onto their interconnected, maturing national identities, as elite, and later popular, English culture was increasingly defined in relation to France. Demonstrating the need to treat these traditions in tandem, English responses to gender ambiguity, from imitation of classical sources to satirical prints, were greatly shaped by the association of these themes with the French court.

Both countries provide the textual sources necessary for this comparison, as England and France have been the focus of a wealth of literature on gender and gender ambiguity, spurred in particular by studies on the later reigns of the 'masculine Queen', Elizabeth I, and the 'feminine King', Henri III.[84] Yet these contexts each lacked a significant tradition of art

[84] Elizabeth I was celebrated by contemporaries as a model of courage and reason, exceeding her gender. Daniel Tuvill praised Elizabeth I, 'that wonder of hir Sex', for her possession of prudence, moderation, her mind, or, in other words, what commends her most is traits traditionally gendered as male, in Daniel Tuvill, *Asylum Veneris or A Sanctuary for Ladies* (London: Edward Griffin, 1616), 104. For Henri III's reputation for effeminacy see, Crawford, 'Love, Sodomy and Scandal', 513-542;

writing during the early modern period, in comparison with Italy.[85] These locations therefore both stand to benefit from the discovery of new literary and artistic contexts through which to explore not only the political, but also artistic and aesthetic meanings of gender ambiguity in art. This thesis focuses on these locations because their artistic depictions of gender ambiguity remain understudied, and because they provide sufficient contextual evidence, in relation to the structures of society and especially in literature, to demonstrate how a culture of enigmatology can be used as a platform for starting to understand gender ambiguity.

Gender and sexuality have long been considered central to the elite art and culture of early modern France.[86] Rosso Fiorentino's drawing of *Mars disarmed by Cupid and Venus disrobed by the Three Graces*, the *Composite Portrait of François I* and the same-sex and bestial acts in the frescoes and stuccos of Fontainebleau have often been taken as evidence of a 'polymorphically perverse' court, with the King at its centre (fig. 9, 44).[87] François I's taste indeed dictated the tone of court art and established the trajectory of French artistic culture. A taste for sexual themes contributed to the frequent depiction of gender ambiguity. Yet, as Katherine Crawford, Rebecca Zorach, Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, and Marian Rothstein have shown, in sixteenth-century France, gender and sexuality in art and culture were not just private matters, but could communicate ideas about art, power and

---

Michael Wolfe, 'The Strange Afterlife of Henri III: Dynastic Distortions in Early Bourbon France', *Renaissance Studies* 4, No. 10 (1996): 474-489.

[85] This has led to the misguided assessment of English and French art by the standards of the Italian renaissance. For past denigration of French renaissance art, see Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold*, esp.16; for how attempts to understand English art through concepts borrowed from the Italian renaissance have often failed, see Alexander Marr, 'Visual Arts: Introduction', in *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespear*e, ed. Bruce Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 376.

[86] In comparison with Fontainebleau 'few types of art have been capable of such a rich eroticism', in Henri Zerner, *The School of Fontainebleau: Etchings and Engravings* (New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, 1969), 12.

[87] Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold*, 22. Cristelle Baskins has argued this reputation supposedly 'constantly punctures the ideological screen of centralised authority, monarchical privilege, and humanist pretension', in Cristelle Baskins, 'Gender Trouble in Italian Renaissance Art History: Two Case Studies', *Studies in Iconography* 16 (1994): 17, 22. See also Waddington, 'The Bisexual Portrait', 99- 132.

nationality.[88] François I's ambitious project at Fontainebleau established a new national style, in competition with other artistic centres on the Continent and, above all, with Italy. This court strengthened the use of sexuality and gender to convey fertility, power, beauty and ideal characteristics in France and its subsequent courts—ideas that were exported in prints, portraits and fashions across Europe.

This taste for sexual themes in art was combined with delight in hidden symbolism and deception. Against this backdrop, classical stories of gender transformation and androgyny were mined in both visual art and poetry for their political and artistic messages by a court that delighted in discussing complex and puzzling art. Some of the earliest scholarship on ambiguous art developed in response to the particular demands of this iconography.[89] An approach that places gender ambiguity within this context of artistic appreciation of difficulty has potential for illuminating these works, whose sexual and gender-inverting themes were once dismissed as just licentious. This thesis begins with French renaissance uses of gender ambiguity, placing them within this context of courtly delight in enigma and establishing the ability of gendered artistic themes to speak to broader concepts, from puzzling difficulty to gendered national artistic style. During the Wars of Religion, Henri III's gender play came to be widely criticised, spurred in particular by his lack of an heir—strategies that had been established by François I to demonstrate perfection, or even fertility, came to be reinterpreted as unnatural and decadent sexual excess, contributing to the end of the Valois dynasty.[90] King Henri IV promoted a more masculine, military public

---

[88] For Katherine Crawford, in the French renaissance, 'sexual expression occupied, saturated, and helped organise modes of thinking to which we… have little access', in Katherine Crawford, *The Sexual Culture of the French Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1. For the political uses of gender ambiguity, see 'functional gender' in Marian Rothstein, *The Androgyne in Early Modern France: Contextualising the Power of Gender* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 27-42; Wilson-Chevalier, 'Feminising the Warrior', 23-60. Rebecca Zorach has demonstrated how the vases that populate much of the art of Fontainebleau, far from simply being classicising details, often function as symbols of female fertility, enhancing the symbolic resonances of these works, in Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold*, 9-10.

[89] Erwin and Dora Panofsky characterised the *Galerie François Ier* as 'open and elastic rather than closed and stable' in Erwin Panofsky and Dora Panofsky, 'The iconography of the Galerie François Ier at Fontainebleau', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 1076 (1958): 159.

[90] Crawford, 'Love, Sodomy and Scandal', 513-542; Wolfe, 'The Strange Afterlife', 474-489.

image, to distance him from his unpopular predecessor's gender presentation.[91] This thesis will therefore focus on the period in which gender ambiguity was a central courtly theme, between the reign of François I and Henri III.

Henrician England competed with French art and culture, without replicating these themes. Longstanding military rivalry fueled artistic competition between Henry VIII and François I, as evidenced by the spectacle of the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520.[92] Both locations also demonstrate strong and interconnected traditions of portraits, central to this study, often exchanged as gifts between these courts. Artists such as Hans Holbein and Nicholas Bellin of Modena took advantage of this rivalry by working for patrons in both courts. Despite this competition, however, and the superficial similarities between Henry VIII and François I, who both ascended to the throne young, enacted Italy-oriented warlike foreign policy, and styled as gallant knights, their preferences were very different.[93] While his serial marriages also brought issues of gender and sexuality into the public eye, unlike the French King, Henry VIII did not commission or collect art with sexual themes, or make sexual potency or gender play overt themes in the English court. [94] His attitude was more prudish than licentious, and sexuality formed a more covert and private theme in art, although gender and power were still linked in displays of kingship and authority.[95] Ambiguity was generally rare in English art, limited to anagrams and puns, tricks of perspective or anamorphosis, usually imported by foreign artists, like Hans Holbein, and did not typically extend to gender.[96] Perhaps Erasmus, a member of the humanist circle that included many in Henry

---

[91] In public discourse and royal presentation strategies, 'Everything the last Valois was, the first Bourbon most definitely was not', in Wolfe, 'The Strange Afterlife', esp. 477-479.

[92] Dana Bentley-Cranch, *The Renaissance Portrait in France and England: A Comparative Study* (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2004), 109.

[93] Bentley-Cranch, *The Renaissance Portrait*, 109.

[94] 'In arguing his case for a divorce from Catherine (of Aragon), Henry VIII exposed to print not only his conscience but the royal sexual body, as the question of whether Catherine had consummated her marriage with Prince Arthur became a central issue', in Kevin Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 70.

[95] On Henry VIII's masculinity, especially in the Whitehall Mural, see Tatiana String*, Art and Communication on the Reign of Henry VIII* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 68-76.

[96] The inventive, witty, and sometimes enigmatic character of Holbein's art has gained more attention in recent decades. See Jeanne Nuechterlein on Holbein's descriptive and rhetorical modes.

VIII's court, summarised this *milieu*'s views when he used cross-dressing as a comparison for comically ill-suited rhetorical style, since 'it would be ridiculous for a man to appear in public in a woman's dress'.[97] This position towards gender ambiguity may have been hardened by the perceived lasciviousness of French court culture. Indicative of this stereotype, syphilis was known in England at this time as the French disease, or French pox.[98] An unusual satirical double portrait of François I and Eleanor of Austria, in inventories at Hampton Court since 1542, epitomises this view of the court, depicting the King smirking lecherously at the viewer, despite his wife's caricatured Hapsburg features, while a fool points a mocking finger at the couple in the background (fig. 1).[99]

Elizabethan culture, however, was inspired to a greater extent by both the classical sources drawn upon in French literary and artistic gender play and directly by French culture. In England, this also forged complex links between gender, fashion, monarchy and state, as Elizabeth I drew on gender play in speeches and entertainments in ways that reflected French royal presentation in the previous decades.[100] This was fed in particular by the

---

Jeanne Nuechterlein, *Translating Nature into Art: Holbein, the Reformation, and Renaissance Rhetoric* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011). Holbein's *The Ambassadors* has long been considered an ambiguous image, exemplified by the anamorphic skull. See Susan Foister, Roy Ashok and Martin Wyld, *Making & Meaning Holbein's Ambassadors* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 50; James Ackerman, *Distant Points: Essays in Theory and Renaissance Art and Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994), 1. For examples of puns in Holbein's art for English patrons, see *Portrait of a Lady with a Squirrel and a Starling*, 1526-8, National Gallery, London, in which the starling puns on the sitter, Anne Lovell's, family home, East Harling—a connection discovered in David King, 'Who was Holbein's Lady with a Squirrel and a Starling?', *Apollo* (1 May 2004).

[97] Desiderus Erasmus, *On Copia of Words and Ideas*, transl. Donald King and David Rix (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1963), 18.

[98] Kevin Siena, 'Pollution, Promiscuity, and the Pox: English Venereology and the Early Modern Medical Discourse on Social and Sexual Danger', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 8, No.4 (1998): 556.

[99] For more on this painting, see Lisa Mansfield, 'The Royal Art of Conjugal Discord: A Satirical Double Portrait of Francis I and Eleanor of Austria', in *Practices of Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Megan Cassidy-Welch and Peter Sherlock (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 117-135.

[100] For how Elizabeth invoked masculine authority to bolster her reign, see Cristy Beemer, 'The Female Monarchy: A Rhetorical Strategy of Early Modern Rule', *Rhetoric Review* 30, No. 3 (2011): 258-274; Janet Green, ''I My Self': Queen Elizabeth I's Oration at Tilbury Camp', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28, No. 2 (1997): 421-445.

Ovidian revival in English poetry and drama which, as in France previously, provided a catalogue of gender inversions, transgression and changes from which to draw.[101] Importing fashions from France, androgynous clothing, and particularly headwear, also came increasingly into fashion.[102] It is no coincidence that these trends flourished in England during a period of peace and particular proximity between England and France, encouraged by the Alliance of Blois of 1572 and marriage negotiations that lasted until 1584. This bred a more Francophile court culture in England, accompanied by a growth in the appreciation of ambiguity, complexity, and hidden meanings, spurred by courtly Neoplatonism.[103] It was at this time, for example, that obscure personal *imprese* gained popularity, and English artists and writers, from Nicholas Hilliard to Philip Sidney, began to write about the visual arts in terms that paralleled the mission of Giorgio Vasari and other art writers in Italy to raise painting to an intellectual practice.[104] This formed fertile ground for similar thematisation of ambiguity and gender ambiguity, as seen in France since the 1530s. In France, from 1530 to

---

[101] Cora Fox, *Ovid and the Politics of Emotion in Elizabethan England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 2; Lisa Starks-Estes, *Violence, Trauma, and Virtus in Shakespeare's Roman Poems and Plays: Transforming Ovid* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 8.

[102] For androgynous clothing in the French court, see Gary Ferguson, *Queer (Re)Readings in the French Renaissance: Homosexuality, Gender, Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 100; Robert Knecht, *The French Renaissance Court, 1438-1589* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 312-3. For how English women's clothing increasingly drew inspiration from masculine styles, see Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe*, 142, 144.

[103] 'The change in status accorded to the visual arts by Humanist scholars came late in England, in part because of the effect of Reformation iconoclasm and the resulting change in the visual culture of worship' in Jane Partner, *Vision and Poetry in Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 32. For courtly Neoplatonism, see Sophia Howlett, *Marsilio Ficino and His World* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 180-191.

[104] For how these artists and writers raised the status of the arts in England, see Alexander Marr, 'Pregnant Wit: *Ingegno* in Renaissance England', *British Art Studies* 1 (2015): https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-01/amarr. For privacy in late Tudor art and culture, see Patricia Fumerton on miniatures, Patricia Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 67-71. According to the earliest emblem treatise, written by Paolo Giovio (1555) and translated into English by Samuel Daniel (1585), the *impresa* should 'be not obscure, that it neede a Sibilla to enterprete it, nor so apparant that euery rusticke may vnderstand it', quoted in Christina Faraday, ''it seemeth to be the thing itsefe': Directness and Intimacy in Nicholas Hilliard's Portrait Miniatures', *Études Épistémè* 36 (2019): https://journals.openedition.org/episteme/5292. For more on ambiguity in *imprese*, see Alexander Marr, 'An Early *Impresa* Miniature: *Man in an Armillary Sphere* (1569)', *British Art Studies* 17 (2019): https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-17/amarr.

1590, and England, 1560 to 1620, drawing on this tradition, literature and social history suggest that a certain caché could surround gender ambiguity and its depiction, at least in elite circles. In these contexts, diverse literature, from pamphlets to poetry, link gender ambiguity to its ability to evade categorisation, blur boundaries or deceive, in ways that help to shed light on how contemporaries considered depictions of gender ambiguity.

In England, however, these themes were tempered by continuing hostilities towards France, which deepened in Jacobean England against the backdrop of the Thirty Years' War and the resultant rise in anti-Catholic sentiment. National allegiances and hostilities were often channeled by, or discussed in reference to, foreign fashions. In 1611, Henry Prince of Wales, for example, used dress to distance himself from individuals in the court, especially Robert Carr, who wore French clothing. According the Venetian ambassador, 'The Prince has abandoned the French dress and has taken to the Italian… He says he will always wear it… as he cannot endure the changes in fashion which come every day from France'.[105] Demonstrating the rhetorical link between French fashion, effeminacy and foreignness, or even barbarism, William Prynne argued that the fashion for men to adopt long hair made them resemble 'Virginians, Frenchmen, Ruffians, nay, Women, in their Crisped-Lockes, and Haire'.[106] In the satirical *Hic Mulier* pamphlet, the author similarly derides the 'loose, lascivious civill embracement of a French doublet', part of the masculine woman's costume, tracing its origins to French fashions and drawing on stereotypes of licentiousness.[107] As Rachel Trubowitz has argued, in these sentiments, 'the deviant, unnatural, non-English, or primitive were often tied together, and expressed in fears about foreigners and gender transgression'.[108] Gender ambiguity therefore helped give voice to emerging national identities, which were far from fixed and usually articulated through comparison with what

---

[105] Quoted in Maria Heywood, *Stuart Style: Monarchy, Dress and the Scottish Male Elite* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020), 81.

[106] William Prynne, *The Unlovelinesse, of Love-Lockes* (London: Publisher not Identified, 1628), Sig. A4^{r}.

[107] Anonymous, *Hic Mulier*, A4$^{v.}$

[108] Rachel Trubowitz, 'Cross-Dressed Women and Natural Mothers: Boundary Panic in Hic Mulier', in *Debating Gender in Early Modern England, 1500-1700*, ed. Cristina Malcolmson and Michoko Suzuki (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 188.

was not English, from New World encounters to the French, helping to define a 'normative identity as national home'.[109]

It is therefore important to note that, even as gender raised issues of nationality and identity, these were associative and comparative. Their artistic expression is further complicated by the popularity of foreign artists in early modern France and England, from elite portrait painters to popular printmakers. The artistic trajectory of both locations was also shaped by foreign artists, especially from Italy, in the court of François I, and the Netherlands, as artists like Lucas de Heere worked in both England and France. As will be seen, images of gender ambiguity by foreign artists could speak to themes of nationality and influence in complex ways, sometimes drawing on native poetic conceits, as will be explored in the chapters on the *Triple Profile Portrait* and the *Cobbe Portrait of Henry Wriothesley*, and other times importing and adapting foreign artistic developments for new audiences, as will be demonstrated in the chapter on Primaticcio's frescoes of Hercules and Omphale. While issues of nationality, influence and adaptation will be raised throughout this thesis, these case studies demonstrate the extent to which ideas about nationality and identity, often in flux, were communicated through gendered binaries and their subversion. Like gender in this period, national identity and heritage were adaptable and often formed through comparison, as humanists traced their countries' heritage to mythological classical origins and competed to forge national literary and artistic styles.

The depiction of gender ambiguity in England was also altered by specific artistic and religious circumstances. The reformation may have impeded English access to more visually ambiguous forms of art on the Continent, as well as curbing demand for art that exemplified visual trickery, as religious debates about the role of images heightened suspicion about visual curiosity.[110] The combination of visual ambiguity and thematic ambiguity seen in

---

[109] Ibid.

[110] For the relationship between mass and visual deception in Protestant England, see Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 4. As Lucy Gent writes, 'where we see naturalism in the lifelikeness produced by perspective and chiaroscuro, they saw deception', in Lucy Gent, *Picture and Poetry, 1560-1620: Relations between Literature and Visual Arts in the English Renaissance* (Leamington Spa: G.K. Hall and Company, 1981), 60.

sixteenth-century France therefore differs from the more subtle, literary-based forms of late Elizabethan England. These cultural overlaps and divergences present the opportunity to assess the impacts of different courts, religious changes, humanism, pan-European literary and fashion trends, artistic traditions, and emergent national identities on gender ambiguity in art.

Chapters

Each chapter addresses a different problem, question, or intervention into past scholarship. These case studies are not exhaustive; rather they aim to open up new avenues for study. They span a wide range of media, including the most public frescoes at a renaissance palace, private portraits and popular prints, which make different demands of diverse audiences. This choice permits a comparison not only of how media influences the meanings of gender ambiguity in art, but how various audiences perceived and responded to its ambiguity.

The first chapter explores how gender ambiguity could encapsulate artistic and aesthetic messages, and appeal to cultures that prized ambiguous art. This chapter places Francesco Primaticcio's complex and ambiguous frescoes of *Hercules Cross-dressing*, c.1535, the first images that a visitor would have seen at the château of Fontainebleau, in the context of fascination with ambiguous images and their potential to spark learned discussions, feeding the socially competitive court of François I. This seeks to answer the question of why an image of cross-dressing was considered an appropriate and fitting introduction to the palace and its artistic programme. Primaticcio used gender ambiguity to comment on debates drawn from poetics and promote a national style that combined masculine strength and feminised grace, encapsulated by Hercules' relenting to Omphale, presented on the entry to the palace.[111] Moroever, their ambiguity allows them to function as a riddle through which visitors would prove their intellectual mettle. Since early modern England did not produce a similar tradition of large-scale mythological or history painting, this chapter demonstrates how gender ambiguity in complex mythological compositions could thematise ambiguity,

[111] For France's 'feminised' national style, see also Baskins, 'Gender Trouble', 17.

especially in courtly contexts.[112] Fontainebleau is therefore used to explore how gender ambiguity could communicate self-reflexive messages in art.

The next two chapters address the issue of why sitters may have presented as gender-ambiguous in portraits. By assessing fashions in portraits and textual sources, these chapters consider what constituted gender-ambiguous appearance, clothing or behaviour, and how it differs from today. These chapters use French renaissance and English Ovidian poetry to explore how two understudied depictions of androgynous sitters, a *Triple Profile Portrait*, c.1570 and the *Cobbe Portrait of Henry Wriothesley*, c.1590-1593, paralleled contemporary poetry that admired gender-ambiguous figures for their capacity to pleasurably confound expectations. By historicising the portrait's gender ambiguity, the *Triple Profile Portrait* chapter uncovers how gender and its obfuscation were promoted in the art and culture of the French court of the 1570s, and addresses the art historical challenges posed by a portrait in which the sitters' gender, and therefore their identities, remain obscure.

The *Cobbe Portrait* chapter, by contrast, approaches how gender ambiguity may have been understood in portraits where the sitter and his gender are known, but the depiction thematises gender ambiguity in ways that mirror praise of androgynous youths seen in literature. This chapter bridges the discrepancy between the wealth of English plays, pamphlets and poetry that feature gender ambiguity, and the lack of recognition of the same themes in the coeval visual art. At the same time, by grounding this portrayal in broader Ovidian tropes, and demonstrating how this also encapsulated a rebellious *persona*, this chapter seeks to challenge the often repeated assumption that Wriothesley's gender

[112] The reformation in England resulted in a reduction in Italian influence over the arts and the development genres beyond religious and history painting. See Tarnya Cooper, 'Predestined Lives? Portraiture and Religious Belief in England and Wales, 1560-1620', in *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, ed. Tara Hamling and Williams (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 49-63, 50.

ambiguity in this portrait spoke primarily to homosexuality.[113] Indeed, the portrait has only been alluded to in works of literary scholarship as an illustration of the beautiful, feminine youth who attracted Shakespeare's poetry dedications and perhaps his affections.[114] The *Cobbe Portrait* and *Triple Profile Portrait* facilitate the comparison of how different aspects of a classicising tradition of praising androgyny in poetry appealed in these diverse literary and cultural contexts. This will allow some tentative conclusions to be drawn about the relationship between visual and literary representations of gender ambiguity in these contexts.

Under certain conditions, the ambiguity or non-normative gender performance exemplified by the *Triple Profile Portrait*, or the *Cobbe Portrait of Henry Wriothesley*, could become undesirable, disturbingly ambiguous, or morally threatening. The final chapter assesses the factors that influenced fears about ambiguity or gender performance. The wider reach and understanding of androgynous fashions and styling in art is best explored through prints. These often multi-authored and anonymous works require an approach that is open to ambiguity.[115] Popular fears about gender ambiguity are perhaps demonstrated most starkly by the attacks on Henri III's 'effeminacy', part of broader polemical attacks during the Wars of Religion, leading to his assassination.[116] Yet a similar narrative is shown in Jacobean prints of masculine women, which present a more pressing case for reevaluation. While literary critics and historians have puzzled over the sudden density of references to gender confusion and subversion in the early seventeenth century for decades, there has been no significant study of this costume and its uses in visual culture. This is not least because the

---

[113] See for example, Jane Armstrong, *The Arden Shakespeare Miscellany* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), 3; Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare, Sex, and Love* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 35.

[114] Nathan Drake was the first to suggest that Wriothesley, to whom *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* are dedicated, may also have been the inspiration for the 'Fair Youth of the Sonnets', in Nathan Drake, *Shakespeare and his Times,* II (London: T. Cadell, 1817), 58-9. For a summary of how this suggestion persisted, see Park Honan, *Shakespeare: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 360-1.

[115] For accessibility of broadside prints, see Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 11; Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 91.

[116] Crawford, 'Love, Sodomy and Scandal', 513-542; Wolfe, 'The Strange Afterlife', 474-489.

once-ambiguous connotations of the items of clothing that constituted 'masculine' costume for women have been lost.[117] By comparing written accounts of the so-called 'masculine' costume, consisting mainly of masculine hats and doublets, to satirical prints and portraits, it is possible to reappraise the gendered associations of clothing for contemporaries. The masculine woman then emerges as a prominent figure in visual art, as in literature and on stage. The final chapter addresses how this neglected iconography of masculine women came to stand in the eyes of commentators as a cipher for a range of social ambiguities that were considered the product of social and political changes. These shifts in meaning will be explored in relation to the changes in gender ideology, and especially the reassessment of Elizabeth I's legacy that accompanied King James I's coronation and rule. The selection of English prints aims to complicate the art of early modern England, often assumed to be unambiguous or naïve, bringing back the rich connotations that these works would have once held for viewers.[118]

These four case studies examine the possibilities of using ambiguity to understand the various meanings that images of gender ambiguity could possess for early moderns. By foregrounding ambiguity, understudied objects like the *Triple Profile Portrait*, or the *Cobbe Portrait of Henry Wriothesley*, can be re-evaluated, using textual sources to foreground their transgressive or ambiguous connotations for contemporaries. In the case of previously

---

[117] The *Hic Mulier* pamphlets have received much attention, especially in New Historicist studies of gender in early modern England. For an overview, see Cressy, 'Gender Trouble', 438-442. See also Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 66-93; Laura Levine, 'Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization from 1579 to 1642', *Criticism* 28 (1986): 121–43; Jean Howard, 'Crossdressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39 (1988), 418–40; Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (London: Harvester, 1989); Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540–1620* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1984); Jonathan Dollimore, 'Subjectivity, Sexuality and Transgression: The Jacobean Connection', *Renaissance Drama* 17 (1986), 53–81; Stephen Orgel, 'The Subtexts of The Roaring Girl', in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. Susan Zimmerman (London: Routledge, 1992), 12–26.

[118] 'Discussions of painting in sixteenth-century England frequently contrast a rich literary culture… and an impoverished visual culture', in Susan Foister, 'Sixteenth-Century English Portraiture and the Idea of the Classical', in *Albion's Classicism: The Visual Arts in Britain, 1550-1660*, ed. Lucy Gent (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 163.

studied objects, like the frescoes at Fontainebleau, or pamphlets on masculine women, this method helps to undo their past oversimplification, bringing back the ambiguity and layers of interpretation that would once have surrounded these objects. In this way, studying gender ambiguity aims not just to highlight what people thought about sex and gender, but about freedom, fantasy, rebellion and conformity, excess and moderation, polemicism, and persecution.

Gender and the *Paragone* in Francesco Primaticcio's Frescoes of Hercules and Omphale at Fontainebleau, c.1535

Introduction

In the sixteenth century, a visitor would have approached the château of Fontainebleau via a long, tree-lined path terminating at the Porte Dorée (fig. 2).[119] This entrance, designed by Gilles Le Breton, was one of King François I's first changes to the medieval castle when he began its renovation in 1528 and remained its principal entrance until the seventeenth century.[120] Entering the Porte Dorée's portico, the visitor would have faced a plain door, unlike the gilded seventeenth century version that can be seen there today. Additions to the portal were planned and partly executed—most notably by the Florentine sculptor, Benvenuto Cellini—but were not installed during the reign of François I.[121] Instead, the entrance was decorated with only two frescoes, undertaken after designs by the Bolognese artist, Francesco Primaticcio, who became head of artistic works at Fontainebleau from 1540 onwards. While the frescoes visible today are largely the work of a restoration in 1835 which reproduces only the original layout (fig. 3, 4), Primaticcio's drawings for these compositions, the first in the Albertina, Vienna, c.1535, (fig. 5), and the second in

---

[119] Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos and Georges Fessy, *Fontainebleau* (London: Scala Books, 1998), 133.

[120] Dominique Cordellier, 'La Porte Dorée à Fontainebleau', in *Primatice: Maître de Fontainebleau*. Exh. Cat., ed. Dominique Cordellier, Bernadette Py, Ugo Bazzotti, and Marianne Grivel (Paris: RMN, 2004), 155.

[121] For more on Cellini's additions to the portal, see John Pope-Hennessy, 'A Bronze Satyr by Cellini', *The Burlington Magazine* 124, No. 952 (1982): 394-412; Joseph Bliss, 'Cellini's Satyrs for the Porte Dorée at Fontainebleau', *Studies in the History of Art* 64 (2003): 72-93; Jonathan Marsden and Jane Bassett, 'Cellini's Other Satyr for the Porte Dorée at Fontainebleau', *The Burlington Magazine* 145, No. 1205 (2003): 552-563. The lunette was not installed at Fontainebleau, but was later placed over the entrance to the Château of Anet. See Michael Cole, *Cellini and the Principles of Sculpture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 98-99; Nancy Miller, 'The Mistress in the Masterpiece', in *The Poetics of Gender*, ed. Nancy Miller (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1986), 19-41. For its later history, see Katherine Marsengill, 'Identity Politics in Renaissance France: Cellini's Nymph of Fontainebleau', *Athanor* 19 (2018): 35-41.

Chatsworth House, c.1535 (fig. 6), as well as signed engravings after them by Léon Davent, c.1540 (fig. 7, 8), permit their reimagining to some extent. Their prominent, semi-public placement suggests that they constituted an introduction to the palace and its artistic programme.

Pausing on the threshold of the palace, the learned viewer may have identified Hercules in the centre of the first fresco, and perhaps noted his skirt and cross-dressed state. From this clue, they may have recognised the second fresco as a resulting scene of mistaken identity, in which a satyr, Faunus, misidentifies Hercules as his female companion, the Lydian Queen Omphale, perhaps recalling its source in Ovid's *Fasti*.[122] Their complexity, however, filled with sculptural, classicising figures and decorative elements that confuse the boundaries between sculptures and living people, background characters and principal protagonists, renders their immediate and complete understanding impossible. Moreover, despite their prominence, situated at the entrance to the king's favourite château, which shaped the trajectory of French art for centuries, these frescoes have rarely been studied.[123]

Primaticcio's frescoes present an opportunity to reassess gender-ambiguous imagery at Fontainebleau, which has often been ascribed moralising or licentious meanings. These images encapsulated messages about art, gendered style and national identity—an interpretation that will be supported by Primaticcio's artistic references to both classical and contemporary works, which were previously dismissed as antiquarian details.[124] These artistic allusions provide a new context with which to interpret these frescoes: France's involvement in contemporary artistic debates, imported from Italy, such as the competition, or *paragone*, between ancient and modern art, and between sculpture and painting. This chapter will trace the gendered connotations of media and styles in French literature and visual art, before applying these to a new reading of Primaticcio's artistic references,

---

[122] Ovid, *Fasti*, transl. Anne Wiseman and Peter Wiseman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 25-27.

[123] One important exception is Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, 'Women on Top at Fontainebleau', *Oxford Art Journal* 16, No. 1 (1993): 35.

[124] The sculptural fragments in these frescoes attest to 'le goût de Primatice pour l'Antiquité' in Cordellier, 'La Porte Dorée', 157.

especially to Michelangelo, in these frescoes. In this context, these scenes of gender confusion form a self-reflexive statement about the arts, while their ambiguity thematises the potential pitfalls of interpretation. By selecting an obscure episode from Ovid, and multiplying the surrounding figures, Primaticcio heightened the ability of gender ambiguity to speak not only to sexuality or morality, but to a variety of binaries and judgements of media and styles. Ultimately, Primaticcio used gender to comment on debates drawn from poetics and promote a national style that combined masculine strength and feminised grace, encapsulated by Hercules' relenting to Omphale.[125]

Past Interpretations

Gender and sexuality have long been considered central to the art of Fontainebleau, as the sexual imagery in Fontainebleau has often been taken as evidence of a perverse, licentious court, guided by François I's personal taste.[126] Aggressive women, effeminate men, and androgyny in Fontainebleau's art traditionally have been seen in this light and sometimes interpreted as a threat to the King's public perception.[127] This has coloured the interpretation of the *Hercules and Omphale* frescoes, which have previously been dismissed as licentious, or understood as moralising images.[128] Yet these accounts reflect a modern understanding of gender transgression, as cross-dressing was considered a pathology, indicative of sexual perversion and homosexuality, until the late twentieth century.[129] As Rebecca Zorach, Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier and Marian Rothstein have shown, in sixteenth-century France, gender and sexuality were not just personal, but could be used to

[125] For France's 'feminised' national style, see also Baskins, 'Gender Trouble', 17.
[126] Baskins, 'Gender Trouble', 17; Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink,* Gold, 22.
[127] For 'licence' and 'licentiousness' in French renaissance art, see Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold*, 176-188; Waddington, 'The Bisexual Portrait', 99-132.
[128] See the recent inclusion of these frescoes in a discussion of sexual imagery at Fontainebleau, which characterised their tone as 'bawdy', in Tracy Adams and Christine Adams ed., 'A Tradition Takes Hold: Anne de Pisseleu d'Heilly', *The Creation of the French Royal Mistress: From Agnès Sorel to Madame Du Barry* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020), Kindle, Location 1096.
[129] For the historical treatment of transvestism as a disorder, see Peter Ackroyd, *Dressing Up: Transvestism and Drag: The History of an Obsession* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1979), esp. 10-29.

communicate ideas about art, power and nationality.[130] This chapter extends these conclusions to gender ambiguity in art and looks beyond the overtly political, misogynistic and moralising interpretations of these frescoes, which have failed to account for and explore their visual and thematic ambiguity.

In 'Women on Top at Fontainebleau', the first, and most thorough, academic study of the Porte Dorée, Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier reads the *Hercules and Omphale* frescoes as a denunciation of the power of women, motivated by the 'ambient misogyny of the times'.[131] According to this interpretation, Hercules' humiliating subjection to Omphale is placed on the threshold of the palace in order to alert the male viewer to the threats to his masculinity that may be lurking within, while a female spectator is implicitly warned by Omphale's negative example.[132] To advance this reading, she draws on the broader use of Hercules and Omphale as a moral example in renaissance culture and interprets details like Hercules' supposedly 'undersized' genitals as signs of his shameful emasculation.[133] That the story of Hercules and Omphale could receive a moralising gloss is indeed supported by some later literature of the French court, such as Pierre de Ronsard's *Le Satyre*, 1560, which provides a warning against the humiliations of women and cuckoldry.[134]

---

[130] Rothstein, *The Androgyne*, 27-42; Wilson-Chevalier, 'Feminising the Warrior', 23-60; Crawford, *The Sexual Culture*, 1.

[131] Wilson-Chevalier, 'Women on Top', 35.

[132] Ibid., 38. This interpretation is adopted in Patricia Zalamea, *Subject to Diana: Picturing Desire in French Renaissance Courtly Aesthetics* (PhD Thesis, Rutgers University, NJ, 2007), 218.

[133] Catherine Jenkins, 'Les graveurs de Primatice au XVIe siècle à Fontainebleau', in *Primatice: Maître de Fontainebleau*, 36. Marie Madeleine Fontaine similarly understands Davent's print after these frescoes as constituting a flattering allusion to François I's disempowerment through love of his new bride, Eleanor of Austria, in Marie Madeleine Fontaine, 'Stories Beyond Words', in *The French Renaissance in Prints from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France,* Exh. Cat., ed. Karen Jacobson, Karen (Los Angeles, CA: Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, University of California, 1994), 62.

[134] Pierre de Ronsard wrote of his version of Ovid's story of Hercules and Omphale, *Le Satyre*, 1569, that it was meant 'pour bien te faire rire', but ends with a warning to adulterers, 'Que pleust à Dieu que tous les adultères/ Fussent puniz de semblables salaires!', Pierre de Ronsard, *Oeuvres Complètes*, XV, ed. Paul Laumonier (Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1953), 67, 75. For more on this poem, see Benedikte Andersson, 'Ronsard en grand Pan: L'imaginaire du dieu Pan dans les

In Primaticcio's frescoes, however, Hercules appears far from feminised.[135] His genitals, when compared, for example, to the clearly emasculated Mars in Rosso Fiorentino's drawing of *Mars disarmed by Cupid and Venus disrobed by the Three Graces*, are not 'undersized' but in keeping with renaissance artistic conventions (fig. 9).[136] Moreover, the iconography that most strongly supports a moralising or 'power of love' reading in contemporary depictions of this episode—such as the distaff which usually marks out Hercules' shameful subjection to women's work, his comically ill-suited or undersized clothing, laughing spectators, or the suggestion of Hercules being beaten or abused by Omphale—is notably absent from Primaticcio's version.[137] Shown striking Faunus, he is depicted as still capable of masculine defence of honour when necessary, thwarting his romantic rival.[138] Meanwhile, Omphale, central to both a moralising and 'power of love' reading of this episode, shrinks into a background littered with classically dressed and posed attendants, fragments of sculpture and antiquities. A moral warning, moreover, seems a curiously negative message with which to introduce a palace where the iconography

---

hommages rendus à Ronsard dans l'édition posthume de ses Oeuvres (1587)', *Seizième Siècle* 3 (2007): 177-205; Ferguson, *Queer (Re)Readings*, 125.

[135] Philip Ford argues that Hercules is not made effeminate through his cross-dressing in these frescoes, in Philip Ford, 'Hercule et le thème solaire à Fontainebleau: la Porte dorée et Le Satyre de Ronsard', in *Cité des hommes, cité de Dieu, Travaux sur la littérature de la Renaissance en l'honneur de Daniel Ménager*, ed. Jean Céard, Marie-Christine Gomez- Geraud, Michel Magnien, and François Rouget (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2003), 250. For a discussion of a depiction of Hercules feminised through pose in renaissance art, see Elisa De Halleux, 'L'androgynie d'Hercule, entre dérision et glorification du prince', in *Le Miroir et L'Espace du Prince dans l'art Italien de la Renaissance*, ed. Philippe Morel (Tours: Presse Universitaires de Rennes, 2012), 145-164.

[136] For more on this drawing, see Waddington, 'The Bisexual Portrait', 111; Jean Adhémar, 'Aretino: Artistic Advisor to Francis I', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17 (1954): 311-18; Baskins, 'Gender Trouble', 17.

[137] Examples of these traditions include Lucas Cranach the Elder*, Hercules and Omphale*, 1537, oil on beech wood, 82 cm × 118.9 cm, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Brunswick; Bartholomeus Spranger, *Hercules and Omphale*, c.1585, oil on copper, 24 × 19 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; Peter Paul Rubens, *Hercules and Omphale*, c.1606, oil on canvas, 278 × 215 cm, Louvre Museum, Paris. According to the English poet, Philip Sidney, this kind of depiction of Hercules and Omphale 'breedeth both delight and laughter', in Richard Rowland, *Killing Hercules: Deianira and the Politics of Domestic Violence, from Sophocles to the War on Terror* (London: Routledge, 2017), 115.

[138] For more on honour and masculinity in the renaissance, see Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 97-127.

generally celebrates female beauty as an occasion to demonstrate artistic virtuosity and as a metaphor for the richness and fertility of the land.[139] Given the subversion of the cultural association between masculinity and ideal behavior in much of the art of Fontainebleau, Hercules' deviation from a masculine ideal is unlikely to be shown negatively.[140] At the same time, Primaticcio's inclusion of complex artistic references and supporting figures introduces layers of meaning and further ambiguities, beyond the interaction between Hercules and Omphale.[141]

As multivalent works, these frescoes would have been in good company at Fontainebleau, where complexity and ambiguity allowed art to sustain seemingly infinite debate in court circles.[142] Scholarly consensus has largely settled on the notion that the art of Fontainebleau, and especially the *Galerie François I*, was deliberately impenetrable and visually and intellectually demanding.[143] For Rosso Fiorentino, Francesco Primaticcio and

---

[139] See Rebecca Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold*, 9-10.

[140] '…in a ploy to downplay military achievement and devalue the disruptive masculinity of potentially rival lords, women, conflated with culture, were being placed at the centre of the civilising function assigned to the King's court', in Wilson-Chevalier, 'Feminising the Warrior', 27. 'Style at Fontainebleau is often perceived as especially feminine', in Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold*, 9. Sylvie Béguin, Jean Guillaume and Alain Roy interpret the now lost programme of the *Chambre du Roi*, including the *Achilles in Hiding* fresco, as cohering around the theme of 'prudence', rather than a negatively moralising interpretation of cross-dressing, in Sylvie Béguin, Jeane Guillaume and Alain Roy, *La galerie d'Ulysse à Fontainebleau* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), 97.

[141] For the King's reputation as 'père des lettres et des arts', see Catherine Jenkins, *Prints at the Court of Fontainebleau, c.1542-47*, I (Ouderkerk aan den IJssel: Sound and Vision Publishers, 2017), 123. This chapter expands on Suzanne Boorsch's characterisation of these frescoes in a catalogue entry as 'too open to multiple, even contradictory interpretations...to be restricted to a single, narrow reading', in Karen Jacobson ed., *The French Renaissance in Prints*, 249.

[142] For examples of interpretations of multivalency in the art at Fontainebleau functioning as talking points, see Barolsky and Ladis, 'The 'Pleasurable Deceits'', 32-36; Rebecca Zorach, ''The Flower that Falls before the Fruit': The Galerie François Ier at Fontainebleau and Atys Excastratus', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 62, No. 1 (2000), 63-87; Christine Tauber, 'A Paragone of Styles: The Mannerist Challenge to Raphael and Michelangelo at the Court of Francis I', in *The Translation of Raphael's Roman Style*, ed. Henk van Veen (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 64.

[143] André Chastel argues that the gallery unfolds without logic, instead governed by a collection of loose themes, forming a biographical commentary on the King's life, broadly following Erwin and Dora Panofsky's influential account of its iconography. André Chastel, 'Le système de la galerie', *Revue de l'art* 16-17 (1972): 143-149; E. Panofsky and D. Panofsky, 'The iconography of the Galerie', 160. The gallery's decoration must be 'deciphered like a puzzle', in Barolsky, *Infinite Jest*, 115. For

Benvenuto Cellini, creating challenging works would have showcased their own virtuosity and learning, to the credit of the patron who employed them.[144] Delight in difficulty was not unique to visual culture, however, but permeated many of the cultural products that emanated from the French court.[145] Ronsard, for example, saw the joint task of poets and painters as masking truth with a 'cloak of fables'.[146]

This appreciation of complex interpretation and hidden meanings suggests that closer attention should be paid to even the details of these images that have not received much attention in previous scholarship, such as Primaticcio's sculptural sources, references to Michelangelo and the herms in the margins. This chapter will use artistic parallels and literature from court writers to demonstrate how these details and allusions drew on ideas about the gendered connotations of media and style, their respective merits and ideal combination, in circulation in France. While this interpretation may seem to place too much weight on subtle details and allusions in these two frescoes, it is important to bear in mind that the social performance surrounding art and the significance placed on visual details, was greater at Fontainebleau than at many other renaissance palaces.

Henri Zerner, there probably was a cohesive programme at one time, but one so complex that it was accessible to few and soon lost altogether, in Zerner, *Renaissance Art*, 89. Rebecca Zorach argues that the gallery was deliberately confusing and even contained iconographic 'red-herrings', Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold*, 45. For hybrid and ambiguous motifs in the art of Fontainebleau, see Lisa Andersen, 'Masquing/(Un)Masking: Animation and the Restless Ornament of Fontainebleau', in *Ornament and Monstrosity in Early Modern Art*, ed. Maria Fabricius Hansen and Chris Askholt Hammeken (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 177-202. Yet the desire to fix this iconography in a stable mold still persists. See the Neoplatonic interpretation in Carlo Falciani, 'Rosso at Fontainebleau and Pontormo at San Lorenzo: Michelangelo, Rhetoric and Court Painting', in *Pontormo and Rosso Fiorentino: Diverging Paths of Mannerism*, ed. Carlo Falciani and Antonio Natali (Florence: Mandragora, 2014), esp. 301.

[144] This followed classical ideals of artistic patronage, epitomised, for example, by the relationship between Apelles and Alexander the Great. For the king as a 'new Alexander' in these frescoes, see Zerner, *Renaissance Art*, 78. This relationship was held up as an ideal of patronage in Castiglione, *The Book*, 100.

[145] See for example, Malcolm Quainton, *Ronsard's Ordered Chaos: Visions of Flux and Stability in the Poetry of Pierre de Ronsard* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 7-30; Margaret McGowan, *Montaigne's Deceits* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1974), esp. 42, 65-83.

[146] 'À bien déguiser la verité des choses/ D'un fabuleux manteau dont elles sont encloses', 'Hymne d'Automne', in Pierre de Ronsard, *Oeuvres Complètes*, XII, ed. Paul Laumonier (Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1946), 50.

Following military defeats, François I forged his identity around artistic patronage and cultural pursuits, earning the epithet, 'father of arts and letters'.[147] Complex and ambiguous art served his promotion of intellectualism, occupying the courtiers, ambassadors, artists and humanists of his court.[148] In this context of close and competitive interpretation, even small, seemingly ornamental details, like the ornate stucco 'frames', often played a central role in the interpretation of the images that they surround, and decorative details often bear significance within the frescoes.[149] Difficult, complex and ambiguous art seems to have formed an artistic challenge, that may have served to distinguish those who were like-minded from those who failed to rise to the occasion.[150] Indeed, contemporary evidence suggests that those outside the French court, who lacked this cultural context, often failed to interpret these images. John Wallop, English ambassador to France, for example, wrote excitedly to King Henry VIII about the materials employed at Fontainebleau, yet failed to interpret the iconography, even erroneously including a 'Lucretia' in the gallery.[151] The entrance itself forms an ideal location for such a challenge and, as this was a place where visitors would have naturally paused, left to contemplate these images, this position further encourages thoughtful, slow looking.[152] First, we will turn to how Primaticcio adapted his

---

[147] André Chastel, 'French Renaissance Art in a European Context', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 12, No. 4 (1981): 86. Nicole Bensoussan also has summarised how 'Fontainebleau palace became the staging ground for this broad development in cultural taste', in Nicole Bensoussan, 'From the French *Galerie* to the Italian Garden: Sixteenth-century Displays of Primaticcio's Bronzes at Fontainebleau', *Journal of the History of Colle*ctions 27, No. 2 (2015): 175.

[148] Jenkins, *Prints at the Court*, 123.

[149] As Lisa Andersen writes, ornament at Fontainebleau 'resists purely decorative or formal status, with specific motifs acting as an aid to interpreting the central scene', in Andersen, 'Masquing/(Un)Masking', 181; see also Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold*, 9-10.

[150] For difficulty as serving social hierarchies, see Rothstein, 'Making Trouble', 97.

[151] John Wallop writes that '…the length and bredthe (of the gallery) no man canne better shewe Your Majestie then Modon, who wrought there in the beynnyng', 'all antique of such stuff as the said Modon makith Your Majesties Chemenyes', quoted in William McAllister Johnson, 'On Some Neglected Usages of Renaissance Diplomatic Correspondance', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 79 (1972): 51-54. Those prints from Fontainebleau that found their way into foreign collections also often troubled the collectors' categories of organisation. The compiler of Philip II of Spain's 'Escorial album' created a new section for 'French' prints in his otherwise thematically arranged album. See Jenkins, *Prints at the Court*, 131.

[152] As Emeline Sallé de Chou has argued of the frescoes inside the Porte Dorée's vestibule,'Dès l'entrée, devenu spectateur, il devait faire appel à tout son savoir et à sa sagacité pour identifier les épisodes souvent peu connus et pour résoudre l'ambiguïté intentionnelle…', in Emeline Sallé de

source, before exploring how he introduced new levels of self-reflexive interpretation, by drawing on the gendered connotations of art at Fontainebleau.

Primaticcio's Interpretation of Hercules and Omphale

Comparing the frescoes to the two surviving drawings by Primaticcio confirms their attribution. In the prints after the drawings and frescoes, the engraver, Léon Davent, introduces only minor changes, such as a sunset in the first engraving, and a full moon in the second.[153] These effects translate Primaticcio's designs into print, while maintaining their visual appeal and legibility without colour.[154] The incised outlines of the drawing at Chatsworth map onto the engraving exactly, suggesting that it may have been traced by Davent, who was trusted above other Fontainebleau printmakers with the task of reproducing Primaticcio's original drawings.[155] A further engraving by Antonio Fantuzzi after one of these frescoes suggests an end date for their completion in 1543 (fig. 10). While the designs were by Primaticcio, their execution was collaborative, with a total of four painters, as well as multiple builders and stucco workers, receiving payment for work on the entrance in royal accounts.[156] Beginning with Louis Dimier, art historians have generally dated these frescoes to the time of the first payments in 1535, while payments from the 1540s are

Chou, 'La Porte Dorée du château de Fontainebleau: nouvelles interprétatives de deux fresques peintes par Francesco Primaticcio', *Seizième Siècle* 12 (2016): 113; 123.

[153] A *tazza* by a Limoges enamellist, c.1550, at the Rubens House, Antwerp, also replicates the second scene of *Hercules and Omphale*, after Davent's engraving, on the inside.

[154] Jenkins, 'Les graveurs de Primatice', 39.

[155] Michael Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection of Italian Drawings: Bolognese and Emilian Schools*, III, (London: Umberto Allemandi & Co, 1994), 177. Catherine Jenkins has shown that Davent, who does not appear in the account books of Fontainebleau, was likely employed specifically by Primaticcio to engrave his oeuvre. Jenkins, 'Les graveurs de Primatice', 38-44.

[156] The painters, Bartolomeo da Miniator and Henry Tison, were paid between April and August, 1535, and two more painters, Gerard Michel and Jean Dieppe, in 1543. Cordellier, 'La Porte Dorée', 155.

usually considered to refer to the later frescoes of the inner vestibule.[157] It is likely that Primaticcio's frescoes were in place before Cellini began work on his bronze sculptures for the portal, partially cast in 1543-44, as these echo the paintings' themes and iconography.[158] The traditional date therefore remains the most plausible, even if dating the frescoes by stylistic analysis is impossible due to their restoration.[159] The drawings and engravings after these works, however, allow for an examination of their iconography and meaning.

The frescoes depict an episode from classical mythology, Hercules' year-long enslavement to Omphale, Queen of Lydia, which can be traced back to Sophocles.[160] Later Hellenistic art and texts introduced a cross-dressing scene as part of this servitude.[161] A Herculean subject may have been commended by the significance of Hercules as a model for many renaissance kings, and especially by his role as the supposed founder of Gaul.[162] Geoffrey Tory influentially claimed in his *Champfleury* of 1529 that Hercules had not only been the King of France, but also the founder of Paris.[163] The subject of Hercules, followed by the frescoes based on the *Iliad* that continued on the inside of Porte Dorée's vestibule, likely alluded to these mythical origins of France, positioning the palace as a classically inspired

---

[157] Louis Dimier, *Le Primatice: peintre, sculpteur et architecte des rois de France* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1900), 306-7. This has been repeated in most works that mention these frescoes, including, most recently, Sallé de Chou, 'La Porte Dorée', 113-123.

[158] Dominique Cordellier casts doubt on this dating, arguing that sculptors usually intervened before frescoers, in Cordellier, 'La Porte Dorée', 155. Yet stucco workers had already received payment for work on the portal in 1535.

[159] Ibid.

[160] See Lisa Rosenthal, *Gender, Politics, and Allegory in the Art of Rubens* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 122.

[161] For this myth in its various permutations, see John Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.C.–A.D. 250* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 172-179.

[162] Bull, *The Mirror*, 95. Jean Lemaire de Belges drew on this account in his *Illustrations de Gaule et singularitez de Troye* as evidence for the 'extraction Herculienne et Troyenne de la nation Gallicane et Française'. See Robert Hallowell, 'Ronsard and the Gallic Hercules Myth', *Studies in the Renaissance* 9 (1962): 244.

[163] Ibid.

hub of the arts. Yet depictions of Hercules and Omphale that show consecutive narrative episodes—and especially the encounter with Faunus—are rare.[164]

It is notable that the artist does not take this story as an occasion to luxuriate in Omphale's beauty or nudity, in comparison with contemporary illustrations of the same myth, especially in the context of the licentious imagery that he created for other locations at Fontainebleau, including the lost baths.[165] Indeed, in northern art, the subject was usually depicted in small-scale erotic cabinet pieces, or 'world-turned-upside-down' prints and paintings.[166] This couple was also sometimes included in 'power of love' cycles in Italy, as Annibale Carracci included this pair among his *Loves of the Gods* on the ceiling of the *Farnese Gallery*, 1597.[167] Primaticcio, by contrast, draws directly from his classical source, which Raymond Lebègue identified as Ovid's *Fasti*. This is the only version of the myth that features the exchange of costumes by Hercules and Omphale, followed by Faunus, god of the forest, mistaking Hercules for Omphale.[168]

In Ovid's account, the couple dined one evening in a cave with Omphale's attendants, where they then exchanged clothes and retired to bed. This forms the basis of Primaticcio's first scene. Looking to the left inside the portico of the Porte Dorée, the viewer is met by the image of Hercules, at the centre of the composition, in an elegant contrapposto stance, the

---

[164] Other depictions of Hercules, Omphale and Faunus can be found later in the century, including Jacopo Tintoretto, *Hercules expelling the Faun from Omphale's Bed*, c.1585, oil on canvas, 112 × 106 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Bucharest, which formed one of four paintings of the life of Hercules for emperor Rudolf II, and Abraham Janssens, *Hercules Drives Away Pan from the Bed of Omphale*, 1607, oil on canvas, 150 × 190cm, State Museum of Art, Copenhagen.

[165] For Batholomeus Spranger's depiction of *Hercules and Omphale*, see Malcolm Bull, *The Mirror of the Gods: How the Renaissance Artists Rediscovered the Pagan Gods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 134. For erotic imagery at Fontainebleau, see Waddington, 'The Bisexual Portrait', esp. 114. Sexual imagery in the baths is noted in Christine Tauber, 'Translatio Imperii?—Primaticcios Abguss des Laokoon in Fontainebleau', in *Laokoon in Literatur und Kunst: Schriften des Symposions 'Laokoon in Literatur und Kunst' vom 30.11.2006*, ed. Dorothee Gall and Anja Wolkenhauer (Berlin: University of Bonn, 2009), 208.

[166] For Lucas Cranach's *Hercules and Omphale*, see Robert Scribner, *Religion and Culture in Germany (1400-1800*), ed. Lyndal Roper (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 141.

[167] For 'power of love' imagery in these frescoes, see Charles Dempsey, ''Et Nos Cedamus Amori': Observations on the Farnese Gallery', *The Art Bulletin* 50, No. 4 (1968): 369.

[168] Ovid, *Fasti*, 25-27.

muscles of his torso rippling above the skirt of his *all'antica* costume, which is barely held up by a straining girdle. Omphale is just visible over his shoulder, holding up the fabric of the dress, as if about to drape it over his arm, under which she brandishes a knife. Her face is cast into shadow by Hercules' lion skin, worn as a hood. These are the largest figures in the centre of the image, around which the other figures circulate. Two attendants help to dress Hercules; at his feet, one woman guides his foot into a sandal, while another faces the hero, her right arm silhouetted against Hercules' dress. To the left of this group, a herm, revealed by a curtain, scowls at Hercules, who returns his glare. To the right of the central group, a man swipes away a dish, a remnant from the recent meal, from a table, on which a nude youth leans. An antique-style ewer is placed behind him, while the table rests on a stand composed of the legs of two or three animals, one of which seems to be winged.

According to Ovid, after the couple retired to bed, Faunus crept into the cave, consumed by lust for Omphale, whom he had seen earlier that day, before she exchanged clothes with Hercules. Looking for Omphale, Faunus approached the beds, only to recoil in terror from the feel of bristly lion skin that she still wore. Moving to the other bed instead, he was this time encouraged by the soft feel of Omphale's dress, yet moving his hand under its folds, Faunus startled at the touch of the crossed-dressed hero's hairy legs and fell back in horror. Omphale then called for her attendants, who brought the light. This forms the basis of the second fresco. The night scene is illuminated by a central torch, held up by an attendant. His recent arrival is signalled by the two other attendants who rush in from the right, waking a nearby group of women, who are depicted in varying states of waking and standing.[169] Omphale, sitting up in bed beside Hercules, reaches out towards the attendants, perhaps to confiscate Cupid's bow. A similar gesture is seen in Alciato's emblem, 'Love of Virtue, conquering the other Love', in which Love is punished for the hurt he inflicts on men.[170] Yet, as Cupid turns away from Omphale, he may equally be taking the bow from her. Behind Hercules and Omphale a row of four herms is partially hidden by a curtain. Hercules' foreshortened arm stretches out towards the front of the scene with a clenched fist and his

[169] Pierre de Ronsard similarly uses light and seasonal imagery in his poetic treatment of this episode from *Fasti* to echo the story's blurring of boundaries. See Ford, 'Hercule et le thème solaire', 245-58.
[170] Wilson-Chevalier, 'Women on Top', 37. For this emblem see Jane Kingsley-Smith, *Cupid in Early Modern Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 70-71.

legs are open, with one powerful leg extended, as if kicking. Preparatory drawings survive for this composition, which attest to the attention that the artist lavished on perfecting these complex torsions (fig. 11).[171] At the foot of the bed, Faunus, marked out by his horns and goat's legs, lies on the floor with his back to the viewer, reaching up in the direction of Omphale, the true object of his desire, as made explicit by his erection—a detail that remains true to the Ovidian account, although it is missing from the fresco today, and may have been censored during its restoration.

The placement of these frescoes as pendants either side of the door seems to present the viewer with a binary choice, perhaps drawing on the iconography of the choice of Hercules.[172] The decision to encapsulate the narrative within two images indeed captures some of the duality and ambivalence that surrounded Hercules and especially the story of Hercules and Omphale. As a demi-god, Hercules is an inherently dual figure, representing the virtue of the gods, but also mortal error, allowing him to act as both a flattering parallel for renaissance kings, and an example of the challenges that a ruler could face.[173] An

---

[171] The connection between these drawings and the frescoes of Hercules and Omphale was first presented in Anna Forlani Tempesti, 'Quaesti per Primaticcio', in *Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Sylvie Béguin*, ed. Mario Di Giampaolo and Elisabetta Saccomani (Rome: Paparo Edizioni, 2001), 227-238.

[172] Wilson-Chevalier interprets these images as presenting a choice, as a novel version of the Hercules at the crossroads theme, in Chevalier, 'Feminising the Warrior', 27.

[173] For the duality of Hercules, see Nicole Loraux, 'Herakles: The Super-Male and the Feminine', in *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World,* ed. David Halperin, John Winkler, and Froma Zeitlin (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 24; Natalie Kampen, 'Omphale and the Instability of Gender', in *Sexuality in Ancient Art*, ed. Natalie Kampen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 237. For the concept of virtue in the early modern period, see Joanna Woodall, 'In Pursuit of Virtue', *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 54, No. 1 (2003): 7-25. For Hercules as an exemplar, see Leopold Ettlinger, 'Hercules Florentinus', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 16, No. 2 (1972): 119-142; Klara Garas, 'Le tableau du Tintoret du Musée de Budapest et le cycle peint pour l'Empereur Rodolphe II', *Bulletin du Musée hongrois des Beaux-Arts* 30 (1967): 39; Edmund Dickerman and Anita Walker, 'The Choice of Hercules: Henry IV as Hero', *The Historical Journal* 39, No. 2 (1996): 317-319; Rosenthal, *Gender*, 123. For more on Hercules and Omphale in Roman authors, see Elaine Fantham, 'Sexual Comedy in Ovid's *Fasti*: Sources and Motivation', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 87 (1983): esp. 192-201; for Hercules' cross-dressing in Propertius, see Sara Lindheim, 'Hercules Cross-Dressed, Hercules Undressed: Unmasking the Construction of the Propertian 'Amator' in Elegy 4.9', *The American Journal of Philology* 119, No. 1 (1998): esp. 52-53.

inscription on one of Lucas Cranach's paintings of Hercules and Omphale summarises the conventional reading of the story of the couple in the renaissance as an emblem of how even 'the ablest souls are weakened by gentle love'.[174] The viewer might interpret the frescoes' binary format as dramatising the struggle between virtue and vice.[175] It is therefore unsurprising that past scholarship on Primaticcio's drawings for these frescoes, and the prints after them, has generally placed them in the tradition of moralising or comical 'power of love' imagery.

Yet discrepancies between the drawings, engravings and what remains of the final frescoes indicate that the artist deliberately obscured some moralising iconography. It seems that Primaticcio considered including Cupid in the first fresco, as suggested by the sketch of a putto in the first drawing, which resembles the depiction in the second fresco, seen clinging to the base of the angry herm on the far left (fig. 12).[176] The execution is swift, showing signs of *pentimenti* and lacks the levels of finish seen in the rest of the drawing. A skeletal arm on the top left corner, resembling the pose of Hercules' raised arm in the centre of the composition, suggests that the artist may have been using this sheet to decide some final compositional elements. It remains unclear whether the Cupid was intended to be read as part of the sculpted base of the herm or as a living figure. In either case, the hidden Cupid in the first drawing strengthens a reading of this fresco as decisively pertaining to love and its follies, by suggesting that Cupid played a role not just in guiding Faunus to the cave, but also in motivating Hercules' actions. This element was not reproduced in the final fresco or Davent's engraving.[177] In the second original drawing, Hercules also appears to be sprouting slight protrusions from his head, which could be interpreted as either curls, or horns. These

---

[174] Quoted in Rowland, *Killing Hercules*, 45.

[175] Examples of this theme in art include Lucas Cranach the Elder, *The Choice of Hercules*, after 1537, oil on beech wood, 110.1 x 98.1 cm, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig; Giorgio Ghisi after Giulio Romano, *Hercules at the Crossroads*, 1547-87, engraving, 19.5 x 28.6 cm, The Metropolitan Museum, New York; Annibale Carracci, *The Choice of Hercules*, oil on canvas, 166 cm × 237 cm, Capodimonte Gallery, Naples; Paolo Veronese, *The Choice Between Virtue and Vice*, c.1565, oil on canvas, 219.1 x 169.5 cm, The Frick Collection, New York.

[176] Cordellier, 'La Porte Dorée', 158.

[177] The Cupid is included in a print of this fresco in etching and aquatint by Johann Gottlieb Prestel from 1777, now in the British Museum, London, which must, as the inscription claims, have been undertaken after the original drawing, although it falsely attributes this to 'Maturino'.

are softened in the engraving and painted versions, weakening the evidence for interpreting Hercules as an unenviable cuckold in these images.

Another detail suggests that Primaticcio purposefully thematised ambiguity in these frescoes. While the 'animal legs' of the table stand have been noted previously, the feathered wings that sprout from the shoulders of the cat-like body facing the viewer have been overlooked (fig. 13).[178] These details suggest that they are sphinxes. Sphinx iconography became standard in French decoration, especially from the 1540s, due to a vogue at the court for all things Egyptian.[179] Primaticcio frequently drew on Egyptian motifs, including sphinxes and obelisks in his *Galerie d'Ulysse*, and even designed a sphinx costume for the King to wear to a wedding entertainment in 1546.[180] The artist could therefore simply be quoting a real piece of furniture or adding visual interest to an otherwise empty space. As discussed, however, decorative elements in the art of Fontainebleau often played a significantly symbolic role.

Tellingly, the sphinxes seen in this fresco are not the Egyptian kind, which featured a lion's body and the head and (sometimes multiple) breasts of a woman, but, as can be seen most clearly in Davent's engraving, the Greek, riddle-telling sphinxes, which do not have breasts, but sprout wings. Andrea Alciato's *Emblemata*, first translated into French by Jean Lefevre in 1536, featured a sphinx with avian features, 'in its face a virgin / in its feathers a bird / in its feet a lion', as the emblem for 'Ignorance that must be banished' (fig. 14).[181] This detail may provide an opportunity to interpret Hercules' actions in this scene as 'frivolous' and pleasure-orientated, the result of blunted reason and all-too-human frailty.[182] Yet these

---

[178] Cordellier, 'La Porte Dorée', 157.

[179] For the Egyptian craze in the French court see Yassana Croizat-Glazer, 'The Role of Ancient Egypt in Masquerades at the Court of François Ier', *Renaissance Quarterly* 66, No. 4 (2013): 1206-1249; James Curl, *The Egyptian Revival: Ancient Egypt as the Inspiration for Design Motifs in the West*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 119; Philip Usher, *Epic Arts in Renaissance France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 44-45.

[180] See Croizat-Glazer, 'The Role of Ancient Egypt', 1206-1246.

[181] Ibid., 1225.

[182] For sphinx iconography and romantic folly, see the sphinx on the reverse of a pendant depicting François I kneeling before a figure who has previously been associated with his mistress, Anne de Pisseleu, Duchess of Étampes, with a cupid hovering above the pair, discussed in Lisa Mansfield,

creatures also thematise difficulty of interpretation. That John Moffitt has identified the feathered, lion-footed creature with the head of a girl seen in Bronzino's *Cupid and Venus*, sent to François I, as a hidden sphinx, suggests that the sphinx was a known emblem of complexity in this artistic context.[183] Indeed, the sphinx's bodily hybridity, linked to its symbolism of interpretative difficulty, also resonates with Hercules's gender ambiguity, caused by cross-dressing.[184] The sphinx's general associations of interpretative difficulty, as well as specific associations as the guards of the ancient Greek city of Thebes, considered a proto-Troy—from which French humanists often traced the country's origins—therefore form a fitting introduction to the complex and classical imagery within the palace.[185]

Primaticcio often selected and interpreted classical narratives in order to introduce a further level of meaning, thematising the arts and foregrounding his artistic achievements, which could enliven discussion of these works. Giancarlo Fiorenza, for example, considers Primaticcio's painting of *Ulysses and Penelope*, after figures from the *Galerie d'Ulysse*, as a virtuoso encapsulation of 'a new pictorial language that emphasizes the eloquence of images'.[186] Delphine Trebosc has also explored Primaticcio's use of classical sources to stage or interrogate inherently visual and artistic themes, for example, including a potential self-portrait as Apelles in the bedchamber of the Duchesse d'Etampes, to signal his competition with heights of the arts of antiquity.[187] Primaticcio's frequent use of classical narratives to

---

Representations of Renaissance Monarchy: Francis I and the Image-makers (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 122-7.

[183] See John Moffitt, 'A Hidden Sphinx by Agnolo Bronzino, 'ex tabula Cebetis Thebani'', *Renaissance Quarterly* 46 (1993): 277–30.

[184] For more on hybrid figures at Fontainebleau, see Andersen, 'Masquing/(Un)Masking', 177-202.

[185] Thebes was considered a proto-Troy, from which French humanists often drew the country's origins. References to Thebes can be found throughout the palace, including, for example, the fresco of the *Destruction of Semele*, daughter of Thebes' founder, Cadmus, seen in the gallery, and *Alexander sparing Timoclea*, a Theban woman, seen on the King's staircase. For Homer's comparisons between Thebes and Troy, see Elton Barker and Joel Christensen, *Homer's Thebes: Epic Rivalries and the Appropriation of Mythical Pasts*, Hellenic Studies Series 84 (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2019): http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn3:hul.ebook:CHS_BarkerE_ChristensenJ.Homers_Thebes.2019.

[186] Giancarlo Fiorenza, 'Penelope's Web: Francesco Primaticcio's Epic Revision at Fontainebleau', *Renaissance Quarterly* 59, No. 3 (2006): 817.

[187] 'Primatice introduit en outre une référence é l' invention de la pratique picturale dans un théme iconographique associé au discours théorique sur les arts', in Delphine Trebosc, 'Le décor de

comment on the arts gives grounds to suspect that it was the ability of the gender-transgressive subject of Hercules and Omphale to speak to broader themes that made it a fitting introduction to Fontainebleau, rather than its moralising content. In these works, gendered binaries and their subversion carried aesthetic messages to be decoded by the learned viewer. We will now turn to the gendered judgments that were evoked in French literature and art to position the palace within continental artistic debates about style, before using these debates to shed light on Primaticcio's scenes of gender transgression.

Gender and the *Paragone* at Fontainebleau

It is worth noting that these frescoes, potentially among some of the first undertaken at Fontainebleau, coincided not only with François I's marriage, previously used to interpret them as 'power of love' images, but also with his moves to establish himself as a great patron of the arts, with Fontainebleau as a key cultural centre—as Vasari called it, a 'new Rome'.[188] *Paragone* debates were imported into Fontainebleau from Italy via the artists whom François I attracted to the court, most notably Leonardo da Vinci in 1515, literature, and his acquisition of key *paragone* artworks. François I bought Giovanni Girolamo Salvodo's *Portrait of Gaston de Foix*, c.1529, for example, which included mirrors to provide multiple views of the painted subject, to rival sculpture.[189] Much of the art produced in France thematised its artistic competition both with ancient and contemporary masters, in particular Michelangelo and Raphael, whose styles and associated media of sculpture and painting were discussed in gendered terms.[190] French writers and artists took up and

---

Primatice pour la chambre de la duchesse d'Etampes: une oeuvre réflexive?', *Seizième Siècle* 3 (2007): 39.

[188] Quoted in Jenkins, *Prints at the Court*, 20.

[189] Peter Hecht, 'The *paragone* Debate: Ten Illustrations and a Comment', *Simiolus* 14, No. 2 (1984): 127; Patricia Zalamea, 'Inscribing the *Paragone* in French Renaissance Art: René Boyvin and Pierre Milan's Engraving of the *Nymph of Fontainebleau'*, *Word & Image* 32, No. 3 (2016): 313.

[190] 'C'est le moment où la France commence à ressentir la necessité d'acquerir des connaissances théoriques et techniques lui permettant de se mesurer avec les conquêtes artistiques italiennes', in Gabriella Rèpaci-Courtois, 'Michel-Ange et les écrivains français la Renaissance: grâce et disgrâce d'un itinéraire critique', *Nouvelle Revue du XVIe Siècle* 8 (1990): 64.

expanded these associations, using gendered binaries to communicate the characteristics and merits of French cultural products.

While other forms of *paragone*, especially between art and nature, or the classical theme of *ut picture poesis*, have long been noted in the art, literature and poetry of the French court, artistic references in the work of Fontainebleau's artists have often been seen as derivative and devoid of meaning, rather than as creative reappropriation.[191] More recently, art historians have demonstrated how competition with Italian art influenced the iconography and stylistic choices in the French court, as 'François I sought to introduce Raphaelesque style to Fontainebleau, but also to encourage court artists to surpass, by means of an employment of mannerist wit, the *maniera* of Raphael and Michelangelo', especially after the King's failed attempt to invite the latter to the court in 1529.[192] Primaticcio's admiration for the art of Michelangelo is well known and evidenced especially by his work from the 1540s. A large number of cartoons by Michelangelo for the Sistine Chapel paintings had supposedly reached France as early as 1531 via his pupil, Antonio Mini, and nine prints after figures from the Sistine and the Medici chapels attest to the presence of these models in Fontainebleau school workshops.[193] While the gendered connotations of Raphael's and Michelangelo's styles in France have been noted, their implications for scenes of gender ambiguity in Fontainebleau's art have not yet been explored. By visually citing

---

[191] For *ut pictura poesis* in French renaissance literature, see Ronsard's 'Élègie è Janet' in Pierre de Ronsard, *Les Oeuvres de Pierre de Ronsard: Texte de 1587*, I, ed. Isidore Silver (Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1966), 324-329; Roberto Campo, 'Mannerist Conflict and the 'Paragone' in Ronsard's 'Temple de Messeigneurs'', *L'Esprit Créateur* 33, No. 3 (1993): 9-19; Margaret McGowan, 'Ronsard and the Visual Arts: A Study of Poetic Creativity', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 78 (2015): 173- 205. For art that thematises the competition between nature and art, see the popular ceramics by Bernard Palissy, incorporating life cast creatures, and Serlio's *Grotte de Pins* at Fontainebleau, which merged human figures with natural rock formations, discussed in Andersen, 'Masquing/(Un)Masking', 192.

[192] Tauber, 'A Paragone of Styles', 51, 63. For more on *paragone* themes and competition with Italy in the art of Fontainebleau, see Carmelo Occhipinti, *L'arte in Italia e in Europa nel secondo Cinquecento* (Torino: Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi Mappe Arte, 2012), 78-82; Tauber, 'A Paragone of Styles', 49-68; Zalamea, 'Inscribing the paragone', 311-325. For more on the denigration of French renaissance art in historiography, see Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold*, esp. 16-17.

[193] Paul Joannides, 'À propos d'une Sanguine nouvellement attribuée a Michel-Ange. La Conaissance des Dessins de l'Artiste en France au XVIe siècle', *Revue du Louvre: La Revue des Musées de France* 3 (1994): 15-29.

Michelangelo, and perhaps even a work that could be seen at Fontainebleau, as will be seen, the artist anticipated recognition by a learned audience and built on their connotations.[194] Primaticcio's visual citations of Michelangelo's work and classical statues in the frescoes of Hercules and Omphale suggest that the theme of gender ambiguity spoke to gendered artistic debates.

While knowledge of these debates or artistic citations was not essential to finding meaning in the frescoes of Hercules and Omphale, these references would have added a further level of complex allusions to be decoded by the learned viewer. Debating the merits of the arts formed the subject of an idealised conversation among the courtiers of Urbino in Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*, published in a French translation in 1537, and circulating earlier in Italian, demonstrating how this subject was commonplace for courtiers looking to signal their artistic knowledge.[195] This book formed an important cultural reference point for French courtiers, looking to present in a similarly cultivated and urbane guise.[196] Given the importance of decoding these references for courtly viewers, it is worth pausing to explore the gendered connotations of Michelangelo's style in France and the implications for how contemporaries considered artistic media, especially sculpture and painting, and their related senses of touch and sight, before turning to how specific artistic references and imagery of the senses in Primaticcio's frescoes articulate Fontainebleau's particular style in gendered terms.

---

[194] References to Michelangelo enter French literature as early as 1521. See Rèpaci-Courtois, 'Michel-Ange et les écrivains français', 64.

[195] The courtiers discuss the arts, including the competition between painting and sculpture, in Castiglione, *The Book*, 96-100. 'The French edition, which carried a salutation addressed to François Ier, was yet another way in which ideas about the *paragone* were circulating relatively early at the French court as part of Leonardo's legacy', in Zalamea, 'Inscribing the paragone', 313. Originally, the work was even set to include a dedication to the French King. See Lauro Martines, *Strong Words: Writing and Social Strain in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 261.

[196] For more *on The Book of the Courtier* as a model for behavior, see Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Paragone themes found new interpretations in Fontainebleau, where writers and artists combined and subverted their Italian sources, in particular commending or enacting the synthesis of artistic sources, styles, and media.[197] In France, unlike in Florence, a sculptural and robust style was not necessarily promoted as the pinnacle of art. Louis de Montjosieu in his discussion of 'pictura' in the *Gallus Romae Hospes*, 1585, for example, promoted softness or 'mordibezza' as the height of art, advocating soft colouring and transitions as opposed to strong contrasts and harsh lines, and denigrating the sculptural style associated with Michelangelo.[198] For Geoffrey Tory in the *Champfleury* of 1529, Italian artists formed models of 'discipline' and 'rigour', which must permeate their whole life, but which should also be combined with 'grace'.[199] Instead of drawing these styles into conflict, Tory professed an ideal that was both 'robust' and graceful.[200] Echoing this ideal, the poet Guillaume de Autels claimed to see in French writers, like Marot, Dolet and an unnamed poet who was likely Ronsard, something of Apelles' 'admirable sweetness and naïve Grace', as these authors also use a language that is 'graceful rather than haughty'.[201] Making a case for moderation in art and life, he continues that even if his ideal practitioner of moderate art 'does not have a lot of blood, he has a lot of good reason ('prou de bon ius') and if he does not have such great and robust strength, at least he is in good health'.[202] By referencing blood, a hot, masculine humoral fluid and strength at the opposite extreme of his measured poets, this author also suggests that he favoured a less masculine and 'robust' art—one which he associates with Apelles' feminised 'grace'.

---

[197] This debate eventually codified around *disegno*, as in Italy. For Philppe Desportes, 'Le sculpteur excellent desseignant pour ouvrage/ Une plante, un lion, un homme, un element, / Si sa main obeyt et suit l'entendement/ Trouve en un marbre seul toute sorte d'image', Philippe Desportes, 'Sonnet à Cleonice', in Philippe Desportes, *Oeuvres de Philippe Desportes*, ed. Alfred Michiels (Paris: Adolphe Delahays, 1858), 186.

[198] 'Certum est enim in pictura colorata nullum esse prorsus linearum usum. Imo vitio dari si lineae appareant. Extremae enim lineae, qua parte umbra definit ei prorsus adherent, et cum ea confonduntur', quoted in Rèpaci-Courtois, 'Michel-Ange et les écrivains français', 67-8, n.21.

[199] Ibid., 64.

[200] Rèpaci-Courtois defines this as a subordination of Michelangelo's style and reputation to Raphael's in renaissance France, in Rèpaci-Courtois, 'Michel-Ange et les écrivains français', 65-66.

[201] 'admirable douceur & naïve grace', 'de gracieuses plutôt de hautaines', in Guillaume des Autels, *Replique aux furieuses defences de Louis Meigret* (Lyon: J. de Tournes et G. Gazeau, 1551), 71.

[202] 's'il n'ha beaucoup de sang, il ha prou de bon ius: & s'il n'ha celle tant grande & robuste force, au moins est il en bonne sante', in Ibid., 71.

For art writers and artists, artistic style, like bodily comportment, could be gendered, and the human body remained a clear and privileged site for artists to express and play with ideas about appropriate 'manner', compete in the arena of ideal beauty, or demonstrate artistic versatility.[203] Graceful female figures, for example, provided occasion for painters like Rosso Fiorentino to pay homage and perhaps even surpass Raphaelesque *grazia*, as Christine Tauber has suggested of the gallery at Fontainebleau.[204] In the bedroom of the Duchesse d'Etampes, Primaticcio employs references to Apelles to demonstrate his ability to compete with the great master of painting, through the depiction of the most suitable subject for *virtuoso* painting, beautiful women (fig. 15).[205]

This gendered language in art writing encouraged these visual parallels and may have primed a viewer to consider this image of gender confusion in light of its stylistic or artistic implications, especially due to the association between sculpture and Michelangelo's 'robust' style and painting with Raphael's soft depiction of graceful women.[206] These gendered judgments have implications for how to understand gender subversion and references to Michelangelo in the art of Fontainebleau and Primaticcio's frescoes of Hercules and Omphale. In the Porte Dorée's frescoes, gendered connotations of art and style extended the meaning of gender confusion to comment on *paragone* conceits.

---

[203] See Sohm, 'Gendered Style', 760.

[204] Tauber, 'A Paragone of Styles', 63. See also Ita Mac Carthy, 'Grace and the 'reach of art' in Castiglione and Raphael', *Word & Image* 25, No. 1 (2009): 38.

[205] 'Si cette demarche peut participer d'une 'autopromotion', elle s'inscrit plus fondamentalement dans une recherche sur la representation du nu feminin', Trebosc, 'Le décor de Primatice', 44. Guillaume des Autels echoed this association of Apelles with 'grace', and a style 'non pleine mais ornée', Autels, *Réplique aux furieuses defences*, 71. This echoes French renaissance discussions of Raphael's 'graceful' art.

[206] Oil painting, for example, was identified by Vasari as soft (*morbidezza*), sweet, delicate, *sfumato*, while Michelangelo supposedly denigrated the medium for its 'gaudiness' that appealed only to women. As Ita Mac Carthy has argued 'Where Michelangelo seeks 'la difficulta' in his art, Raphael strives to effect 'la facilita', creating the illusion that his work unfolded almost without effort, and certainly without showing any signs of his learning and hard work', in Mac Carthy, 'Grace', 38. 'While fresco requires mastery, oil, on the other hand, contains qualities in itself that only require the artist to be obedient and compliant (*diligente, con amore*), placing the artist in a more passive and therefore, following renaissance taxonomies of gender, feminised position', in Sohm, *Gendered Style*, 790; 789.

Gendering the Arts in the frescoes of Hercules and Omphale

Primaticcio uses artistic references to structure his frescoes and build on the associations between sculpture, masculinity and Michelangelo's art in the first fresco, before subverting them in the second. In the first fresco, the eye is drawn to three male, sculptural figures: the angry herm on the far left, Hercules, standing in the centre, and the antique-style youth watching from the far right. Hercules' pose seems to derive from a lost sculpture by Michelangelo, known from drawings, bronzes, and a molding in wax (fig. 16).[207] Whether a similar statue of Hercules by Michelangelo, perhaps one recorded by Vasari as sent to France in 1530, was on display at Fontainebleau has been debated—this may have been the statue placed atop a fountain in what became the Cour de la Fontaine in 1541, that was later moved to the Jardin de l'Etang, c.1550 (fig. 17).[208] These sources strengthen an association between Hercules and sculpture that supports a reading of this scene not only as a struggle between genders, but also on a *paragone* level.

If Hercules' pose was indeed derived from a sculpture by, or after, Michelangelo, it draws not on the artist's more complex, contorted figures, which speak most directly to contemporary art trends, but to the artist's simpler, classicising style, epitomised by the statue of *David*, 1501-4. While Michelangelo could surpass the ancients, creating more complex, difficult, and therefore skillful, figures than had previously been attempted, he could also imitate antiquity so convincingly that some of his early sculptures were supposedly mistaken for classical survivals.[209] While a French audience may not have known

[207] Paul Joannides, *Michel-Ange, élèves et copistes*, Exh. Cat. (Paris: RMN, 2003), 290.

[208] Robert Knecht, *Francis I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 263. For the debate on the lost sculpture see Paul Joannides, 'Michelangelo's Lost Hercules', *The Burlington Magazine* 119, No. 893 (1977): 550- 555; Paul Joannides, 'Michelangelo and the Medici Garden', in *La Toscana al tempo di Lorenzo il magnifico: Politicia, economia, cultura, arte*, I, ed. Riccardo Fubini (Pisa: Pacini, 1996), 32-33; and Joannides, *Michel-Ange*, 290. This source sculpture, whether by Michelangelo, or a classical statue on which it may have been based, was likely missing an arm, filled in as holding a club in the drawing thought to be after it, one attributed to Rubens, and another by Parmigianino. See Cordellier, 'La Porte Dorée', 155.

[209] Paolo Giovio recounts the story of a now lost Cupid by Michelangelo: 'Contigit ei porro laus eximia altera in arte, quum forte marmoreum fecisset Cupidinem, eumque defossum aliquandiu ac

these early works, rhetoric praising Michelangelo's imitation of the ancients reached France, as did later copies and original compositions inspired more directly by classical precedents, perhaps including the lost statue sent to France. Heightening the figure's classical associations, Hercules' pose may also refer to the *Apollo Belvedere*, known and later cast in Rome by Primaticcio, adopted in the renaissance as a key model for imitation and considered an embodiment of masculine perfection.[210] By combining Michelangelo's classicising style, and perhaps an antique reference, Primaticcio underscores Hercules' grandeur and promotes the association of Hercules with classicism and sculpture.

This is further shown through the various Herculean sculptural references that litter this scene. The youth on the far right of the fresco, for example, may similarly have been inspired by a lost statue of a youthful Hercules, possibly by Michelangelo, and bears resemblance to the small bronze Hercules in the V&A, which also may have shared a source (fig. 18).[211] The angry herm, with its heavy brow, beard and muscular frame, is particularly reminiscent of the *Farnese Hercules*, although Primaticcio likely borrowed the motif of herms supporting a curtain from his teacher in Mantua, Giulio Romano (fig. 19).[212] The angry herm evokes the renaissance emblem of Terminus, described by Alciato as 'A squared stone is set in the ground, an unshakable cube, and on it stands a curly-headed image, fashioned down to the chest'—although in the earliest illustrations, the herm is depicted clothed (fig. 20).[213] In this way, three male, nude, Herculean figures of different ages and types order the first scene. Taking their varied poses together, they provide views of Hercules in the round, playing on the *paragone* trope that painting can rival sculpture's

---

postea erutum, ut ex concepto situ minutisque iniuriis ultro inflictis, antiquitatem mentiretur, insigni pretio per alium Riario Cardinali vendidisset'. In Girolamo Tiraboschi, *Storia della letteratura italiana di Girolamo Tiraboschi: Dall'anno 1500 fino all'anno 1600*, VII, Parte Quarta (Milan: Dalla Società Tipographica de' Classici Italiani, 1824), 2496.

[210] See Christine Tauber on Primaticcio's cast of the *Apollo Belvedere* from the papal collection, in Tauber, 'Translatio Imperii', 213-4.

[211] See the discussion in Cordellier, 'La Porte Dorée', 157.

[212] Similar herms can be seen in the illustrations of *I Modi* after Giulio Romano, now lost but known through copies, which often form a comical counterpoint to the couples. See Bette Talvacchia, *Taking Positions: On the Erotic in Renaissance Culture*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 24.

[213] Andrea Alciato, *Emblematum Libellus* (Venice: Aldus, 1546), 33.

three-dimensional effects, as exemplified by Savoldo's *Portrait of Gaston de Foix*.[214] Drawing on the theme of gender confusion, the back view that completes this rotated figure is supplied by the female attendant facing away from the viewer.

This draws on an association of the medium with endurance and masculinity, as well as Michelangelo's reputation for a 'herculean' or 'robust' style, of which some viewers would have been aware.[215] In Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*, the art of sculpture is promoted as 'durable' and 'dignified'—the same terms that would be applied by Vasari to praise Michelangelo's art.[216] These were gendered descriptions. In *Le Satyre*, for example, Ronsard digresses the story of Hercules and Omphale to have Omphale describe the differences between the sexes, designating man's ideal character as 'robust'.[217] Indeed, Alciato glosses the figure of Terminus, to which the herm may allude, as anchored to the ground, so that 'This declares that it yields to none. Such is Terminus, the one and only goal that governs men.'[218] This herm extends the association in this fresco between fixity, masculinity, and sculpture, perhaps playing on the connotations of inflexibility sometimes attached to Michelangelo's style.[219] These associations, and especially Primaticcio's citations of Michelangelo's classicising style, suggest that Hercules resists feminisation in the first fresco.

---

[214] Paolo Pino advised painters in 1548, 'in all your works you should introduce at least one figure that is distorted, ambiguous and difficult, so that you shall thereby be noticed as outstanding by those who understand the finer points of art'. Quoted in Shearman, *Mannerism*, 138.

[215] Vasari describes Michelangelo's style in terms such as *ardito*, *bravo*, *fiero, forte*, *franco*, *risoluto*, *robusto*, and even *erculeo*, all usually considered male qualities. See Philp Sohm, 'Gendered Style in Italian Art Criticism from Michelangelo to Malvasia', *Renaissance Quarterly* 48, No. 4 (1995): 774. For the seventeenth-century art writer, Giovanni Pietro Bellori, 'Michelangelo was truly great in the grand Herculean and robust style, but… this alone is not enough to garner fame as a great artist, it being necessary to possess all of the other forms, tender, poliute svelte, graceful and delicate (like Raphael)'. Quoted in Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory*, 130.

[216] Ibid., 98.

[217] 'robuste', in Ronsard, *Oeuvres Complètes*, XV, 71.

[218] Alciato, *Emblematum Libellus*, 33.

[219] See Michael Cole, *Leonardo, Michelangelo, and the Art of the Figure* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014*),* 16.

In the second fresco, Hercules is once again indebted to Michelangelo, but in a different mode, now taking the form of a cinquecento *figura sforzata*, associated with the modern arts and perhaps especially painting. This is most apparent in the preparatory chalk drawing, where the hatching, bold foreshortening, and musculature speak to this influence (fig. 11). The pose, with one shoulder and arm thrust over the opposite leg, is typical of Michelangelo, and can be seen in frescoes of the *ignudi* on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, that Primaticcio likely knew through prints in circulation at Fontainebleau (fig. 21).[220] These contrasting portrayals may have served both to highlight Primaticcio's mastery of Michelangelo's two modes and also to draw out a second, conflicting interpretation of Hercules. Hercules' shift from calm to violent provides potential for depicting dynamic action and emotional extremes, signaling virtuoso artistic performance.[221] This change from sculptural to painterly, and classicising to modern, foregrounds *paragone* themes. While the second fresco enacts a shift towards modern and painterly sources, the first scene depicts a stalemate, epitomised by the deadlock between the two protagonists. Omphale brandishes a knife at Hercules' neck, who in turn holds his arm to her throat, deviating from more typical depictions of this story, in which Hercules is docile and effeminate. In light of his sculptural depiction, Hercules' resistance may therefore be interpreted as twofold, thwarting both Omphale's attempt to clothe and feminise him, and the artist's attempt not only to depict but to convert a sculptural source into his painterly composition, dramatising the synthesis achieved in the second fresco.

As these scenes shift from sculptural to painterly artistic references and effects, the surrounding figures also shift from predominantly male to female. In contrast with the first fresco's concentration of Herculean and male sculpture, the second fresco sets up a visual alignment between Hercules and feminine figures, such as the female herms who are brought to the foreground. Hercules' head is positioned directly in front of one's pudenda,

---

[220] Catherine Jenkins, *The Fontainebleau School of Printmakers* (PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2003), 28.

[221] It is this aspect of the *paragone* that Christine Tauber argues motivated the emotional extremes of the art of Primaticcio's predecessor and collaborator at Fontainebleau, Rosso Fiorentino, in Tauber, 'A Paragone of Styles', 63. As Michael Cole has explored, *figure sforzate* in general, through their complex torsions, often spoke stylistically to themes of difficulty and mastery, in Cole, *Leonardo*, 81.

suggesting that here the hero may be feminised. Given the hero's association with sculpture in the first fresco, we might read this change also as artistic commentary. Drawing on the gendered judgments of style current in France, these two shifts, from sculptural to painterly sources and styles, and from masculine to feminine figures, demonstrate a contrast between the Michelangelesque first scene, and a Raphaelesque emphasis on delicacy and feminine nudity in the second.

Indeed, a link between women and painting may be suggested in these frescoes, for example, by the association of the women with clothing in the first image, in contrast with the male nude figures. It is striking that, in the first image, Omphale is a background figure, her face half in shadow from Hercules' hood, suggesting an association with deception and darkness or illusion that was often seen in renaissance discussions of painting.[222] This is particularly notable as it subverts both the emphasis on female nudity seen elsewhere in Fontainebleau, as well as the convention in other contemporary versions to depict Omphale's nude body. Borrowing from classical rhetoric, art writers compared ornamental style with women's adornment, from clothing to makeup—an association used both to praise the beautifying effects, and to denigrate the illusionary capacities of painting, as employed by Michelangelo.[223] Primaticcio's association of women with clothing, and men with nudity in the first fresco, may draw on a link between clothing and deception that was at the heart of Ovid's telling of this story in the *Fasti*, which he offers as an illustration of why the followers of Faunus are naked, as the God never trusted clothing again.[224]

This shift from masculine sculptural sources, to feminised and painterly figures may represent an oblique argument for the power of painting. Imagery of touch and sight had implications for their related arts, sculpture and painting, as the tension and collaboration between these media runs through the frescoes. The shadowy light effects produced by the

---

[222] Dominique Cordellier comments that truth and nudity are aligned in these drawings, in Cordellier, 'La Porte Dorée', 156. A similar connection between clothing and the body is used to describe the truthfulness of style in ancient rhetoric and poetics. See Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory*, 73.
[223] This rhetoric is underpinned especially by the concept of colour as feminine. For ornament and femininity in art theory, see Sohm, 'Gendered Style', esp.781-782.
[224] Ovid, *Fasti*, 26.

torch in the second fresco of Hercules and Omphale, for example, provide the opportunity for virtuosic painterly performance. It was a common trope in art writing that sculpture was an inferior art to painting, since it could not depict the fall of light, and colour. As the Count argues in *The Book of the Courtier*, 'sculpture lacks many things to be found in painting, and especially light and shade: for example, the natural colouring of the flesh, which appears altogether changed in marble, the painter copies faithfully'.[225] He even includes the 'darkness of night' as an example of a subject that only a painter can convey.[226] Vasari admired these effects in the now lost *Galerie d'Ulysse*s frescoes by Primaticcio at Fontainebleau, although he based his description on second-hand accounts.[227] Despite using 'no other colours but the earths in the pure state in which they are produced by Nature, without mixing with them, it may be said, any white', due to the deep shadows, 'so heavily loaded with darks in the deep parts', 'these have extraordinary relief and force'.[228] The night scenes in the frescoes of Hercules and Omphale are a precursor to those of the *Galerie d'Ulysses*, creating shadowy effects that could not be achieved in sculpture.

Further building on this competition between painting and sculpture, Primaticcio's herms appear curiously alive. The herms may have been more noticeably stony in appearance when coloured in the fresco, but their animation nonetheless appeals to the *paragone* trope of the potential for sculpture to compete with painting's ability to convey colour and movement, as well as demonstrating the artist's ability to enliven even stone through painting.[229] As Carmelo Occhipinti has argued, Primaticcio's frescoes for the now destroyed *Pavilion of Pomona* similarly highlight the expressive potential of paint through sculptural contrasts.[230] In this context, cross-dressing may have symbolised the cross-pollination of the arts, reflecting the unique gendering and effects of the arts at Fontainebleau, in which

---

[225] Castiglione, *The Book*, 99.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Bensoussan, 'From the French *Galerie*', 189.
[228] Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors & Architects*, transl. by Gaston Du C. de Vere, IX (London: Macmillan and the Medici Society, 1915), 148.
[229] Vasari, for example, praises the *Laocoon*, the *Hercules* and the *Belvedere torso* as possessing 'the appeal and vigour of living flesh', being 'full of movement', in Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, transl. George Bull (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965), 251.
[230] Occhipinti, *L'arte in Italia*, 82.

mixing artistic media and references was not considered detractive, as in purist discussions of style or media epitomised by the Florentine Vasari or Michelangelo, but constructive and additive. This stance on the *paragone* may represent something of Primaticcio's own position.[231] Working in sculpture as well as fresco, and designing costumes and props for ephemeral entertainments, the artist appreciated and practiced various techniques, and in frescoes like these, and his stuccos, created works that blurred the boundaries between media, and thematised their fruitful cross-pollination.[232] These frescoes likely used gender confusion to visualise Fontainebleau's combination of masculine and feminine styles.

Cellini's planned sculptures for the portal, which reflect these gender and *paragone* conceits, support this reading. These comprised a colossal nymph in a lunette above the door, overlooked by two victories bearing torches in the above corners, while two satyr caryatids would stand on either side of the portal, as part of a programme that is described in his autobiography. While the lunette is the only executed element that can still be seen today, in the Louvre, the lost victories survive as casts, and models for the bronze satyrs are in the Royal Collection, London, and the Getty Museum, Los Angeles (fig. 22, 23, 24).[233] These works, and his account of them, suggest that Cellini interpreted and responded to the frescoes as a challenge to his own preferred medium, sculpture. In response to the ambiguous tensions promoted by Primaticcio, Cellini's additions point firmly to masculinity and mastery as the only viable position.[234] This is communicated above all through his angry and frightened satyrs, with their whips and shackles, and unusually human form, distinguished only by their horns. These visually echo Primaticcio's Hercules.[235] Primaticcio's

---

[231] For the role of *disegno* in allowing him to move across genres, see Chastel, Béguin and Roy, *La galerie d'Ulysse*, 1.

[232] For Primaticcio's contribution to the stucco at the Palazzo del Te, see Jenkins, *Prints at the Court*, 19. For his role casting antiquities in Rome for the French court, see Bensoussan, 'From the French *Galerie*', 175-198.

[233] John Pope-Hennessy, *Cellini* (New York, NY: Abbeville Press, 1985), 140.

[234] As Michael Cole suggests, Cellini's programme for the door 'reminds the viewer that retirement to the wood requires a renunciation of the life of action; at the Porte Dorée one surrenders one's force', Michael Cole, 'The Figura Sforzata: Modelling, Power and the Mannerist Body', *Art History* 24, No.4 (2001): 542.

[235] See Nancy Miller on themes of masculinity and dominance in Cellini's designs for the Porte Dorée, Miller, 'The Mistress in the Masterpiece', esp.28-30. See Cellini quoted in Bliss, 'Cellini's Satyrs', 77, 81.

composition, however, does not promote this negative reading of Hercules. Instead, gendered imagery of the senses suggests that Faunus may form the true target of mockery in Primaticcio's version of the story.

Blindness and Interpretation

As the herm in the second fresco looks into the light, the surrounding herms turn away, blinded, while Faunus lies vanquished, misled by the feel of Hercules' dress in the dark cave. This fresco therefore suggests the fallibility of the sense of touch, in comparison with the revelations brought by light and sight. Blindness was a theme of the *paragone* debate, usually invoked in favour of sculpture over painting, since the tactile art of sculpture could be understood even by the blind.[236] This association of sculpture with tangibility and truth was a common theme of *paragone* literature, although artists and commentators drew attention to issues of judging painting and sculpture by the same standards or senses. This is seen, for example, in Jusepe Ribera's painting of *The Sense of Touch*, 1615-16, which depicts a blind man feeling a sculpted bust, while a foreshortened portrait lies neglected in the foreground, showcasing the painter's virtuosity only to the viewer (fig. 25).[237] In a similar way, Faunus's blindness might also subvert the hierarchy of the senses assumed in the trope of the blind man as a judge of art—a role here played by Faunus.

The fresco of *Ignorance chassée* in the *Galerie François I* relies on a similar association between blindness and ignorance, ultimately drawn from Plato's allegory of the cave.[238] This fresco contrasts the blindfolded figures in the foreground with François I, depicted as a Roman Emperor carrying both a sword and book, standing for sovereignty and perhaps the

[236] This may have roots in the story of the competition of the arts staged by soliciting a blind man's judgement of sculpture and painting, and an idiot's efforts in both media, used to ascertain their comparative worth, which was traced to Leonardo in the renaissance. See Hecht, 'The Paragone Debate', 134.

[237] See Peter Hecht on art that mocks the application of false standards of judgment to painting and sculpture, in Ibid., 127. See also a drawing by 'Jan Miel, or at least to an artist who must have been very close to him, who painted a *paragone* in which we see the experiment with the blind man being conducted in the presence of three elegantly dressed gentlemen', in Ibid., 133.

[238] Plato, *The Republic: Book VII*, ed. W. H. D. Rouse (New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 1951), 365–401.

key to meaning or culture—the sole figure who is enlightened enough to enter the Temple of Jupiter in the background (fig. 26).[239] The poet Jacques du Bellay even summarised François I's legacy in similar terms, praising him as a sun that illuminated all, and lifted 'the black blindfold of blind ignorance'.[240] In the art and poetry of Fontainebleau, then, vision and knowledge were aligned, and so too were ignorance and blindness. Foregrounding this association, in *Ignorance chassée*, among the blind who seek a path to the temple, one figure on the far left turns away, groping a nude woman in the foreground. This comical figure forges a similar link between touch, carnality and ignorance—a relationship also suggested in the fresco of Hercules, Omphale and Faunus by the satyr's erection.[241]

Emeline Sallé de Chou sees similar themes of deception in the vestibule's frescoes, inside the Porte Dorée, which, she argues, remind the viewer to look beyond potentially deceitful appearances—a reading that draws on courtly Neoplatonism. As these examples suggest, however, much of the art of Fontainebleau did not denigrate sight, but rather its failure, as demonstrated by the frequent association of blindness with ignorance, as sight itself often stood as a metaphor for spiritual or intellectual enlightenment.[242] Indeed, in the second fresco of Hercules and Omphale, mistaken identity is revealed by the brightly lit torch, suggesting this link between sight and revelation. In this way, much of the imagery that Sallé de Chou considers a warning against the deception of images may more suitably, given the frequency of *paragone* tropes and the elevation of the arts at Fontainebleau, be seen as a virtuoso celebration of the illusions that were unique to painting. Visual and thematic ambiguity in the art of Fontainebleau did not usually aim to raise suspicions of art, and

---

[239] Tauber, 'A Paragone of Styles', 67.

[240] 'C'est luy qui à de ce beau siècle ici/ Comme un soleil, tout obscur éclairci,/ Ostant aux yeaux des bons espriz de France/Le noir bandeau de l'aveugle ignorance', Jacques du Bellay, quoted in Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, *Pandora's Box: The Changing Aspects of a Mythical Symbol* (London: Pantheon Books, 1956), 40.

[241] Geraldine Johnson gives an overview of this association between sculpture, touch and carnality, which she traces back to Plato and Aristotle who 'both ranked touch well below sight in terms of its relative dignity since the former was considered to be a less cerebral and more carnal sense than the latter', in Geraldine Johnson, 'Touch, Tactility, and the Reception of Sculpture in Early Modern Italy', in *A Companion to Art Theory*, ed. Paul Smith and Carolyn Wilde (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 62.

[242] These images force the viewer to question 'la tromperie' and 'les faux-semblants', in Sallé de Chou, 'La Porte Dorée', 123.

specifically painting, but to draw attention to successes and failures of interpretation. By representing the episode in which Faunus is led astray by the feel of Hercules' dress at night, Primaticcio seems to subvert wittily the common conclusion that while sight misleads, touch reveals. The blind satyr, Faunus, presented as incapable of interpreting through sight, due to darkness, and misled by touch, may represent the true source of mockery, rather than the cross-dressed hero.

Conclusion

In these frescoes, cross-dressing, and the feminisation of Hercules, reflected and fed into the commendation of mixed-media effects that was central to French renaissance art, and represented a deviation from the rhetoric of Florentine artists and writers. These effects forged a characteristic style that celebrated abundance and material richness, rather than purity of medium or technique, which was translated into print, and copied across France and beyond.[243] At the same time, this blurring of techniques, iconography and gender fed into the court's appreciation of complexity and the confusion of categories, which also lay at the heart of the story of Hercules and Omphale. The recognition of this further layer of self-reflexive interpretation sheds light on some of the symbolism and use of sculptural sources that had previously escaped interpretation, as well as providing a possible reason why an episode of cross-dressing formed the introduction to this palace. While these frescoes avoid a clear and final comment on how we are meant to interpret this struggle between binaries, perhaps the only truly unenviable position present in these frescoes is that of the unskilled interpreter, Faunus, who mistakes artifice, and by extension art, for weakness.

This case study demonstrates the necessity of foregrounding past connotations of gender and artistic traditions when approaching gender ambiguity in art. These complex depictions

[243] For 'aesthetics of abundance' in sixteenth century France, see Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979). For its application for discussing abundance in art at Fontainebleau, see Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold*, 17-19. For the export of this style in prints, see Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold*, 139; Zalamea, 'Inscribing the paragone', 321; Jenkins, *Prints at the Court*, 122-126.

of cross-dressing could not be elucidated by modern gender associations, which had previously led scenes of cross-dressing and gender confusion at Fontainebleau to be interpreted primarily as evidence of the monarch's sexual desires or gender identity. At Fontainebleau, however, gender and its ambiguity spoke to complex aesthetic concerns, used to differentiate French from Italian artistic and literary preferences. These scenes likely presented Hercules cross-dressed as an oblique allegory for the synthesis of robustness and grace and masculine and feminine artistic styles, demonstrating the self-reflexive meanings that gender ambiguity could communicate. While previous interpretations have reduced these frescoes to moralising or power of love imagery, their ambiguity was once central to their function as an elite talking point and their placement as a riddle at the threshold of the palace.

Androgyny and Ambiguous Portraiture: A French Renaissance *Triple Profile Portrait*, c.1570

Introduction

A portrait in the Milwaukee Art Museum depicts three sitters in profile (fig. 27). Their elaborate, matching costumes become progressively less ornate from left to right, as the flame and water drop motifs on the doublets of the first two sitters give way to the muted cream and gold stripes seen on the furthest sitter. Their hair is elaborately tied in a Grecian style, decorated with blue and red flowers along the top of the head, and each wears fewer pearls from left to right. The painter's skill, the sitters' fine clothes and the unusual, expensive slate support suggest that this portrait was painted for an elite patron, but one whose identity, like those of the sitters, is not known.[244] Cropped at shoulder-height, excluding hose or skirts, the painting provides the viewer with pointedly little visual information with which to discern the sitters' gender, while their features appear feminised to various degrees. A strip of black background runs along the top, framing their ambiguous faces in a central position. Contradictory details prompt the viewer to draw parallels between the sitters and their costumes in search of a stable categorisation of their genders and identities, which ultimately remain elusive. It is this quality of evasiveness that will be reassessed in this chapter as a deliberate effect that would have once been evident to its original viewers, rather than an accident of historical distance.

The portrait has only featured in four previous works of art history. In the first, André Chastel summarised how the ambiguity surrounding the artist, date, the sitters' identities, and even their gender, impeded its study: 'difficult to localise and date, but doubtless by some French or Italian master with Flemish leanings, is the triple portrait in profile, a beautifully contrived work. The sitters remain irritatingly unidentifiable: are they princes (judging by the goffered collar) or princesses (judging by the flower-patterned hair

[244] An earlier title of this work, 'Three Princes', acknowledges the apparent status of the sitters. André Chastel, *The Crisis of the Renaissance, 1520-1600* (Neuchatel: Skira, 1968), 193.

bands)?'.[245] The second interpretation, by the art historian, Edward Lucie-Smith, simply glossed the painting's subject as 'three of the decadent favourites of the homosexual Henri III, last of the Valois kings'.[246] While providing a more certain definition of the painting's subject, this account also highlights the sitters' gender ambiguity as a central feature.[247] Lucie-Smith's evocation of the 'mignons', who were often described as wearing fashions and behaving in ways that blurred lines between genders, highlights their gender ambiguity. Despite misleadingly turning to homosexuality as an explanation, he rightly suggests that these sitters might best be understood through an appeal to the painting's most likely context, the late Valois court, where androgynous fashions and appearances were glamorised. The current museum label, updating the museum catalogue entry —the third art historical interpretation of this portrait —echoes the idea that the sitters are 'mignons' of Henri III, and warns that despite seeming 'exceedingly feminine', 'it is possible that they are in fact men'.[248] Most recently, Judith Mann, in a catalogue of works on slate, has repeated Lucie-Smith's interpretation, renaming the portrait *The Minions of Henry III*.[249]

Portraits of the mignons or of Henri III, however, are rarely this gender-ambiguous. An anonymous, cabinet miniature of Paul de Stuer de Caussade, Marquis de Saint-Megrin, epitomises the 'effeminacy' for which the mignons were known (fig. 28).[250] This youthful favourite is depicted in streamlined clothing, with no sign of a codpiece, which had been a feature of courtiers' costume until the 1560s, and posed daintily with his hand on his hip.

---

[245] Ibid.

[246] Edward Lucie-Smith, *Concise History of French Painting* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), 47-8.

[247] He admitted in a letter to the museum curator, however, that his interpretation relies on 'hostile', satirical accounts of the mignons' 'effeminacy', which may have been misleading. Lucie-Smith, to Goldstein, from London, 13 August (no year; probably before 1986), in object file (museum no. M1966.55), Milwaukee Art Museum.

[248] Rosalie Goldstein, *Milwaukee Art Museum Guide to the Permanent Collection* (Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Art Museum, 1986), 29.

[249] Judith Mann, *Paintings on Stone: Science and the Sacred, 1530-1800* (Munich: Hirmer Publishers, 2020), 162.

[250] Pierre L'Estoile called him 'one of those *mignons* ruffed and curled by the King', in his *Registre-Journal*, and followed his account of his assassination in 1578 with a libelous poem, attacking him for 'borrowing the strength of Mars and the beauty of Adonis' to impress Henri III, in Tom Hamilton, *Pierre de L'Estoile and his World in the Wars of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 121.

His white, stockinged legs in particular create an effeminate appearance for modern viewers, although, in the sixteenth century, exposing the silhouette of the legs was within the purview of men's fashion and breached feminine decorum in everyday dress.[251] His sword, faint moustache, and hand-on-hip pose, frequently associated with masculine self-control in sixteenth-century portraiture, make it clear that, while he embodies a new kind of courtly masculinity, he is a man nonetheless.[252] The charges of effeminacy levelled at the mignons often aimed more at the courtly artifice epitomised by this costume, as well as their perceived dependency on the King, than overt gender ambiguity.[253]

The *Triple Profile Portrait*, by contrast, employs visual devices that heighten the sitters' gender ambiguity, multiplying attributes and costume features that would have been recognised in its original context as belonging to both genders, and omitting visual information that could be used definitively to gender the sitters, both in the sixteenth century and today. This level of visual ambiguity, not typically seen in the portraits of the mignons, which might be linked to a homosocial or homoerotic context, suggests that the *Triple Profile Portrait* communicates more than homosexual desire. Indeed, Patricia Simons warns against the dangers of interpreting portraits as statements of modern-day homosexuality: 'even if we do have some access to biographical information, neither history nor the visual mask clarify the sitter's sexuality in a categorical way'.[254] In early modern art, androgyny may speak to attractive youthfulness, the revival of antiquity, and appeal across sexualities, suggesting the need to look beyond homosexuality to explain the portrait's ambiguous effects. While this painting's facture, attribution and lack of documentation

---

[251] For the link between legs, athleticism, and masculinity in the renaissance, see Elizabeth Currie, *Fashion and Masculinity in Renaissance Florence* (Bloomsbury: London, 2016), 49.

[252] See David Kutcha on the clash between *sprezzatura*'s emphasis on artifice and traditional masculinity, in Kuchta, *The Three-piece Suit*, 10-11, 26-34, 68.

[253] 'In L'Estoiles own terms, the mignons' queer appearance is only the outward show of their fundamental impiety and rebellion, but it is fitting for satire', in Hamilton, *Pierre de L'Estoile*, 112. As Amanda Bailey has argued, the concept of effeminacy at this time 'indexed an ideological fault line and conjured up a disconcerting nexus of leisure, idleness, immorality, luxury, insouciance, and decadence', in Amanda Bailey, *Flaunting: Style and the Subversive Male Body in Renaissance England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 118.

[254] Patricia Simons, 'Homosociality and Erotics in Italian Renaissance Portraiture', in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, 33.

remain obstacles to interpretation, art history is now closer to possessing the critical tools necessary to explore its ambiguity of iconography, identity and gender. Research into gender transgression and costume in the French court, as well as how to discern intentional ambiguity, and parallels in court poetry provide further avenues for understanding this portrait's anomalous effects.[255]

As the artist's apparent skill suggests that its effects were intentional, the *Triple Profile Portrait* will be treated as an 'ambiguous object', borrowing James Elkins' term, containing more than one (in this case gendered) meaning, but presenting no logical way to choose between them.[256] By combining three figures, the artist prompts the viewer to question their relationship, made more pressing by their similar costumes and poses, which suggest that they could be allegorical figures. Yet the figures' specific physiognomy indicates that they are individualised portraits. By creating ambiguous visual cues, the *Triple Profile Portrait* disrupts the assumption, in currency since the fifteenth century, that portraits refer unambiguously to living or once-living sitters.[257] Both genre and gender are problematised, posing methodological issues for the object's study not only today, but, as will be shown, also for its sixteenth-century viewers. Visual parallels, including portraits and allegorical figures, will be used to uncover how a similar androgynous aesthetic informed French visual culture. Although the *Triple Profile Portrait* remains anomalous, due to the extent of its visual ambiguity and unusual slate support, the painting's artistic and social context provide ample evidence for why a painter, patron and sitter may have sought these effects.

This portrait's gender ambiguity will be explained through parallels in coeval court poetry, in which androgynous presentation was specifically admired as a visual spectacle that enjoyably confounded the viewer's expectations, while indicating that person's ineffable

---

[255] For aporia, see Nagel and Pericolo ed., *Subject as Aporia*, 2. For indeterminacy, see Gamboni, 'Potential Images', 13. For intentional ambiguity, see Rosen, *Caravaggio,* 12; Koos, 'Dosso's Ambiguity', 45-66.

[256] See Elkins, *Why Are Our Pictures Puzzles?*, 97, 88. This definition derives from William Empson's third category of ambiguity in his influential 1930 literary study. See Empson, *Seven Types*, 102-132. See also Gamboni, *Potential Images*, 13.

[257] For the role of portraits to 'make the absent present' in the renaissance, see Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, transl. John Spencer (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 63.

beauty or charisma. This close parallel with poetry suggests that this portrait might be considered a French equivalent to sixteenth-century Italian visualisations of Petrarchan poetry, which included androgynous boys.[258] Yet in the Pléaide poets' verses, capturing or reproducing these subjective experiences of an individual's enigma was often central to establishing poetry's superiority over the visual arts. This chapter will therefore explore the *Triple Profile Portrait*'s ambiguous effects as a potential visualisation of this challenge, designed for a learned, courtly setting. This portrait may gain its distinctive ambiguity from its thematisation of an impossible task, for which poets also strived: to capture and preserve a fleeting experience of a subject's changeability, sometimes expressed as mistaken gender. This chapter explores how poetic and courtly types of ambiguity, especially the *je-ne-sais-quoi,* the ineffeable and the pleasingly indeterminate, could inspire the portrayal of gender ambiguity in art. The *Triple Profile Portrait* therefore suggests that employing gender ambiguity to signal *virtuoso* painting may not have been limited to history painting in France, breaking with hierarchies of genre seen abroad, and most notably in Italy. As a visualisation of a classicising poetic *topos* of gender-ambiguous looks, yet employing contemporary costume and visual style, this object places gender ambiguity at the heart of one of the most pervasive and studied themes of French renaissance art and literature, the mission of both painters and poets to rival the ancients.[259]

The *Triple Profile Portrait* therefore has the potential to shed light not only on sixteenth-century French artistic, literary and courtly culture, but to act as a case study for how to approach deliberate ambiguity in portraiture, and especially of gender, rooting anomalous effects in its broader culture, without reducing it to an illustration of sexual preference. Before turning to how this portrait intentionally cultivates ambiguous effects, it is first

---

[258] For examples of art historians explaining beautified or androgynous men in portraits through reference to coeval poetry, see Stephen Campbell, 'Eros in the Flesh: Petrarchan Desire, the Embodied Eros, and Male Beauty in Italian Art 1500-1540', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 35, No. 3 (2005): 634; Simons, 'Homosociality and Erotics', 29-51; Pericolo, 'Donna bella e crudele', 202-233.

[259] See Joachim Du Bellay, who wanted to raise the French language 'en telle hauteur, & grosseur, qu'elle se poura egaler aux mesmes Grecz & Romains, produysant comme eux, des Homeres, Demosthenes, Virgiles, &Cicerõs…' in Joachim Du Bellay*, La Deffence et illustration de la langue Francoyse* (Paris: Arnoul L'Angelier, 1549), Sig. B3^{v}.

necessary to address some of the unintentional ambiguity, generated by lack of documentary evidence, that now haunts its dating and attribution.

Dating and Attribution

While the provenance of this painting before it entered the Milwaukee collection remains uncertain, stylistic evidence helps to narrow the attribution.[260] The current attribution to the Netherlandish émigré artist, Lucas de Heere, is unlikely, and appears to be based on his link with the Valois court, first explored by Frances Yates, rather than stylistic or material evidence.[261] The unusual clothing in the *Triple Profile Portrait* might have suggested his involvement, given that his only signed works are costume books. Yet the technique or style are not consistent with de Heere's calligraphic treatment of hair and facial features. His treatment of the curls of the 'English Gentlemen' in his *Theatre of all the People and Nations of the World with their Habits and Ornaments* is particularly characteristic (fig. 29). While de Heere's painted oeuvre is far from secure, his attributed oil paintings feature closely depicted fabrics, such as the glinting embroidery of the brocade seen in de Heere's *Allegory of the Tudor Succession*, c.1572, or the fur stole in the *Portrait of a Woman*, c.1573 (fig. 30, 31). The depiction of the sitters' doublets in the *Triple Profile Portrait*, by contrast, tells us comparatively little about their material properties. De Heere also did not depict any other sitters in profile, or any works on slate, and is only recorded as in France too early to have painted this portrait, making this attribution improbable.[262]

---

[260] In object file (museum no. M1966.55), Milwaukee Art Museum. The brief stylistic comments by Chastel, elaborated by Rosalie Goldstein, have also proven useful in establishing its likely French provenance. See Chastel, *The Crisis*, 193; Goldstein, *Milwaukee Art* Museum, 29.

[261] Frances Yates, *The Valois Tapestries* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), 17-19.

[262] Lucas de Heere was likely in France 1559-60, then based in England when the *Triple Profile Portrait* was most probably executed, yet he is unlikely to have executed this work for an English patron, since similar classicising profile portraits are only found in the Europeanising court of Henry Prince of Wales in the early seventeenth century. Karel Van Mander, *The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters, from the First Edition of the Schilder-boeck (1603-1604)*, I, transl. Hessel Miedema, (Doornspijk: Davaco, 1994), 281.

While unlikely to be by de Heere, the unidealised detail and shadows speak to a tradition of close mimetic description, which was a feature of Netherlandish contemporary portraiture. From Jean Perréal onwards, French portraiture was greatly influenced by Netherlandish artists at work in the court.[263] The *Triple Profile Portraits* fits within this tradition, helping to exclude possible authorship by several prominent French artists. The visible brushstrokes, as can be seen on the loosely worked and impasto passages of the costumes and hair ribbons, rule out Jean and François Clouet, who also almost exclusively depicted subjects in three-quarter profile. These effects also disqualify its authorship by the other French portraitists who were influenced by the Clouets, including François Quesnel and Marc Duval, who worked with smoother, concealed brushwork, little shadow and idealised their sitters to a greater extent.[264] The two oldest members of the Dumonstier family, Étienne and Pierre the Elder, are more likely candidates, as they drew with more shadow and vigorous pencil-strokes and experimented with the profile view, as well as family portraits.[265] There is little evidence that they painted in oils, however, and only their drawings can be securely attributed.[266]

Chastel's early hypothesis that this could be the work of an 'Italian master' is also doubtful. The Italian painters at work in the court included Luca Penni and Francesco Primaticcio, who both occasionally worked on slate.[267] Yet they typically produced mythological or religious large-scale compositions, with exaggerated poses and complex figural groups, and neither

---

[263] For the 'prédiliction de François Ier pour les portraitists flamands', see Laure Fagnart and Isabelle Lecocq, 'François Ier et les arts du Nord: Des relations à explorer et à approfondir encore', in *Arts et Artistses du Nord à la Cour de Francis Ier*, ed. Laure Fagnart and Isabelle Lecocq (Paris: Picard, 2017), 7.

[264] For comparison, see the portrait, signed with François Quesnel's initials, of *Mary Ann Waltham*, 1572, oil on panel, dimensions unknown, Althorp House, Northamptonshire.

[265] See Pierre Dumonstier the Elder, *Portrait of a Man*, 16th century, black chalk and pastel, 26.4 × 17 cm, The Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg; Pierre Dumonstier the Elder, Double *Portrait of Étienne and Pierre Dumonstier*, c.1570, black chalk on paper, 22.5 × 31 cm, The Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.

[266] Anthony Blunt characterises the Dumonstier brothers as continuing the 'vogue of portrait drawings', started by François Clouet in Anthony Blunt, *Art and Architecture i n France 1500-1700* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 100.

[267] Mann, *Paintings on Stone*, 162.

of these artists are known to have produced portraits for the French court. Moreover, while the depiction of the faces in the *Triple Profile Portrait* is fairly skilled, the awkward projection of the sitters' shoulders does not display the fascination with complex figural poses or foreshortening shown by these Italian artists working in the French court, although the hairstyle suggests familiarity with and access to school of Fontainebleau artists.[268]

The slate medium most likely betrays Italian influence, rather than authorship.[269] The work of Sebastiano del Piombo, widely held to have initiated renaissance experiments with painting on stone, was known in the French court, and Vasari writes that his much praised, lost portrait of Giulia Gonzaga was on display at Fontainebleau.[270] Catherine de' Medici ordered portraits on slate from del Piombo before he died in 1547 and may have also commissioned a miniature of Charles IX on slate by François Clouet.[271] Oil on slate, as will be discussed, was an unusual medium, often used in early modern painting to draw attention to themes of representation, alluding to the commemorative, and enduring functions of portraiture.

Based on this division of specialisms between French and Netherlandish and Italian artists at the court, and the use of shadow, minimal idealisation and impasto effects in the *Triple Profile Portrait*, the artist is likely to be Netherlandish, or a French portraitist who was familiar with Netherlandish portraiture through contact with court artists. This portrait, however, cannot yet be securely attributed to any known Netherlandish artist in the French court in the 1570s. While Lucas de Heere was not present in the court late enough to have

---

[268] A similar style is worn in School of Fontainebleau, *Venus at her Toilette*, c.1550, oil on canvas, 97 × 126 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris; François Clouet's *Portrait of Elisabeth of Austria*, 1571, oil on panel, 37 × 25 cm, Musée Condé, Chantilly.

[269] The Milwaukee catalogue plausibly suggests that the use of slate support was in deference to Italian techniques, admired in the French court. Goldstein, *Milwaukee Art Museum*, 29.

[270] Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters Sculptors and Architects*, VI, transl. Gaston de Vere (London: Macmillan and co., 1914), 183. For more on stone painting's origins and development in the renaissance, see Fabio Barry, 'Painting in Stone: Early Modern Experiments in a Metamedium', *The Art Bulletin* 99, No. 3 (2017): 30-61; Piers Baker-Bates and Elena Calvillo ed., *Almost Eternal: Painting on Stone and Material Innovation in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 1-26.

[271] Mann, *Paintings on Stone*, 162, 146.

painted the *Triple Profile Portrait*, the popular Netherlandish portrait-painter, Corneille de Lyon, for example, painted sitters formulaically in three-quarter profile, usually against a green background, on small wood panels. That this portrait may contain meta-allusions, however, makes an attribution to a painter similar to Lucas de Heere, who engaged with poetics, and considered the relationship between painting and writing, plausible.[272] This attribution encapsulates the painter's probable engagement with contemporary poetry, including the ideas of Pierre de Ronsard, which may have informed this portrait, whether through the preferences of the sitters, patron, or artist. While an alternative attribution cannot be made at this point, the artist can be characterised as a Netherlandish portraitist, or someone familiar with Netherlandish portraiture, at work in the late sixteenth-century French court, who was engaging with both the work of Italian artists and perhaps, as will be discussed, French poetry.

Through comparison with the clothes worn in other French portraits, the sitters' costumes can be used to date this painting to within 1570-1575. It is from 1560 onwards that doublets became fashionable attire for both sexes in France, as seen in contemporary portraits such as an *Unknown Woman, Once thought to be Anne Boleyn* (fig. 32), probably by an artist in the Clouet circle. Like the sitters in the *Triple Profile Portrait*, the unknown woman pairs this doublet with a short ruff, which remained a popular style into the 1570s. Towards the end of that century, however, larger, often semi-circular, ruffs became more fashionable, as can be seen in the painting of the *Ball at Henri III's Court,* 1581 (fig. 33). The clothing therefore suggests a date in the early- to mid-1570s. Having addressed some of the unintentional

[272] For the relationship between word and image in Lucas de Heere's poetry, see Bart Ramakers, 'Art and Artistry in Lucas de Heere', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 59 (2009): 164–192. '…the poetry of De Heere, like that of Van der Noot, largely imitates the lyrics composed by Italian and French poets, such as Petrarch (1304-1374) and Clément Marot (1496- 1544), and writers associated with the Pléiade, especially Ronsard. The reception and circulation of French poetry in the Netherlands was profuse and supplied a model of imitation for numerous vernacular works,' in Giancarlo Fiorenza, 'Paludanus, Alabaster, and the Erotic Appeal of Art in Antwerp', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 67, No. 1 (2017): 290-291. As Bart Ramakers has noted, of De Heere's anthology of seventy poems, *Hof en Boomgaerd der Poësien*, twenty-two are translations of poems by the French poet, Clément Marot, in Ramakers, 'Art and Artistry', 170.

uncertainty that has grown up around its attribution, we can turn to exploring how this painting deliberately generates ambiguous effects.

The Profile Pose

The depiction of three sitters in the same profile pose is highly unusual. Other compositions depicting three figures, such as Titian's *Allegory of Prudence*, 1565-70, and Anthony Van Dyck's *Charles I in Three Positions*, 1635-36, differ from the *Triple Profile Portrait*, since they depict the heads looking in different directions, or, in the case of Van Dyck, one sitter in different positions, creating more balanced compositions. In single portraits, however, the profile pose already had a long history, as *quattrocento* Florentine portraitists especially popularised this format. For Rab Hatfield, who first studied this pose extensively in Italian men's portraits, it cultivates a sense of remoteness, speaking above all to exemplarity.[273] In women's portraits, Patricia Simons argues that the profile, while originally a classicising form of heroic male portraiture, became especially associated with communicating status and chaste beauty, as the sitter does not return the viewer's gaze.[274]

While the aims behind sixteenth-century French courtly portraits and *quattrocento* Florentine civic portraits were different, both likely looked to the use of the profile pose in the art of antiquity, seen on surviving coins and medals, as inspiration. Both of these later revivals may have aimed to import these connotations of distance, exemplarity and classical authority. This can be seen, for example, in French profile portraits that reference antique profiles on coins and medals, like those of King Henri II (fig. 34). Given its popularity in quattrocento Italy, however, in sixteenth-century France, the profile view was a well-known

[273] Rab Hatfield, 'Five Early Renaissance Portraits', *Art Bulletin* 47, No. 3 (1965): 318, 324-27. These connotations of distance came to fuel David Rosand's argument that profile portraits were usually posthumous, in David Rosand, 'The Portrait, the Courtier, and Death', in *Castiglione: The Ideal and the Real in Renaissance Culture*, ed. David Rosand and Robert Hanning (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 97-102. As David Berger argues, however, citing Hatfield, that this does not matter, as the form itself seeks to abstract people into exemplars, in Berger, 'Fictions of Pose', 105.
[274] See Patricia Simons, 'Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture', *History Workshop: A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Historians* 25, No. 1 (1988): 4-30.

and likely deliberately archaising format. The artist behind the *Triple Profile Portrait* may have used this pose not only to evoke classical gravitas, but also to draw attention to the commemorative and long-lasting intentions behind portraiture, by evoking a pose that had been in frequent use across the Continent for over a hundred years.[275]

The profile pose places this portrait in communication with long-standing traditions, perhaps evoking the often articulated function of portraiture in the renaissance to create an eternal and lasting image. In the case of the *Triple Profile Portrait*, however, Hatfield's criticism that earlier Italian male profile portraits fail to 'convince as representations of the actual physical structure of human faces' seems not to apply.[276] The shadows, dark brows and glinting eyes convincingly suggest individualised features. Their similarity prompts the viewer to look at each face in turn and to compare the details, finding uncanny resemblance, but not indistinction, suggesting that these are the likenesses of three different sitters. This uneasy mix of the generalising profile format and physical differentiation raises questions of genre and intent.[277]

Traditional studies of portraiture usually see the development of mimetic portraiture, as likeness of a once-living individual, rather than representing a generic type, as linked to the renaissance birth of the individual.[278] Much scholarship has since sought to dismantle these assumptions. Harry Berger, for example, criticised previous scholarship's interpretation of portraits as windows onto the sitters' inner worlds, according to which physiognomic observations are often explained using biographical details.[279] As Berger argues, portraits

---

[275] This format may be understood as the visual manifestation of what McGowan called the 'preoccupation in the Renaissance with classical forms of praise', which was especially alive in France. Margaret McGowan, *Ideal Forms in the Age of Ronsard* (Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press, 1985), 1.

[276] Rab Hatfield, 'Five Early Renaissance Portraits', 318.

[277] The profile format is a 'generalising visual device', often used to attribute universal or ideal qualities to figures, in Joanna Woodall, 'Introduction', 2.

[278] See Simons, 'Homosociality and Erotics', 29; Joanna Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture: The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 17.

[279] Berger, 'Fictions of Pose', 88. As Joanna Woodall has explored, physiognomic likeness, seen to refer to the identity of the living or once-living person, has been central to western art, in Woodall, 'Introduction', 1.

reflect not only, or even primarily, the internal life of a sitter, but how they wished to be portrayed and the image that the artist wished to create. Berger therefore emphasised the fictional nature of portraits, foregrounding the role of the sitter in dictating their 'pose' and appearance. Indeed, much work on early modern portraiture has turned to the fictionalisation of self, inspired by Castiglione and the various, rather than singular, ideals or performances that portraits can display.[280] Foregrounding the fictional nature of portraits has also allowed for the study of imagined portraits and those where the fictional or real status of the subject is troubled.[281] As Caroline Vout summarised, 'the reassertion of the portrait as an artwork enables us to sidestep the vexing question of mimesis or faithfulness'.[282]

This has included new approaches to portraits that trouble the gender binary, or blur the lines between portraiture and allegory. Elizabeth Cropper, for example, first treated anonymous and imaginary portraits, especially of women, as occupying an ambiguous position between depiction of a historical individual and stylisation in line with Petrarchan ideals. Stephen Campbell addresses the largely anonymous, often beautified 'male pictorial counterparts to Laura and Beatrice' in Italian art from 1500-1540, which problematise the relationship between portrait and fiction, by rooting their particular, ambiguous beauty in homoeroticism in contemporary culture and poetry.[283] Lorenzo Pericolo similarly responded to the challenges of anonymity and androgyny in Michelangelo's androgynous *Ideal Heads*

---

[280] For Paul Barolsky 'the self…is the seat of fiction and illusion', quoted in Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*, 17; Simons, 'Homosociality and Erotics', 29.

[281] See, for example, Jennifer Craven, '*Ut pictura poesis*: A New Reading of Raphael's Portrait of *La Fornarina* as a Petrarchan Allegory of Painting, Fame, and Desire', *Word and Image* 10, No. 4 (1994): 371-94; Elizabeth Cropper, 'On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style', *Art Bulletin* 58, No. 3 (1976): 374-394; Elizabeth Cropper, 'The Place of Beauty in the High Renaissance and its Displacement in the History of Art', in *Place and Displacement in the Renaissance*, ed. Alvin Vos (New York, NY: State University of New York at Binghamton, 1995), 159-206; Mary Rogers, 'The Decorum of Women's Beauty: Trissino, Firenzuola, Luigini, and the Representation of Women in Sixteenth-Century Painting', *Renaissance Studies* 2, No. 1, (1988): 47-88; Carol Plazzotta, 'Bronzino's Laura', *Burlington Magazine* 140, No. 1141, (1998): 251-63.

[282] Caroline Vout, 'Face to Face with Fiction: Portraiture and the Biographical Tradition', in *Fictions of Art History*, ed. Mark Ledbury (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 73.

[283] Campbell, 'Eros in the Flesh', 634. See also Carlo Pedretti, 'The 'Angel in the Flesh', *Academia Leonardi Vinci: Journal of Leonardo Studies and Bibliography of Vinciana* 4 (1991): 24-48.

by uncovering parallels in his poetry (fig. 35).[284] These studies on ambiguity of identity and gender demonstrate the need to explore their ambiguity in their cultural and literary context.

Without further evidence, we can never know if this is a portrait of three sitters who once lived, an imagined ideal, or an artistic exercise, like Michelangelo's *Ideal Heads*.[285] We cannot rule out the possibility that the *Triple Profile Portrait* might represent a similar depiction of androgynous ideals or generic types, or a challenge to the viewer's expectations. Yet in the *Triple Profile Portrait*, it seems that the viewer is not meant to differentiate three ideal types, or purely allegorical figures such as three Muses, Magi or Fates, all usually differentiated by their attributes or greater physical variation, or the Graces, whose varied poses are usually designed to give a view of the female body in the round.[286] In this portrait, the profile view, combined with physiognomic variation, suggests that it is indeed meant to refer to individuals, even as the costumes raise the possibility of allegorical significance.

The sitters' similar but individualised features may be intended to communicate family resemblance. A sibling relationship would indeed provide a context for why these sitters were depicted together. Dynastic portraiture had a strong tradition in France, as abroad. In 1561, for example, François Clouet painted a full-length depiction of Catherine de Medici and her children (fig. 36). The *Allegory of the Dinteville Family*, 1537, in which the four Dinteville brothers took on biblical roles, may form a similar allegorised portrait of siblings (fig. 37). Without the discovery of documents relating to the *Triple Profile Portrait*, however, it is impossible to know whether the sitters display a family resemblance or were simply depicted in order to create a homogenised appearance for a sense of harmonious composition, or to communicate their similar character, age or social rank.

---

[284] Pericolo, 'Donna bella e crudele', 202-233.

[285] For past reactions to the *Ideal Heads*, see Cropper, 'The Place of Beauty', 196. For more on the 'puzzling superimposition of unidentifiable elements' in these heads, see Pericolo, 'Donna bella e crudele', 203.

[286] Depictions of the three Graces frequently drew on classical precedents. These similarly 'invited viewers to pick their preferred angle'. See Caroline Vout, *Classical Art: A Life History from Antiquity to the Present* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018), 103.

The generalising nature of the profile view shrouds not only the sitters' relationship in ambiguity, but even their gender, by limiting the visual information through which a viewer could come to a judgment about their gender identities. Seeing the sitters face-on would allow a viewer to categorise their genders more easily, since it would foreground sexual characteristics such as the fullness of their cheeks or jaw. The viewer's eye is instead drawn to the faces, emerging from the darkness in a central strip, which comprises the most ambiguous area of the painting. In this way, the image also cultivates visual ambiguity, focusing the eye on three faces that cannot be conclusively gendered.

According to psychologists, gender is some of the first information we seek to acquire from a new face.[287] While maintaining that the viewer responds to the painting as a representation and not as if confronted by three figures in real life, it can nonetheless be presumed that people usually attempt to assign a gender to sitters in portraits. Indeed, Chastel's frustration at the unidentifiability of the sitters' genders anecdotally confirms the idea that a viewer seeks to discern, but is not given unambiguous signals about, the gender of those depicted in the *Triple Profile Portrait.*[288] While the application of concepts from modern psychology may risk an ahistorical approach, psychological and historical studies emphasise that gender performance and its reception are contextually determined.[289] Gendered attributes in portraits play a significant role in guiding perceptions, as mediated

---

[287] Research by cognitive psychologists has demonstrated that we 'unconsciously and automatically sex categorize any person to whom we cast ourselves in relation', in Cecilia Ridgeway and Shelley Correll, 'Unpacking the Gender System: A Theoretical Perspective on Gender Beliefs and Social Relations', *Gender and Society* 18, No. 4 (2004): 514. See Marilynn Brewer and Layton Lui, 'The Primary of Age and Sex in the Structure of Person Categories', *Social Cognition* 7, No.3 (1989): 262-274; Candace West and Don Zimmerman, 'Doing Gender', *Gender and* Society 1, No. 2 (1987): 125-151.

[288] Chastel, *The Crisis*, 193.

[289] '…in everyday social relational contexts, we sex categorize others based on appearance and behavioral cues (e.g., dress, hairstyles, voice tone) that are culturally presumed to stand for physical sex differences', in Ridgeway and Correll, 'Unpacking the Gender System', 515. For more on the role of clothing in materialising gender, and its historically contingent nature, see Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 13.

by the viewer's own culturally shaped assumptions. The sitters' lack of gender distinction forces the viewer to turn to their costumes for further hints as to their genders.

Gender Ambiguity

Comparison with sixteenth-century French men and women's portraits suggests that the artist combined elements of costumes and physiognomy that held masculine and feminine connotations. The sitters' complexions are delicate, with pink cheeks, but ruddier, for example, than the portrait of *Elisabeth of Austria* (fig. 38), who typifies renaissance ideals of pale, feminine beauty. Moreover, the profile displays to full advantage the individualised features of the sitters, which are not smoothed, perfected, and rounded as in Elisabeth of Austria's portrait. She appears idealised, in line with Petrarchan conceptions of feminine beauty, which emphasised starker contrasts between pale skin tone, dark brows and eyes, and red lips and cheeks than can be seen in the *Triple Profile Portrait*.[290] If women, the sitters in the *Triple Profile Portrait* break with conventional beauty ideals, creating a more individualised and masculine appearance. Yet the sitters also do not conform to the conventions of renaissance masculinity in portraits. The portrait of Henri II by François Clouet, 1559, for example, while delicately rendered in the artist's idealising style, depicts the sitter with a darker, longer, and fashionably bearded face (fig. 39). Other details also prompt further consideration of whether these sitters were men.

While their classicising hairstyle was common to Fontainebleau iconography, seen in particular on images of Venus and other deities, the hairline suggests a widow's peak. Contemporary portraits, however, show that this may not have been a raised or receding male hairline, but a women's hairstyle that brushed hair back from the temples and may have been cultivated by plucking the hairline artificially higher, or into a heart-shape. This style is seen in François Clouet's portrait of *Elizabeth of Austria*, c.1571, as well as Gabrielle

[290] For Petrarchism and idealisation in painting, see Cropper, 'On Beautiful Women', 374-394. For a Petrarchan reading of this portrait, see François Lecercle, *La Chimère de Zeuxis: Portrait poétique et portrait peint en France et en Italie à la Renaissance* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1987), 118.

d'Estrees' sisters, Duchesse de Villars, on the left in the famous bathing double portrait (fig. 38, 40).[291] While a modern viewer might see this hairline as receding, a high forehead was often considered a mark of beauty, included in idealised descriptions of female beauty.[292] When shown in profile, however, and not paired with a pale complexion, plucked eyebrows and delicate features, as seen in the bathing portrait, this hairline produces a more masculine effect.

Some shadowing on the far-left sitter's chin might also, at first glance, seem to imply slight stubble. Yet the colour is close to another shadow, in a thinly painted area beneath the second sitter's eye, which more clearly represents the fall of light. These shadows seem to have worn especially thin as the pigment degraded, allowing the slate support to become more visible. For a modern viewer, their earrings may also suggest that the sitters are women, although this accessory also became fashionable on men from around 1570 onwards, as portraits and written sources attest (fig. 41). The Venetian ambassador to France, Francesco Morosini, noted with disapproval that Henri III sported this trend in 1572: 'what greatly detracts from his dignity, in my opinion is that, like women, his ears are pierced (a fairly common practice among the French)'.[293]

---

[291] It seems to be an early modern, subtler development of the 'bicorne' style of hair or headdress. See Andrea Denny-Brown, *Fashioning Change: The Trope of Clothing in High and Late-Medieval England* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2012), 144.

[292] See Romeo's description, 'I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,/ By her high forehead, and her scarlet lip…', in William Shakespeare, 'Romeo and Juliet' in *The Folger Shakespeare*, ed. Barbara Mowat, Paul Werstine, Michael Poston, and Rebecca Niles, *Folger Shakespeare Library*, October 31, 2020: https://shakespeare.folger.edu/shakespeares-works/romeo-and-juliet/. For plucking hairlines in the renaissance, see Carole Collier Frick, 'Fashion and Adornment', in *A Cultural History of Hair in the Renaissance*, ed. Edith Snook (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 53.

[293] Quoted in Robert Knecht, *Hero or Tyrant? Henry III, King of France, 1574-89* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 132-133. Earrings may have been adopted by men under Henri III in particular as part of a range of fashion developments, which encouraged a more youthful, boyish, androgynous appearance. This movement towards a more youthful silhouette between Henri II and Henri III, which saw codpieces vanish, silhouettes slim, and swords become less prominent, is explored in Ferguson, *Queer (Re)Readings*, 100; Knecht, *The French Renaissance*, 312-3.

Similarly, the kind of doublet pictured here began as an item of men's clothing, but migrated into women's wardrobes from 1560s onwards. A similar one is seen, for example, in the portrait of an *Unknown Woman, Once thought to be Anne Boleyn* (fig. 32). Similar trends could be seen across Europe, and Elizabeth I sometimes wore a similar doublet-inspired upper part in her portraits, like the *Darnley* portrait from 1575 (fig. 42). Janet Arnold has charted how the style entered elite women's clothes via riding habits, which adapted male styles for practicality.[294] Demonstrating that doublets could retain masculine connotations even when adopted by women, in France the riding habit was referred to as an 'amazone' ('amazon'), drawing a parallel with the mythological tribe of warrior women, the Amazons.[295] Similar doublets, cut in a seventeenth-century, longer style, later became part of the equestrian costume worn in images of women on horseback, who challenged gendered conventions with their masculine clothing and activity.[296] Taken together, neither hair, earrings, doublets, nor faces in the *Triple Profile Portrait* provide clear evidence of their gender. While the sitters may have been unconventional women, depicted in masculine clothing, or youthful, beardless men, with feminine hairstyles, the portrait does not provide enough information to decide, and indeed cultivates an ambiguous impression.

This ambiguity may be explained by a court masque context. The sitters could be cross-dressed men attending a court entertainment, which was a fairly frequent occurance. In 1541, for example, Henri II appeared at a court entertainment as the goddess Diana, and in

---

[294] Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe*, 142, 144.

[295] Orgel, *Impersonations*, 84. For more on the early modern associations of Amazons, see Kathryn Schwarz, *Tough Love: Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), esp. 5-8; Mary Villeponteaux, ''Not as women wonted be': Spenser's Amazon Queen', in *Dissing Elizabeth: Negative Representations of Gloriana*, ed. Julia Walker (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 217.

[296] See, for example, Pierre Daret, *Equestrian Portrait of Henrietta Maria of France*, 1625-1630, engraving, 41.1 × 28.8 cm, London, Royal Collection Trust; Claude Déruet, *Equestrian Portrait of Madame de Saint-Baslemont*, 1646, oil on canvas, 374 × 408 cm, Musée Lorrain, Palais des ducs de Lorraine. For these images and more on women on horseback in seventeenth-century France, 'emulating the behaviour and poses assumed by military commanders and male courtiers, themselves striving to imitate the king', see Valerio Zanetti, 'Holding the Reins: Female Horseback Riding and Aristocratic Authority in 17th Century France', *Ludica: Annals of the History and Culture of Games* 25 (2020): 125-143, 126; Valerio Zanetti, 'From the King's Hunt to the Ladies' Cavalcade: Female Equestrian Culture at the Court of Louis XIV', *The Court Historian* 24, No. 3 (2019): 250-268.

1542, with his head festooned with flowers, perhaps in the manner displayed in the *Triple Profile Portrait*.[297] Costume designs survive, demonstrating the form that gender-inverted costumes often took, such as Primaticcio's costume for the feminine virtue of 'patience', spinning on the back of a tortoise, designed for Charles d'Angloulème, Duc d'Orléans, in 1542 (fig. 43).[298] Court masques often featured gender play and these occasions were also commemorated with artistic commissions. The costly Valois tapestries, c.1580, for example, took a series of courtly entertainments as their theme. If this was indeed the context of the *Triple Profile Portrait*, then the three sitters, perhaps grouped together due to a familial relation, could be dancers or performers in a court entertainment, which would explain their similar dress.

The gender ambiguity in the Triple Profile Portrait, however, may be too subtle to be gender-inverted costume for a court masque. On these occasions, gender inversion often carried allegorical significance, and therefore had to be explicit enough for that significance to be communicated. At the Bayonne festivities on 19 June 1565, all of the French men were dressed as women, since, the *cartel* explained, 'the women of Gaul being too proud, the men decided to live as women.'[299] The men were recognisably dressed in women's clothing in deference to Catherine de' Medici and her daughter Elisabeth, who, for their part, were described as an ideal combination of female beauty and male virtue: 'ladies in body, men in courage'.[300] If the gender-inverted nature of the masquers' costumes was not recognised, then the symbolic weight of the costumes would have been lost. Instead, a mixing of gender identifiers is represented in the *Triple Profile Portrait*. This mixing, however, is not

---

[297] Margaret McGowan, *Dance in the Renaissance: European Fashion, French Obsession* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 143.
[298] Cordellier et al., *Primatice*, 131.
[299] Margriet Hooglviet, 'Princely Culture and Catherine de Medicis', in *Princes and Princely Culture 1450-1650*, I, ed. Martin Gosman, Alasdair Macdonald and Arjo Vanderjagt (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 122. For more on Amazonian disguise in this festivity, see Sylvie Steinberg, *La confusion des sexes: la travestissement de la Renaissance à la Revolution* (Paris: Librairie Antheme Fayard, 2001), 230.
[300] 'Dames, quant est au corps, et, quant au courage, hommes…', Quoted in Hooglviet, 'Princely Culture', 122.

necessarily indicative of how the sitters would have presented in real life, or of their gender identities.

It is important to bear in mind that sex was usually constructed in rigidly binary terms at this time. Contrary to the 'one-sex' model of renaissance sexual difference, promoted by Thomas Laqueur as the dominant 'paradigm', men and women were not typically seen as sexually or psychologically the same.[301] In fact, humoral and elemental theories emphasised how gender differences suffused every element of bodily composition.[302] The cooler, wetter humoral makeup of women, in comparison with the hotter, drier humors of men, therefore governed everything from genitals, to body shape, to character traits and hair length. While this system contained the possibility of masculine women and effeminate men existing, a binary model was upheld and extended to an even broader range of physical and mental qualities than today.

Bearing the gendered connotations of the clothing and the binary nature of early modern gender in mind, two main options present themselves as to how to interpret the sitters' gender presentation in the *Triple Profile Portrait*. These sitters could represent an androgynous ideal, according to which their contradictorily gendered attributes do not constitute antitheses or a choice between multiple gendered readings, but are simply read simultaneously. Given the role of the clothing as a frame, with feminine attributes above and masculine below, it seems more likely that the faces can be read as either masculine or feminine at any given moment. According to this second reading, the image therefore

---

[301] Many scholars have since sought to dismantle this paradigm, based on the popularity of Galen's *On the Use of Parts*, by highlighting the popularity of competing theories circulating in medical texts, on the stage and in literature, and in more vernacular forms. For a summary of this debate, see Schleiner, 'Early Modern Controversies', 180-191. As Katharine Park and Robert Nye argue, 'Aristotle… together with Aristotelian theorists who dominated European thinking on sexuality between 1250 and 1550, expounded a two sex model more sharply delineated in many respects than any modern theory', in Katharine Park and Robert Nye, 'Destiny is Anatomy, Essay Review of Thomas Laqueur's Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud', *The New Republic* (18 February, 1991): 54.

[302] Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 32.

conforms to Elkins' definition of an ambiguous object, as it does not allow both interpretations, the masculine and the feminine readings of the faces, to be sustained at once, yet gives no hint as to the primacy of either reading.[303] In this way, it resembles an 'obverse-reverse' optical illusion.[304] Like the famous *Duck-rabbit* optical illusion, a viewer can switch between interpretations with increasing speed, but it is impossible to see both at the same time, even if the memory of the previous image remains.[305] Following Gombrich, two interpretations can be seen in the *Triple Profile Portrait*: a masculine reading of the faces or a feminine one, which are prompted by the material and pictorial choices of the artist.[306] While the visual evidence implies the latter reading, in order to assess the validity of these interpretations in context, we will now turn to the literary and artistic parallels in the Valois court.

Literary and Visual Parallels

French renaissance culture displayed a fascination with androgyny, hermaphroditism and gender transgression. Interpretations of these phenomena were diverse. Hermaphrodites, for example, were simultaneously described as wonders of nature that could further human understanding —by demonstrating its limits— provide entertainment, or constitute monstrous portents.[307] These various interpretations lie behind the inclusion by Ambroise

---

[303] See Elkins, *Why Are Our Pictures Puzzles?*, 97, 88.

[304] For more on this type of puzzle see Elkins, *Why Are Our Pictures Puzzles?*, 67; Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* (2002), 4-5.

[305] Gombrich, *Art and Illusion* (2002), 5. Richard Wollheim highlights the viewer's awareness of the representational nature of a work of art, in which you see interpretations 'in' a mimetic work, in response to its aesthetic prompts, in opposition to Ernst Gombrich's assertion that the viewer reacts to mimetic art 'as' the thing it represents, in Richard Wollheim, *Art and its Objects,* 2e (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 205-226.

[306] Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (London: Phaidon Press, 1956), 25.

[307] For various myths of androgynes and hermaphrodites in early modern French culture, and especially medical texts, see Poirier, *L'homosexualité*, 66-70. Montaigne, for example, famously recounts the story of Marie-Germain, a girl who underwent a spontaneous, natural sex change, in his essay on the 'Power of Imagination'. This story was also narrated by Ambrose Paré. For more on this, see Fisher, *Materialising Gender*, 14; John O'Brien, 'Betwixt and Between: Hermaphroditism and

Paré, barber-surgeon to the Valois kings from 1552 to 1590, of hermaphrodites among the 'Monsters and Prodigies' of his 1573 illustrated encyclopedia of curiosities.[308] Amazons, by contrast, formed a frequent comparison for strong women, used to both flatter women at court and to criticise the subversion of natural hierarchies in popular pamphlets and literature.[309] As we have seen, since the early sixteenth century, French monarchs and courtiers cross-dressed for entertainments and mined classical stories of sexual ambiguity and transformation for their artistic potential in visual art and poetry. This fascination did not end with François I's death, as gender ambiguity continued to influence court and popular culture.

In fact, in the polarising context of the French Wars of Religion, Henri III's impotence made issues of gender and sexuality all the more pressing.[310] The ambiguous representational strategies that had escaped public censure under previous kings were increasingly considered problematic by the broader public and court commentators in these times of greater uncertainty. For the Protestant commentator, Henri Estienne, the sexual confusion that he saw in courtly gender play and subversion was a sign of political discord and moral decadence (linked to Catholicism).[311] Similarly, *The Mirror of France*, 1581, criticised the 'disorder of the Heliogabaluses at court, and the French Amazons', likening courtiers to the

---

Masculinity', in *Masculinities in Sixteenth-century France: Proceedings, of the Eighth Cambridge French Renaissance Colloquium, 5-7 July 2003*, ed. Philip Ford (Cambridge: Cambridge French Colloquia, 2006), 128-129; Patricia Parker, 'Gender Ideology, Gender Change: The Case of Marie Germain', *Critical Inquiry* 19, No. 2 (1993): 337-364; Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 66-7.

[308] See Gilbert, *Early Modern Hermaphrodites*, 24-5.

[309] Steinberg, *La confusion*, 231-2.

[310] 'Circumscribed by the politics of patronage and his own childlessness, it would seem that Henry was trying to express his majesty and leadership of the court within a recent royal tradition of gender ambiguity and sexual representation,' yet the 'monarchy that Henry III inherited in 1574 was bankrupt and divided by religious wars'. See Crawford, 'Love, Sodomy and Scandal', 530, 517. 'l'impuissance politique du souverain fût tôt associée àun manqué de virilité dans la direction de sa (Henri III's) vie personelle et de sa vie semi-privée à la cour', in Poirier*, L'homosexualité,* 110. 'Anxiety about the current political situation is displaced onto the fantasised symbolic body of the king and his court, which is construed in line with contemporary fascination with, and revulsion from, the hermaphrodite', in O'Brien, 'Betwixt and Between', 134.

[311] Steinberg, *La Confusion*, 273.

cross-dressing, decadent Roman emperor, Heliogabalus.[312] The Huguenot poet and propagandist Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné similarly parodied androgynous fashions in his satirical verses against Henri III and his court: 'at first glance, everyone had difficulty distinguishing whether he saw a female King or a male Queen'.[313] As Kathleen Long has argued, 'Henri's court poets seem to have a sensibility that is completely out of touch with popular demands for clear distinctions between men and women, Protestants and Catholics, foreigners and Frenchmen.'[314] The *Triple Profile Portrait*, however, speaks to a liminal period in which strategies of royal representation had not yet begun to attract great public disapproval. Nonetheless, it is worth reiterating the courtly nature of this object's original audience, who likely would have seen an image like this through the lens of literary and artistic uses and discussions of gender ambiguity, rather than as a sign of portentous hermaphroditism.

For its original audience, this portrait may have reflected long-standing tropes of symbolic hermaphroditism or the 'royal androgyne', in which gender ambiguity often communicated an ideal combination of gendered characteristics or perfection itself, drawing on Aristophanes's description of androgynes as complete beings in Plato's *Symposium*.[315] In court art, this conceit is best exemplified by the *Composite Portrait of François I*, c.1545 (fig. 44). The King, easily recognised due to a strong resemblance to his portraits by Jean Clouet, stands on a plinth bearing a poetic inscription, against a black painted background. Perhaps initially masked by his classicising dress, on closer inspection, his body is an uneasy hybrid of limbs and attributes from five male and female deities. He holds up an armour-clad arm

---

[312] 'la desordre des Heliogabales de Cour, et Amazones françaises', Nicholas Barnaud, cited in Steinberg, *La Confusion*, 273. Guy Poirier agrees that by the end of the sixteenth century, hermaphroditism or androgyny was intimately attached to monstrous otherness. In Poirier, *L'Homosexualité*, 70.

[313] '…au premier abord chacun estoit en peine/ S'il voyoit un Roy femme ou bien un homme Reyne'. Quoted in Long, *Hermaphrodites*, 204.

[314] Long, *Hermaphrodites*, 174.

[315] Aristophanes' speech in *The Symposium* elaborated the mythical origins of love in the separation of androgynes into couples, who, from then on sought their 'other half'. See Plato, *The Symposium*, transl. M.C. Howatson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 22-27. For more on this myth in French literature, see Marian Rothstein, 'Mutations of the Androgyne: Its Functions in Early Modern French Literature', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34, No. 2 (2003): 411.

clutching a sword, borrowed from Mars, contrasting with the curved silhouette of breasts and rounded feminine stomach of 'Amour'. His pale, feminine left arm grasps both Mercury's Caduceus, and Diana's bow. On his head, he wears Minerva's plumed helmet, with Mercury's winged sandals on his feet. Diana's quiver of arrows is visible at his left shoulder. This combination of male and female in one body recalls French poetic descriptions of Hermaphroditus, from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, whose body, combined with the nymph Salmacis, 'became composed of two sexes'.[316]

Due to the awkwardness of this conglomeration—each feature joined into a whole, yet retaining the appearance of belonging to separate entities—some art historians have argued that it is satirical.[317] Indeed, it seems a comically literal visualisation of the verses on the plinth, which commend the King through comparison with these gods and goddesses. Yet the high level of finish, seen in the shimmering, shell gold highlights on his mantle and hatching on his underskirt, as well as the medium—goache, like a courtly miniature or impresa—is rare for anti-monarchical satire, usually undertaken in print. A work of this quality could have been commissioned by the King, or someone close to him.[318] Moreover, the conceit of combining the virtues of both sexes was common to much French court poetry, where it could be serious, playful, or erotic, but rarely mocking.[319] While the allegorical portrait may seem an ironic counterpoint to these verses, it more likely constitutes a serious visualisation of a poetic tradition, designed to demonstrate the King's perfection, surpassing nature. Its combination of text and miniature may have aimed to evoke the competition between poetry and image, a favourite theme in the work of Pléiade

---

[316] Pontus de Tyard, *Fables de Fleuves ou Fontaines, avec la description pour la Peinture, & les Eprigrammes* (Paris: Jean Richer, 1586), Sig. 17 ^{v}-18 ^{r}.

[317] For Raymond Waddington, for example, it is a parody of François I's domination by the strong women at his court, in Waddington, 'The Bisexual Portrait', 99-132, 124.

[318] Barbara Meyer suggests that it may have been commissioned by the King's sister, which would explain its quality, in Barbara Meyer, 'Marguerite de Navarre and the Androgynous Portrait of François Ier', *Renaissance Quarterly* 48, No. 2 (1995): 287-325.

[319] Courtly fascination with the trope of androgyny was sometimes mocked in literature. See Gargantua's androgyne hat badge in Rabelais. Yet this is easily distinguishable in form and tone from its uses in French court poetry. Jerome Schwarz, 'Scatology and Eschatology in Gargantua's Androgyne Device', *Etudes Rabelaisiennes* 14 (1977): 265-75; Marian Rothstein, 'Gargantua: Agape, Androgyny, and the Abbaye de Thélème', *French Forum* 26, No. 1 (2001): 1-19.

poets and court artists, as explored in the previous chapter. This image demonstrates how gendered attributes could be combined in French renaissance allegorical portraiture to form an image of a hermaphroditic figure or androgyne, which ultimately contrasts with the *Triple Profile Portrait*'s subtler effects. It therefore seems that the *Triple Profile Portrait* was not intended, like the *Composite Portrait*, to represent androgynes or hermaphroditic figures. Yet the *Triple Profile Portrait* also find parallels in poetry and especially that of the late sixteenth century.

After the reign of François I, androgyny was increasingly valued not for its spiritual symbolism, but as an intellectual challenge. As Kathleen Long has suggested, 'poets of the court of Henri III (and later) were fascinated with this confusion for its own sake, as a sort of intellectual puzzle'.[320] Poetry commended gender-ambiguous fashions as pleasurably deceptive, often evoking the classicising trope of initial misgendering to praise wearers of androgynous headwear in particular. The historian and biographer of the Valois court, Pierre de Bourdeille, Seigneur de Brantôme, for example, described Marguerite de Navarre's androgynous beauty when wearing a cap: 'Her it did suit so well that, seeing her face only when she was so bedecked, no man could tell which sex she came nearer to, whether she more looked the handsome boy or the beautiful woman she really was'.[321] Here, Brantôme echoes Pierre de Ronsard's Sonnet 90 of *Les Amours*, in which he writes of his mistress, Cassandre: 'When her hair, gathered above her ears/ Imitates the style of Venus? / When with a cap she makes her head resemble Adonis, /And no one knows (so well does she disguise/ Her indeterminate head) whether she's a girl or a boy?'.[322] This sonnet struck a chord with contemporaries and was often imitated over the next decades. Philippe Desportes described the versatility of his mistress with her hair under a hat, ' you represent

[320] Long, *Hermaphrodites*, 163. As Emma Herdman has suggested, this account of Ovid's myth resists the moralisation often attached to this story, in Emma Herdman, 'Folie and Salmacis, 'Labe's Rewriting of Ovid', *The Modern Language Review* 108, No. 3 (2013): 795.

[321] '…qui s'en accommodoit si bien qu'à voir le visage seulement adonisé, on n'eust sceu juger de quel sexe elle tranchoit, ou d'un beau jeune enfant, ou d'une tres-belle dame qu'elle estoit', Brantôme, *Les Dames galantes*, ed. Pascal Pia (Paris: Gallimard, 1981), 295.

[322] 'Quel plaisir est ce, ainçois quelle merveille,/Quand ses cheveus troussés dessus l'oreille/ D'une Venus imitent la façon?/ Quand d'un bonet son chef elle Adonise,/ Et qu'on ne sait (tant bien elle deguise/ Son chef douteus,) s'elle est fille ou garçon?', Ronsard, *Les Amours*, 128.

to us/ the celestial beauty of Hylas or Adonis'.[323] The poet Jean Godard also followed Ronsard's lead in 1594, when complimenting his mistress's appeal with her hair loose or topped with a cap, invoking a similar comparison to Adonis, among other youthful male figures from antiquity: 'When Madame disguises herself as a man,/ Wearing a cap on her golden hair,/ She seems like an Adonis with admired dark eyes,/ Or a new Paris or some young Anchises'.[324] These examples highlight how gender ambiguity multiplied interpretative options ('like an Adonis… Or a new Paris or some young Anchises') and generated doubt, as highlighted by Cassandre's indeterminate or doubt-inducing ('douteus') head, demonstrating how this gender ambiguity subscribed to early modern definitions of ambiguity as doubt. This comparison was applied to men as well as women, as Philippe Desportes compared Henri III, then Duke of Anjou, to the cross-dressed Achilles in similar terms, since his 'sweet grace' and 'beautiful face' were such that 'one did not think him anything other than a maiden'.[325]

These poets grounded the appeal of androgynous styles in classical precedents, as suggested by Brantôme's and Ronsard's use of the same invented verb, 'adoniser', literally to make or become like Adonis, the adolescent favourite of both Venus and Bacchus. Adonis was often singled out as an epitome of youth and beauty by French poets, described by Pierre de Ronsard as 'all young and all beautiful'.[326] The poet Marc de Papillon, Seigneur de Lasphrise, for example, wrote an epitaph to the *mignon*, Louis de Maugiron, who was killed in a duel in 1578, eulogising him as comparable to Adonis in his beauty: 'Like an Adonis, he had a beautiful face'.[327] As these descriptions suggest, comparisons to Adonis evoked the classicising prototype of the attractive adolescent, potentially appealing to and blurring the boundaries between both genders, due to his youth and beauty.[328] This aspect of

---

[323] 'vous nous represent/ D'Hylas ou d'Adonis les célestes beauté', in Desportes, *Oeuvres*, 251.
[324] 'A l'heure que Madame en homme se déguise,/ Une toque portant sur ses cheveux dorés,/ Elle semble un Adon aux yeux moirs admirés,/ Ou un nouveau Pâris ou quelque jeane Anchises…', Jean Godard, quoted in Long, *Hermaphrodites*, 180.
[325] 'grace douce', 'visage beau', 'On ne l'estimoit pas autre qu'une pucelle', quoted in *Ibid.*, 172.
[326] 'tout jeune & tout beau', Ronsard, *Oevres Complètes,* XII, 110.
[327] '…tel qu'un Adonis, il eu beau le visage', Marc de Papillon, quoted in Long, *Hermaphrodites*, 200.
[328] Maya Corry explores the 'widespread perception that both women and older men would perceive the loveliness of young men in an erotic light', in Corry, *Masculinity and Spirituality*, 57.

renaissance culture was far from unique to France. The erotic potency of the *garzoni* in Italy, for example, was often attributed to the obfuscation of the boundary between masculinity and femininity.[329] Adonis, Apollo, young Achilles and Ganymede therefore became frequent figures of comparison for eroticised, androgynous youths for renaissance authors, whose youthful faces could belong to, or be attractive to, men or women.

This shift towards praising androgynous faces may also have been driven by the increasing, monstrous connotations attached to the hermaphroditic body. The cross-dressed body may have raised the spectre of the hermaphrodite, the subject of numerous medical texts and printed polemics in late sixteenth-century France, as discussed.[330] In contrast with the *Composite Portrait of François I*, when Philippe Desportes praises Henri III, 'you make us see Mars and Venus together again', he specifies that this is produced through the combination of his 'beautiful face', 'sweet demeanour', and his masculine 'generous courage'—only his face is visibly androgynous, while the rest of the description refers to character.[331] Indeed, Brantôme warns women against 'disguising of her sex and dressing herself as a boy' at court entertainments, exempting only the fashion trend of women adopting men's berets from his judgment.[332] This attests to the fact that a face ('le visage seulement') could be appealingly androgynous through headwear, while an androgynous body, by this time, could carry monstrous connotations. Rather than describing subjects as representing a truly androgynous ideal, who combine conflictingly gendered attributes seamlessly, late

[329] Ibid., 257.

[330] The androgyne, according to platonic theory, represented an ideal of wholeness and harmony, while the hermaphrodite, in a phrase drawn from Ovid, was 'both and neither sex' at once, in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, transl. David Raeburn (London: Penguin Classics, 2004), 144-150. For the relationship between the ideal androgyne and the monstrous hermaphrodite, see Rothstein, *The Androgyne*, 1-3. For an overview of the cultural associations of hermaphroditism, see Katherine Crawford, 'Sexuality: Of Man, Woman, and Beastly Business', in *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Renaissance*, ed. Linda Kalof and William Bynum (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 67-8.

[331] 'Vous… Nous faites voir encore Mars et Venus ensemble', 'visage beau', 'grace douce', genereux courage', Philippe Desportes, quoted in Long, *Hermaphrodites*, 172.

[332] 'deguiser son sexe…s'habiller en garçon', Brantôme, *Les Dames*, 295.

sixteenth-century authors often employed the trope of the 'double take', where the viewer mistakes the subject's gender.

The *Triple Profile Portrait* draws closer to this poetry, focusing on the intriguing visual confusion that could be spurred by androgynous faces, hair, or headwear. This supports a reading of the sitters' faces as deliberately gender-ambiguous, influenced by either the feminine hair above, or the masculine doublets below, like a multi-stable image. The sitters' shifting gendered interpretations can only be resolved by the addition of outside information about their identity. Just as Cassandre resembled a girl, with her hair up, or a boy, wearing a cap, this conundrum could only be solved by prior knowledge of her true gender—the girl 'that she really was'.[333] Relying only on the painting's visual cues, the identity of the sitters remains obscure.

Gender uncertainty seems another strategy, like the material aspects of the painting, or the ambiguity surrounding whether the flowers worn in the sitters' hair are real or artificial, designed to throw the viewer's assumptions into question. As in the earlier court at Fontainebleau, Jacqueline Boucher sees deliberately esoteric symbolism as 'characteristic' of the court of Henri III, in which complex and mysterious anagrams, emblems and devices were designed to feed discussion.[334] The *Triple Profile Portrait* was likely designed for a context that conformed to similar social ideals to those represented in *The Book of the Courtier*, in which art prompted discussion and differentiation of the sexes was a favoured topic.[335] As such, the *Triple Profile Portrait* may have played a role in a highly elitist interpretative game, functioning analogously to Bret Rothstein's definition of a 'difficult' object, which 'regularly defies a set of expectations that we bring to it.'[336] The particular delight of such an object would depend at least partly on the continued promise of a

[333] '…qu'elle estoit', Ibid.
[334] Jacqueline Boucher, *La cour de Henri III* (Rennes: Ouest France, 1986), 143.
[335] The third book is dedicated to debating how the ideal female courtier differs from her male counterpart. Castiglione, *The Book*, 211-214.
[336] Bret Rothstein, 'Visual Difficulty as a Cultural System', *RES* 65/66 (2014/2015): 344.

satisfaction still deferred.[337] The original patron may have leveraged the *Triple Profile Portrait*'s ambiguous effects, arbitrating its meaning in conversation. Although unlikely to have been a sitter, the patron might have known who these sitters were, or whether they were imaginary, ultimately interceding in conversations about the meaning of this painting in a public context. A viewer might misgender the sitters, refer to artificial flowers as real, or vice versa, making any number of 'mistakes' suggested by the painting, only to be corrected by the patron. For a viewer, moreover, recognising the sitters' quality of ineffable attraction could be equally advantageous. Just as capturing the intangible was described in Italian sixteenth-century poetics as facilitating the demonstration of artistic skill, so could the ability to discern the *je-ne-sais-quoi* in France identify both the subject and the viewer as someone who also possesses that certain something.[338]

Despite an enduring taste for esoteric and ambiguous art and praise for gender-ambiguous faces and headwear in poetry, there are not many visualisations of this particular trope in art. Perhaps the closest parallels to the *Triple Profile Portrait* are contemporary French wax portrait medallions, such as those of the Duchess of Savoy and Queen of Navarre, both from the second half of the sixteenth century, now at the Château d'Ecouen (fig. 45, 46). From their ornate golden, high-necked doublets, to their raised hairlines, these wax portraits echo the costumes and poses seen in the *Triple Profile Portrait*. These also show the sitters in a classicising profile pose, and their round format makes the parallel with portrait coins or medals more overt. The wax medium, known in the early modern period for creating particularly life-like results, is perhaps intended to enliven and exceed this classical format.[339] These medallions create an androgynous effect and perhaps may have once for contemporaries, due to their costumes, which, upon opening its box, may have temporarily

[337] Ibid.

[338] For Richard Scholar, this was 'a posture systematically cultivated by a group in order to affirm and maintain its identity', Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi*, 186-7.

[339] The ability of wax to mimic closely the effects of skin, for example, has been particularly explored in relation to renaissance ex-votos (life-sized votive figures that could be seen in renaissance churches). See David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 225-29; Megan Homes, 'Ex-votos: Materiality, Memory, and Cult', in *The Idol in the Age of Art: Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World*, ed. Michael Cole and Rebecca Zorach (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 159-81.

obscured their gender. Cropped below the bust, however, the viewer swiftly would have recognised their feminine silhouette. The *Triple Profile Portrait*, by contrast, does not include this visual information, keeping the question of the sitters' gender in play for longer.

The rhetoric surrounding appealingly indeterminate faces also finds a visual parallel in a series of enamel platters by Leonard Limousin, 1550, in which Venus possesses contradictory features and accessories (fig. 47). The head appears boyish, with a cap poised on top, while the body is unambiguously female. This image also seems to play on the power of the ambiguous face to subvert the viewer's expectations in a manner similar to the *Triple Profile Portrait*, although her nudity renders her masculine beret more a teasing nod towards androgynous fashions than creating an indeterminate figure. These comparisons prompt the question of why the *Triple Profile Portrait* creates a more ambiguous visual experience than other depictions of similar themes or sitters. Due to its close parallel in literature, it may be the case that the artist was deliberately creating a work that captures something of this ambiguous effect of the 'double-take'. Competition between arts and poetry, often conveyed by both arts striving to capture an indeterminate experience, provides a context for why the *Triple Profile Portrait* is anomalous in visual culture and closely aligned with poetry.

The *Paragone* between Painted and Poetic Portraits

The classical theme of *ut pictura poesis* in art and literature continued beyond the court of François I, transmitted especially through the work of Pierre de Ronsard, who was often imitated by later poets, and remained in the service of Henri III until his death in 1585. [340] As part of this theme, poets and painters also competed in portraying people, which formed a

[340] Norman Shapiro*, Lyrics of the French Renaissance: Marot, Du Bellay, Ronsard* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 18. See Roberto Campo, 'Mannerist Conflict and the 'Paragone' in Ronsard's 'Temple de Messeigneurs'', *L'Esprit Créateur* 33, No. 3 (1993): 9-19. 'The imitation of other or older poets gave rise to a derivative originality, that of the much-admired model', in Ramakers, 'Art and Artistry', 177.

particularly prized subject. Not only did French poets praise portraitists like Corneille de Lyon as their visual parallels, but in the hands of some, Michelangelo was transformed into a portrait painter, compared to both François Clouet and Ronsard.[341] By emphasising portraiture, poets shifted the arena of competition between the arts to reflect the domestic products of French writers and artists. This formed part of the Pléiade poets' aim to raise the standing of French arts, taking inspiration from the Italian writers before them, most notably Petrarch, who had sought to elevate vernacular rather than Latin language, and promote contemporary painters to the status of classical masters.[342] In the work of these writers, however, poetry almost always had the upper hand, including when it came to depicting people. Most frequently, poetic portraits' superiority hinged on their eternal nature —while paint physically degrades, poetry supposedly lasts forever—as well as its ability to capture more than meets the eye.[343] While painting could capture the physical, poetry could convey the experience of a beloved person, encapsulating something of their enigma or *je-ne-sais-quoi*.[344]

---

[341] Rèpaci-Courtois, 'Michel-Ange et les écrivains français', 72. In Ronsard's *Elégie à Janet*, the narrator paints a verbal portrait of his mistress for a painter to copy, demonstrating his verbal dexterity through competition with a painter who was known in the court as a talented portraitist, in Ronsard, *Les Oeuvres*, 324-329.

[342] As Philip Ford argues, however, in France, these attempts were 'more concerned …in establishing their prestige as humanist poets than they are in bringing their poetry to a broad audience', in Philip Ford, 'The Symbiotic Muse: The Case of Neo-Latin and Vernacular Poetry in Renaissance France', *Renaessance forum* 6 (2010): 93.

[343] Repaci-Courtois, 'Michel-Ange et les écrivains français', 68. Comparison with engraving sometimes forms an exception, used to represent an eternal image. Yet these poets' relationship with artistic metaphors and comparisons was ambivalent, and usually one of rivalry. See Mariann Regan, 'The Evolution of the Poet in Ronsard's Sonnet Sequences', *Mosaic* 11, No. 1 (1977): 133-4. As François Lecercle has argued, French poetic portraits cannot be treated as separate from the art with which these authors to compete in capturing features for posterity, in Lecercle, *La Chimère de Zeuxis*, 6.

[344] This phrase, as Philip Sohm explores, 'describes the ineffable by means of absences or lacunae, either verbal or visual', in Sohm, *Style in the Art* Theory, 190. For a detailed account of its transmission from antiquity, via Italy, to France, see Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi*, 25-38. Philip Ford traces these Petrarchan tropes to Latin love poetry, in Ford, 'The Symbiotic Muse', 80. Certain genres, especially the blazon, do deal with the physical attributes of the beloved (although, as seen, these descriptions were often vague and general, referring more to precedent than personal characteristics). Lecercle separates out two types of poetic portraits: those that enumerate physical parts, and those that seek to capture a person's charm, in Lecercle, *La Chimère de Zeuxis* 5, 7; 98.

While François Lecercle argues that poets also sought to compete with visual art by capturing 'space and global vision', inspired by perspectival art, visual and literary evidence instead suggests that both arts could converge on attempting to capture the enigmatic.[345] Ronsard, for example, sets a challenge to capture enigmatic qualities in an ode to the poet and painter Nicolas Denisot, who he ultimately insists could never paint his mistress Cassandre's peculiar 'grace' or 'transfixing smile'.[346] While this was a common poetic conceit, the extent of these changeable impressions, described, as Philip Ford has highlighted, through 'anti-thesis', including of gender, was particularly pronounced in France.[347] Describing personal contradiction as a site of fascination, central to much Petrarchan poetry, may have chimed particularly with elite French taste for obscurity and enigma. Even the Pléiade circle's descriptions of people seem to adhere to Ronsard's advice that poets should never fully reveal a work's meaning, but disguise it 'as painters do in well-drawn canvases'.[348]

Even as poets criticised the efforts of painters as mere shadows, drawing on Neoplatonic conceits, the most prized qualities or experiences that they sought to convey were also shadowy glimpses of their charismatic or desirable subjects, described as clusters of contradictions.[349] The competition between written and visual depictions of people, as

---

[345] 'Et comme les peintres s'efforcent de traduire ce qui, par nature, leur échappe—le mouvement, l'invisible, le subjectif —les poêtes essaient divers subterfuges pour saisir ce qui leur est interdit — l'espace et la vision globale', in Lecercle, *La Chimère de Zeuxis*, 7.

[346] 'Qui pourroit bien colorer/ La majesté de sa grace/ Qui me force à l'adorer?', or 'Son ris, ains une Meduse,/ Qui tout me va transformant?', quoted in McGowan, 'Ronsard and the Visual Arts', 180. 'These themes derive in turn from Petrarch's great poem on Simone Martini's portrait of Laura, in which desire for the absent beloved is grounded in the realisation that she can be present only as representation', in Walter Melion, 'Vivae dixisses virginis ora: The Discourse of Color in Hendrick Goltzius's Pygmalion and the Ivory Statue,' *Word & Image* 17, 1-2 (2001): 153-176, 162. Pontus de Tyard similarly wrote that the portraitist, Corenille de Lyon, could only capture a 'shadow' (l'ombre) of his mistress, in McGowan, 'Ronsard and the Visual Arts', 181.

[347] Ford, 'The Symbiotic Muse', 80.

[348] 'comme les peintres font/ Aux tableaux bien portraits', quoted in McGowan, 'Ronsard and the Visual Arts', 175.

[349] Neoplatonic language suffuses these poems, which often describe bodily beauty as a shadow of inner virtue, as well as poems and paintings as only 'shadows' of the people they praise. Ronsard's narrators are haunted by their fantasies of their beloved, described as 'idole', 'portrait', 'mirouer',

described by poets, was often geared towards encapsulating and performing precisely these intangible qualities.[350] The pleasure of reading these descriptions, as in looking at paintings, by their own admission, comes from attempting to discover a hidden or disguised meaning, from the hints left by the poet.[351] These poets' challenges to portraitists, although conventional in form, may have spoken to a genuine shared aim across the literary and visual arts to capture the shifting, evasive or unstable.[352]

The *Triple Profile Portrait*'s idiosyncrasies and ambiguous effects may stem from the paradoxical aim, shared by poetry, of rehearsing before the eyes a fleeting impression, and in particular, one of gender.[353] By generalising the sitters' appearance through similar costumes, physiognomy and the use of the profile pose, something of the sitters' specific characteristics is lost. Similarly, the Petrarchan sonnet or elegy that foregrounds form,

---

'ombre', denigrating images through their association with deception, drawing on Neoplatonic symbolism. See Regan, 'The Evolution', 130. For more on the conceit of visual art as a shadow in French renaissance poetry, see McGowan, 'Ronsard and the Visual Arts', 175.

[350] For more on 'l'indicable' in French portrait poems, see Lecercle, *La Chimère de Zeuxis*, 126; in Du Bellay's poetry, see Maryan Tebben, 'Writing the Ineffable: Du Bellay's Olive', *The French Review* 78, No. 3 (2005): 522-535. Neoplatonic descriptions of poetry or paintings as shadows of their subjects circulated in Bembo's *Gli Asolani*, and perhaps more influentially in a speech given by the character of Bembo in *The Book of the Courtier*. See Leonard Forster, *The Icy Fire: Five Studies in European Petrarchism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 27. Lecercle suggests that two bodies are present in this poetry: the visible, and therefore describable, and the ineffable, in Lecercle, *La Chimère de Zeuxis*, 133.

[351] As Lawrence Kritzman has argued, even most obsessively physically descriptive poems, the 'blasons anatomiques', often paradoxically create a 'blurring of the desired object', and are typified by the 'non-finito', in Lawrence Kritzman, *The Rhetoric of Sexuality and the Literature of the French Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 97, 105. Leonard Forster identifies 'the psychology of love and its effect of the poet' as a key theme of Petrarchan poetry in Forster, *The Icy Fire*, 8. For François Lecercle, French portrait poems dissolve the body into its composing parts, rendering the portrait a kind of 'puzzle', 'deformé par une mémoire sélective', in Lecercle, *La Chimère de Zeuxis*, 61, 83, 102, 116.

[352] Contrary to Margaret McGowan's assertion that 'the ability to capture either idealised features in a woman's form or the ever changing rhythms of expression and movement was rare, especially in painting', both poetry and the visual arts in renaissance France shared a fascination with emergent forms, hybrid states, and ambiguity, in McGowan, 'Ronsard and the Visual Arts', 181.

[353] As Joanna Woodall has argued, 'if a portrait is a likeness which is seen to refer to the identity of the person depicted, then the history of portraiture will be closely connected with changes in beliefs about what aspects of identity are appropriate or susceptible to portrayal', in Woodall, 'Introduction', 9.

referring primarily to other sonnets through intertextual references, provides little information about the subject.[354] This poetry, like the *Triple Profile Portrait*, may instead convey something of the appealingly indeterminate experience of viewing the subject, as well as the skill of the artist or author who captures these effects.[355] While the number of sitters in the *Triple Profile Portrait* suggests that they were not depicted as mementos of lovers, these forms of idealisation and admiration that grew up around conveying romance were equally used in court poetry to praise Henri III or Marguerite de Navarre, as seen.[356]

The use of slate further problematises the relationship between a lasting, stable portrait and indistinct or fleeting impressions. Just as the profile view limits visual information and ultimately subverts the conventional role of a portrait to 'make the absent present' through their easy recognition, so the slate support raises the traditional association of stone with durability and essential nature, only to unsettle this relationship.[357] Recent scholarship has foregrounded how the metaphorical associations and physical properties of rock, praised by Vasari for being 'almost eternal', often informed the appearance and interpretation of paintings on stone, whether areas of stone were left unpainted in the final product or not.[358] Contemporaries praised Sebastiano del Piombo's portrait of Guilia Gonzaga on slate,

---

[354] Applying this effect to portraits, Mary Vaccaro argues that 'Ideal beauty in a portrait (usually though not necessarily a female portrait) asserts and mirrors the artist's creative presence even as it renders anonymous the sitter', in Mary Vaccaro, 'Beauty and Identity in Parmigianino's Portraits', in *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art*, ed. Mary Rogers (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 107.

[355] For paratextuality in the Pléiade poets, see Ford, 'The Symbiotic Muse', 94.

[356] As Isidore Silver has argued, Ronsard's career was shaped by the 'occasionalism' imposed by nature of life at Court and of the 'literary circles dependent upon the Court', in Isidore Silver, 'Ronsard's Reflections on Cosmogony and Nature', *Publications of the Modern Landguage Association* 79, No. 3 (1964): 219.

[357] This line derives from the well-known passage in Leon Battista Alberti's treatise. See Alberti, *On Painting*, 63. It is worth noting that absent presence is also a Petrarchan trope. See Lecercle, *La Chimère de Zeuxis*, 88.

[358] Quoted in Baker-Bates and Calvillo ed., *Almost Eternal*, 3. Christopher Nygren argues that 'paintings on stone challenge the implicit distinction between essence and representation', by letting the material substitute the subject that is represented, in Christopher Nygren, 'The Matter of Similitude: Stone Paintings and the limits of Representation in Cavaliere d'Arpino's Perseus and Andromeda and Jacques Stella's Jacob's Dream', in *Almost Eternal*, 132. Paintings on stone usually make use of the visual effects of the support, for example, leaving the black stone unpainted to form the background in nocturnal scenes, or using white marble striations to generate snowy landscapes. These kinds of objects were popular for how they staged an interplay of art and nature, a common

for example, in terms which play on the aptness of the medium for substantiating the sitter's essential beauty, petrifying it on stone for generations to come.[359] In French poetry, stone and metal were also evoked as a comparison for poetry's eternal qualities.[360] As Joachim Du Bellay wrote, his verses would immortalise his mistress 'Better than any image, in bronze, in marble or in copper…Which would make her and I live and be revived (forever)'.[361] Indeed, the flowers worn by the sitters may similarly draw attention to the ability of painting to freeze time, presenting them forever in bloom, just as French poets compared their immortalised subjects to flowers that could last forever, impossible in nature.[362] By calling attention to their materiality, painted stone portraits mobilised ideas about the authenticity and durability of a sitter's likeness, and by extension their essence.[363] This relationship, however, is subverted by the *Triple Profile Portrait*, which instead heightens slate's dark and obscuring effects, concealing rather than revealing the sitters' identity, and foregrounding artistic effects instead.

While the discourse surrounding paintings on stone promoted its stability and therefore its appropriateness as a medium for conveying lasting essential characteristics, the properties

---

conceit of the cabinet of curiosities. For painted stone works as collectors' items, see Nadia Baadji, 'Painting on Stone and Metal: Material Meaning and Innovation in Early Modern Northern European Art', esp. 252-257; Johanna Beate Lohff, 'Antonio Tempesta's Paintings on Stone and the Development of a Genre in 17th Century Italy', in *Almost Eternal*, esp. 180.

[359] Francesco Maria Molza described the portrait as 'equal to the hammer, and the grandeur that previously only sculpture had possessed', quoted in Nygren, 'The Matter of Similitude', 142. While this statement references the *topos* of the *paragone* between painting and sculpture in conventional terms, it also suggests how the 'grandeur' of stone, linked to its lasting nature, was considered an apt medium for presenting the sitter's essential beauty.

[360] In Ronsard's *Odes Au Seigneur de Carnavalet*, for example, he claims that 'Le marbre, et l'airain vestu/ D'un labeur vif par l'enclume/ N'animent tant la vertu/ Que les Muses par la plume'. In the last of the *Odes*, 'A sa Muse', Ronsard similarly compares poetry to metal, 'plus dur que fer j'ay finy cest ouvrage', so that 'Tousjours, tousjours, sans que jamais je meure, Je voleray tout vif par l'univers', quoted in McGowan, 'Ronsard and the Visual Arts, 177.

[361] 'Mieux qu'en tableaus, en bronze, en marbre, en cuyvre… Qui elle et moy feroit vivre et revivre', in Joachim Du Bellay, 'Sonnet 18', *L'Olive*, (Geneva: Droz, 2002), 73.

[362] For more on flowers and immortality in French renaissance poetry, see Gertrude Hanisch, *Love Elegies of the Renaissance: Marot, Louise Labe and Ronsard* (Saratoga: Anma Libri, 1979), 129-30.

[363] Nygren, 'The Matter of Similitude', 142.

of different types of stone could be very different.[364] Far from being 'almost eternal', slate, for example, is friable, porous and prone to flaking. Indeed, the *Triple Profile Portrait* bears a crack, running from the lower half of the painting, sloping from left to right. The painter also utilised the darkness of the stone to create facial shading, painting these areas more thinly, to create depth, as if the faces are emerging from the shadowy background. The effect heightens the obscuring, dark qualities of the slate, flattening the differences between the faces and the background. The artist seems to play up the medium's more obscuring effects, highlighting not the stability but the subjectivity of this visual experience.

Given the prominence of the theme of capturing 'shadows' in French poetry, the sitters' stark profiles, emerging from a black, slate background, may have been intended to evoke this conceit. While this language was used by poets to criticise the limitations of painting, capturing the enigma, and especially the *je-ne-sais-quoi* of the admired subject, could showcase the artist's skill, as well as the ineffable charisma of the sitters, as in poetry. The portrait's unnerving combination of individualised facial features but lack of information about their identity or gender may have brought the conceit of a portrait as a shadow to mind, problematising the relationship between image and sitters. Outlining the shadow of a person, and perhaps especially the profile, may have even been a particularly strong visual reminder of the ability of portraits to typically make the absent present. As narrated in Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, translated into French in 1562, the first painting of any kind was allegedly undertaken 'to outline only the shadow of a person'.[365] Later, Pliny elaborates on a particular version of this myth, in which a daughter of a potter traces her lover's profile on the wall.[366] This legend was referred to throughout the renaissance, repeated in Alberti's

---

[364] As Ana Gonzalez Mozo argues, 'Oil on stone is not preserved much better than on canvas or wood, and artists had been aware of this since the technique was implemented', in Ana González Mozo, 'Painted Stone: Idea and Practice in Italian Renaissance', in *Almost Eternal*, 79.

[365] '…la première peinture se fit à pourfiler seulement l'ombre d'une personne', Antoine du Pinet, Pliny the Elder, *L'Histoire du monde de C. Pline Second... À quoy a esté adjousté un traité des pois et mesures antiques, réduites à la Françoise* (Lyon: C. Senneton, 1562), 632. For further alleged origins of painting, see Woodall, 'Introduction', 1.

[366] Pliny, *Natural History, IX, Books XXXIII-XXXV*, transl. Harris Rackman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), 43. For more on this myth, see Robert Rosenblum, 'The Origin of Painting: A

Della pittura and Leonardo's *Trattato*, as well as depicted by early modern artists, as seen in Vasari's fresco at the Casa Vasari (fig. 48).[367] While not an illustration of the scene from Pliny, it is not beyond possibility that the sitters' crisp profiles against the dark background form an oblique allusion to the mythical origins of portraiture in tracing shadows. By combining gender ambiguity with other forms of visual ambiguity, the *Triple Profile Portrait* may intentionally draw attention to the assumptions and tensions between likeness, identity and representation that lie at the heart of portraiture.

The desire to engage with literary conceits may have stemmed from the patron or the artist. As seen, competition between the arts, and the use of portraiture to stage this, were commonplace in contemporary literature and culture. This shared culture could have provided the artist or patron with these themes. It is worth exploring, however, how a sixteenth-century Netherlandish artist, looking to fulfill a patron's desire for something novel, may have accessed these conceits. While unlikely to be the artist, Lucas de Heere's poetry provides evidence for how, by the 1560s-70s, these ideas were also familiar to certain Netherlandish artists, having entered Netherlandish art and humanist culture via French poetry. In his poetry, De Heere addresses the theme of the absent beloved, the enlivening powers of the arts, and stages *paragone* themes through portraits and nudes, taking inspiration from poets such as Marot and Ronsard.[368] This poetry shows that de Heere shared a similar interest in artifice and representation in poetry and painting and translated these conceits for a new audience. Even if Netherlandish, then, like de Heere, the painter may have generated the idea to look to or compete with poetic and cultural

---

Problem in the Iconography of Romantic Classicism', *The Art Bulletin* 39, No. 4 (1957): 279-290, esp.281; Victor Stoichita, *A Short History of the Shadow* (London: Reaktion Books 1997), 18.

[367] Hagi Kenaan, ''Tracing Shadows': Reflections of the Origin of Painting', in *Pictorial Languages and Their Meanings, Liber Amicorum in Honor of Nurith Kenaan-Kedar*, ed. Christine Verzár, Gil Fishhof (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Publishing, 2006), 17-28, 21. See also, Gerhard Wolf, 'The Origins of Painting', *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 36 (1999): 60.

[368] As Walter Melion writes, De Heere's poetry combines 'the theme of the absent beloved with the theme of the seductive power of pictorial artifice', in Melion, 'Vivae dixisses virginis ora', esp. 160-162. 'In numerous poems dedicated to the arts, De Heere… commends the ability of painters to create vivifying artifice', in Fiorenza, 'Paludanus', 299.

conceits, whether through personal engagement with French writing, or its transmission via Netherlandish artistic circles, or a patron.

Conclusion

The *Triple Profile Portrait* might ultimately be considered a fashionable, flattering portrait and a visual challenge of the kind that would have been on display in a *château*, on the walls of a semi-public space like a gallery or even a bedroom. In line with French viewing conventions, the portrait would have been at home in such a space, spurring conversation and allowing for the performance of intellectual achievements through the discussion of the object's gendered meaning. The cultural climate of elite, late sixteenth-century France therefore provides ample evidence for how the *Triple Profile Portrait*'s gender ambiguity may have been appreciated as an intellectual challenge and an example of virtuosic painting, for both the viewer and the artist. This painting ultimately stages rhetorical failure in the face of a sitter's irreducible characteristics. It indicates that these sitters possess something more and replicates the experience of something beyond the viewer's grasp, by setting up contradictions and evasions, encapsulated by gender ambiguity. In doing so, the painter succeeds in reproducing the task of the French poets: to capture, without reducing, an admired subject's enigmatic effect. Creating a work that engages with, and perhaps surpasses, poetic descriptions of people, would have been both an appealing challenge for a painter and flattering to the sitters, captured as possessing that evasive something. The appeal of this ambiguous object therefore can be traced to its historical context, demonstrating how the sixteenth-century French court valued, discussed and represented gender ambiguity in ways that were radically different from today.

The *Cobbe Portrait of Henry Wriothesley*, Third Earl of Southampton, c.1590-1593

Introduction

Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton, is famed in English literature as William Shakespeare's early patron and a likely inspiration for several sonnets.[369] His life, punctuated by two periods of imprisonment in the Tower of London—for an illicit marriage and, later, involvement in the Essex rebellion—his court fights and excessive gambling, has generally attracted more mixed assessments than his patronage. Drawing in particular on the portrait of the 'fair youth' that emerges from Shakespeare's sonnets, the young courtier is repeatedly described as vain, reckless, charismatic and sexually manipulative.[370] Some revisionist accounts from the 1960s onwards, the most influential by A.L. Rowse and G.P.V. Akrigg, paint the earl in a more favourable light.[371] Even in recent accounts, however, the turbulent period of his youth and his artistic patronage are often portrayed as at odds with his 'dignified and singularly uncorrupt' character.[372] For Lars Kaaber, the fact that fifteen

[369] Nathan Drake was the first to suggest that Wriothesley, to whom *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* are dedicated, may also have been the inspiration for the 'Fair Youth of the Sonnets', in Nathan Drake, *Shakespeare and his Times,* II (London: T. Cadell, 1817), 58-9. William D'Avenant, Shakespeare's earliest biographer, records that Wriothesley once gave him £1000, although no other evidence has been found for this, in Nicholas Rowe, *Some Account of the Life of Mr. William Shakespear* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1709), x. For Sidney Lee, 'although no specific reference is made outside the dozen 'dedicatory' sonnets to the youth as a literary patron', he identifies Wriothesley both as a patron, and with Shakespeare's 'fair youth', through parallels with portraits, in Sidney Lee, 'Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton', *The Cornhill Magazine* 4, No. 22 (1898): 489-490, 493-4. While both Drake and Lee avoided the assumption that 'W.H.', who the titlepage describes as the 'onlie begetter of these insuing sonnets', was Wriothesley, later authors have debated this as another reference to the earl. For a summary, see Honan, *Shakespeare*, 360-1.

[370] A.L. Rowse, drawing heavily on the 'friend' from the sonnets, concluded 'Southampton was a Narcissus, much in love with himself, and, as we know, 'fond on praise'', in A.L. Rowse, *Shakespeare's Southampton: Patron of Virginia* (London: Macmillan, 1965), 74. W.H. Auden summarises this portrait of the friend from the sonnets as 'a young man who was not really very nice, very conscious of his good looks, able to switch on the charm at any moment, but essentially frivolous, cold-hearted and self-centered', in W.H. Auden, 'Introduction', in Shakespeare, *The Sonnets*, liv.

[371] Rowse, *Shakespeare's Southampton*; George Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1968).

[372] Rowse, *Shakespeare's Southampton*, ix.

portraits of the earl survive, a high number compared to many contemporaries, is evidence of an obsession with being depicted, which he uses to bolster an identification with the beautiful but narcissistic youth with a 'woman's face' in the sonnets.[373] Kaaber extrapolates from these portraits that Wriothesley was 'a poseur, an exhibitionist and a narcissist'.[374] It is in the context of drawing parallels with the 'fair youth' in the sonnets that scholars have most often cited the *Cobbe Portrait of Henry Wriothesley*, attributed to John de Critz, c.1590-1593, after the identification of the sitter in 2002.[375] This portrait, previously thought to depict a woman, was then employed to illustrate the young patron who attracted the writing and possibly affections of Shakespeare (fig. 49).

---

[373] Lars Kaaber, *Hamlet's Age and the Earl of Southampton* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 110, 111.

[374] Ibid., 110.

[375] The *Cobbe Portrait of Henry Wriothesley* is mentioned to strengthen the provenance of the *Cobbe Portrait of William Shakespeare*, identified in 2009, and is described as 'an extremely dandyish young man' in Armstrong, *The Arden Shakespeare*, 3. It is reproduced to illustrate Henry Wriothesley, representing the kind of 'homoerotic public' for whom Shakespeare may have written, in Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare, Sex, and Love* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 35. James Hall uses Hilliard's miniature of Wriothesley, as well as the *Cobbe Portrait*, to discuss the potential meanings behind the lovelock, in one of the most sustained analyses of this portrait, James Hall, *The Sinister Side: How Left-hand Symbolism Shaped Western Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 281. Cedric Watts cites the *Cobbe Portrait* as evidence that the W.H. of Shakespeare's sonnets may have been Wriothesley, as this kind of 'decadent-looking and facially feminine person' is 'a strong candidate for a sonnet describing a 'young man with a 'woman's face'', in Cedric Watts, *Shakespeare Puzzles* (London: Publish Nation, 2014), 10. It is reproduced to illustrate the kind of androgyny that Shakespeare celebrates in *Sonnet 20* in Paul Edmondson and Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 76, 24. 'Southampton's portraits, and in particular the Cobbe portrait and Hilliard miniature… present to us an image of the youth, maiden-faced and with long feminine curls, which we cannot help but compare to the androgynous 'master-mistress' of the sonnets', in Camilla Caporicci, ''Your Painted Counterfeit': The Paragone Between Portraits and Sonnets in Shakespeare's Work', *Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare* 33 (2015): URL: http://journals.openedition.org/shakespeare/3526. For more on the intersection between painting and poetry in early modern England, see Raphaelle Costa de Beauregard, *Silent Elizabethans: The Language of Colour in the Miniatures of Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver* (Montpellier: University Paul Valery, 2000), esp. 32; for the 'interaction between visual and verbal images', see Partner, *Vision and Poetry*, 45; Sarah Howe, ''Pregnant image of life': Visual Art and Representation in 'Arcadia' and 'The Faerie Queene'', *The Cambridge Quarterly* 34, No. 1 (2005): 33-53; Gent, *Picture and Poetry*.

The portrait depicts the sitter in three-quarter profile against a brown background, with his long, auburn hair in a lovelock over his left shoulder, revealing a black and red ribbon earring. He touches the ends of his hair to his heart with one hand, in a variant of the hand-to-heart gesture that was often used in early modern art to symbolise friendship or love, gazing out at the viewer. The dark palette strikes a contrast with his pale skin, red lips and cheeks, drawing attention to his delicate facial features and the intricate white lace trim of his black doublet. While the identification of the sitter as Henry Wriothesley lent the portrait new prominence in English literature, no art historians have yet treated this portrait and only few works of art history have assessed his portraiture in general.[376] While Wriothesley was an important courtier, we lack the documentary evidence to reconstruct his art collection and patronage fully, as Elizabeth Goldring has done for Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.[377] His portraits have received only sporadic attention, perhaps seen as unexceptional examples of the aesthetic norm.

The *Cobbe Portrait*'s appeal for art history is therefore less obvious than for literature. The portrait is of middling quality, the artist's identity has not been firmly established and its recent identification with such a famous sitter has been met with caution. Equally, since in art history early modern English portraits were first studied for the historical importance of the sitters, with attributions being nebulous and aesthetic considerations secondary, finding the sitter may have closed, rather than opened up, the study of a portrait that otherwise seems to offer little to the discipline.[378] Its middling quality, however, being of the same standard and style as the majority of surviving portraits, makes this portrait a more representative example of Elizabethan culture than if it were aesthetically anomalous. For this reason, the *Cobbe Portrait* presents an opportunity to explore the often noted, yet rarely explored, gender ambiguity of Wriothesley's portraiture, and especially the *Cobbe*

---

[376] Tarnya Cooper is one exception to the lack of attention in art history to Wriothesley's portraits or patronage, as she analyses John de Critz's *Tower Portrait of Henry Wriothesley*, in Tarnya Cooper ed., *Searching for Shakespeare* (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 2006), 128-9.

[377] Elizabeth Goldring, *Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the World of Elizabethan Art: Painting and Patronage at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014).

[378] Roy Strong, the first to seriously study English portraits in art history, admits they are visually 'bleak', 'primitive provincial hack work', in Roy Strong, *The English Icon: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 3.

Portrait, in its broader context. While constituting an unusual subject, as the extent of its gender ambiguity is rare for a large-scale portrait of a man, its representative style allows this portrait to be used to consider how Elizabethan artists executed, and viewers may have considered, gender ambiguity in art.[379] This chapter compares the portrait to contemporary literature and men and women's portraits, to show how the complexion, facial and costume features and stylistic conventions that reference women's portraits, would once have made the sitter appear unusually gender-ambiguous for Elizabethans.

Given Wriothesley's patronage of literature featuring gender ambiguity, as well as his tendency to commission thematically unusual portraits, as will be discussed, this chapter will argue that these effects were likely intentional. The meaning of this androgyny will be explored through reference to the broader literary and cultural trend of Ovidianism in the Elizabethan court, which was at its peak by the 1590s. While Elizabeth I's and Anne of Denmark's adoption of masculine clothing and iconography in their portraiture, as well as by their elite female imitators, have been studied, how artists and patrons drew inspiration from classically inspired tropes of gender ambiguity has received little attention in England, especially compared with the Continent.[380]

The comparative lack of mythological themes in English art, where a tradition of large scale history paintings and fresco cycles did not develop after the reformation, largely precludes the depiction of classically inspired, gender-ambiguous subjects.[381] Due to the prominence

---

[379] 'Discussions of painting in sixteenth-century England frequently contrast a rich literary culture… and an impoverished visual culture', Susan Foister, 'Sixteenth-Century English Portraiture', 163. As Alexander Marr suggests, '…if we want to understand English imagery of the period on its own terms rather than our own, we must eschew art history's long-standing obsession with classicism, genius, 'high' art, and even naturalism as it is normally defined', in Marr, 'Visual Arts: Introduction', 376.

[380] Andrew Belsey and Catherine Belsey, 'Portraits of Elizabeth I', in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660*, ed. Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (London: Reaktion Books, 1990), 12; 'Elizabeth's own allusions to her *mascula vis* were usually displaced into her filial identification with Henry VIII', in Louis Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth: Authority, Gender, and Representation* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 159. see Jemma Field, 'Anna of Denmark: A Late Portrait by Paul van Somer (c.1577-1621)', *The British Art Journal* XVIII, No. 2 (2017): 50-55.

[381] These stories did, however, inform ephemeral entertainments. For a selection of works on gender ambiguity in court masques, see Clare McManus, 'When Is a Woman Not a Woman? Or, Jacobean

of these themes in English literature, it may be concluded that visual representations of these themes were taboo, stemming from a broader distrust of images, and especially ambiguous ones, after the reformation.[382] In continental art, gender-ambiguous figures could form one way of generating ambiguity and inciting curiosity, as seen in the *Triple Profile Portrait*. Where we see English treatments of these themes, for example, in the sculpted frieze showing Diana and her nymphs at Hardwick Hall, the personas are rigid and easily identifiable, and their potentially ambiguous or sexual nudity has been eliminated (fig. 50).[383] Yet as this example suggests, Ovidian themes were not entirely avoided in English art, but modified to produce less visually ambiguous effects. By using art historical parallels to recover the gendered associations of clothing and portraiture conventions, it is possible to find the visual equivalents to the literary fascination with gender ambiguity that have previously escaped notice.

By placing the *Cobbe Portrait* in both its literary and artistic context, this chapter will also challenge the assumption that Wriothesley's portraiture speaks primarily to his vanity. Just as art historians have unpicked the claims that Elizabeth I's frequent depiction in portraits

---

Fantasies of Female Performance (1606–1611)', *Modern Philology* 105, No. 3 (2008): 437-474; Barbara Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque: Dance, Costume, and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 188-199; Effie Botonaki, 'Anne of Denmark and the Court Masque: Displaying and Authoring Queenship', in *The Emblematic Queen: Extra-Literary Representations of Early Modern Queenship*, ed. Debra Barrett-Graves (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 133-154.

[382] As Jenny Mann has outlined, 'Curiosity is coded as visual in the period, as a transgression enacted by the eyes', in Mann, 'How to Look at a Hermaphrodite', 69. Lucy Gent similarly argues, 'where we see naturalism in the lifelikeness produced by perspective and chiaroscuro, they saw deception', in Gent, *Picture and Poetry*, 60. Distrust of sight lay at the heart of several reformation debates, including the nature of the Eucharist. See Clark, *Vanities*, 4. As Jane Partner writes, 'The practice of knowing how to look in a way that avoids mental distortion and moral corruption was a central part of Protestant culture', in Partner, *Poetry and Vision*, 9. English literature further evidences an association between mythological art, foreignness and aristocratic decadence, as continental-inspired art was sometimes used as the backdrop to corrupt abuse of power and sophisticated plotting. A servant to the Duke of Florence shows Bianca, a virtuous and poor wife, 'naked pictures' in his gallery in order to 'wet her appetite' before the Duke rapes her, in Thomas Middleton, 'Women Beware Women'. See Thomas Middleton, *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, ed. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1512.

[383] See Agnes Lafont, 'Political Uses of Erotic Power in an Elizabethan Mythological Programme: Dangerous Interactions with Diana in Hardwick Hall', in *Shakespeare's Erotic Mythology and Ovidian Renaissance Culture*, ed. Agnes Lafont (London: Routledge, 2013), 41-57.

spoke only to vanity, Wriothesley's artistic patronage requires reappraisal.[384] Reading portraits solely as interior documents, rather than as fulfilling a social function, neglects the ways that both fashion and portraits could be strategically employed on the early modern social and political stage.[385] The *Cobbe Portrait*, dating from the period of Shakespeare's first dedications to the earl, gives grounds to reassess this simplistic reading of Wriothesley's artistic patronage. By placing the *Cobbe Portrait* in the context of Wriothesley's broader patronage, he emerges as a patron who identified with literary and artistic works, yet also who undertook unusual commissions as an outward-orientated artistic strategy—partaking in broader cultural trends, as well as shaping his literary and artistic patronage to intervene in his social and political circumstances.

This provides the opportunity to consider the motivations for a known sitter's depiction in a gender-ambiguous portrait. In a case like this, the intentions behind a portrait are best sought at the intersection of cultural trends and personal motivations. Previously, the *Cobbe Portrait* has usually been employed in scholarship during discussions of Wriothesley's potential homosexuality, or as evidence of why he may have sparked Shakespeare's desire, implicitly suggesting that the portrait's androgyny is evidence of personal sexual identity.[386]

---

[384] This was built on opinions like Horace Walpole's that 'There is no evidence that Elizabeth had much taste for painting; but she loved pictures of herself', quoted in Roy Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 10. Louis Montrose, however, has highlighted the diverse political and cultural work achieved by these portraits, in Louis Montrose, 'Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender, and the Picturing of Elizabeth I', *Representations* 68 (1999): 109.

[385] For dress as communicating messages far beyond personal vanity in the early modern court, see Maria Heywood, *Stuart Style: Monarchy, Dress and the Scottish Male Elite* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020). Seeing portraits as interior documents has roots in the conception of the renaissance as the birthplace of interiority from Jacob Burckhardt onwards. See, for example, Stephen Greenblatt's idea of 'self-fashioning', which borrows Jacob Burckhardt's characterisation of the renaissance as the time of growing awareness of the self, yet transports this from Italy to sixteenth-century England, in Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980). For criticism, as reinforcing this tradition of renaissance individualism and genius, see Jean Howard, 'The Cultural Construction of the Self in the Renaissance', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 34, No. 3 (1983): 378–81.

[386] Lars Kaaber speculates on whether he might be 'metrosexual' through his portraits in Kaaber, *Hamlet's Age*, 110-1. The *Cobbe Portrait* is introduced in a discussion of Shakespeare's 'homoerotic public' in Wells, *Shakespeare, Sex, and Love*, 35.

Whether Wriothesley was attracted to both men and women has been addressed extensively by later writers and circulated as rumours in the Elizabethan court.[387] Scholars have used the possible connection to Shakespeare's sonnets, as well as Wriothesley's refusal to marry the bride chosen by his guardian, as evidence of same-sex preferences, if not a romantic relationship with the writer.

Since the portrait's androgyny is likely rooted in broader tropes of attractiveness to both sexes drawn from antiquity, as will be shown, to treat this portrait only as a document of personal sexual preferences oversimplifies both sexuality, which is always expressed in the terms available within a culture, and the functions of early modern portraits. In this culture, where artists and writers revived bisexual rhetoric from antiquity, the expression of these desires in art could be either personal or rhetorical.[388] Perhaps unsurprisingly when sodomy was still criminalised, circumstantial evidence of illicit desires that can be used to distinguish between desire and rhetoric is rare and reaching conclusions about past sexual preferences often becomes impossible.[389] Scholars of queer history and literature therefore aim to read

---

[387] Peter Stallybrass argues that since the eighteenth century, responses to the sonnets have constructed Shakespeare's 'heterosexuality ... as a back-formation from the prior imagination of pederasty and sodomy' in Peter Stallybrass, 'Editing as Cultural Formation: The Sexing of Shakespeare's Sonnets', *Modern Language Quarterly* 54, No. 1 (1993): 97. For a review of shifting attitudes towards, and literary reception of, homosexuality in Shakespeare's sonnets, see Matz, 'The Scandals', 477-510. William Reynolds' reports of Wriothesley and Essex supposedly trading sexual favours to men for money during the Essex rebellion, see Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl*, 181–2. As Katherine Duncan-Jones has noted, however, Reynolds' diaries are full of persistent fears of sodomy, and he may have been motivated by a desire to see these courtiers punished, in Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'Much Ado With Red and White; The Earliest Readers of Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis (1593)', *Review of English Studies* 44, No. 176 (1993): 484–6, 481. See also discussions of Wriothesley's intimate love letters to his wife in Diane Wolftal, *In and Out of the Marital Bed: Seeing Sex in Renaissance Art* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 68.

[388] For bisexuality in early modern artistic circles, see Waddington, 'The Bisexual Portrait', 119. James Turner has also suggested that a 'bisexual pose' was adopted by Italian sixteenth-century artists in Turner, *Eros Visible*, 290-4.

[389] Stephen Orgel has argued that the legal definition for sodomy was narrow, allowing homosexual acts to escape greater censure, in Orgel, *Impersonation*s, 58. This may have been particularly true of sodomy involving an active older man and passive youth, which conformed to a greater degree to 'patriarchal mores', in Kingsley-Smith, *Cupid*, 136. Yet 'it would be an exaggeration to claim that there was no policing of sexual desire in male same-sex friendships, including by those within them' since this was a time when even sex licit within marriage was still viewed with suspicion', in Matz,

these silences for what they can suggest about past sexuality.[390] For art historians, perhaps the more telling question is why it became fashionable to present in a way that may have cultivated bisexual appeal and therefore referenced taboo desires.[391]

This chapter therefore suggests a subtler reassessment of the portrait not as an unmitigated reflection of interior life, but a fictionalised representation of the sitter, which, however small the actual number of viewers may have been, if only by the employment of an artist as collaborator, relies at least on an imagined audience to whom the sitter is presented. This aims to refine the harsh association of Wriothesley's portraiture with 'narcissicism' or vanity, often drawn from his theorised connection with the sonnets, and to demonstrate how gender ambiguity could communicate early-modern associations, such as rebelliousness, sexual activity or passivity, desirability, or self-sufficiency that do not necessarily align with modern binaries of homosexual and heterosexual identity. Ultimately, this chapter builds towards a reading of Wriothesley's presentation as an androgynous youth, usually framed as an unattainable object of desire in Ovidian poetry, as a way to reframe recent events in his life positively—in particular his decision not to marry his guardian, Lord Burghley's, choice of bride, which came with harsh social and financial consequences. Evoking conventional love imagery through the pose and costume, yet presenting the sitter as combining both male and female traits, this portrait might be understood as a statement of romantic self-sufficiency, asserted not out of vain 'self-love', but in the face of his guardian's attempts to negotiate his marriage.

'The Scandals', 481. As David Bergeron writes, 'The farther back in history we go, the more difficult it may be to gain precision in defining that culture's sexuality, especially its perspective on same-sex relationships' in David Bergeron, *King James and Letters of Homoerotic Desire* (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 27.

[390] Eve Sedgwick's influential notion of 'closetedness' has highlighted the potential of silences for queer scholarship, in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 2e (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), esp. 3.

[391] This stands in contrast to a transhistorical view of sexuality or expression of desire. For the importance of historicising desire, see David Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Valerie Traub, 'The New Unhistoricism in Queer Studies', *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 128, No. 1 (2013): 21-39; Bartle, 'Gay/Queer Dynamics', 531-569.

Discovery and Attribution

It was not until 2002 that the sitter was identified, based on his resemblance to Wriotheseley, especially in Nicholas Hilliard's miniature, painted within a few years of the *Cobbe Portrait* (fig. 51). Both present the same pale skin, arched brows, blue eyes, slightly down-pointed nose, pointed chin, defined cupid's bow, with fuller bottom lip and characteristic hairstyle. Previously, the archbishop of Dublin, Charles Cobbe, had falsely labelled the sitter as 'Lady Norton, daughter of the Bishop of Winton', on the back of the painting, identifying her as his great-grandmother, Lady Anne Norton. It is likely that the 'Lady Norton', from whose collection this painting descended, instead refers to Lady Elizabeth Noel, great-granddaughter of Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton, who became Elizabeth Norton when she married Richard Norton. With no children, their property passed to the husband's cousin, Honor Norton, in the early eighteenth century, who married Charles Cobbe's grandfather.[392] The portrait seems to have remained in the family's possession ever since.

While it is worth considering whether a female relative may have been the sitter for the *Cobbe Portrait*, portraits show that his characteristic features were not shared by any of his immediate female relatives. The only plausible candidate, based on facial similarity, would be his mother, Mary Wriothesley, as portrayed in Hans Eworth's portrait, c.1565 (fig. 52). It is unlikely, however, that she would have been painted in c.1590, as a widowed forty-year-old woman, with her hair loose in this style, typically reserved in women's portraiture for the depiction of young, virginal women, commemorating a betrothal, or masquing performances. Due to the simple costume and lack of fantastic styling or attributes, these are unlikely contexts for the *Cobbe Portrait*.[393] It is more probable that this portrait indeed depicts Wriothesley. From the sitter's youth and clothing, with a lace collar typical of the early 1590s, the *Cobbe Portrait* has been dated to between 1590 and 1593, when

[392] This lineage was traced by Alec Cobbe, a living descendant. See Alan Riding, Not Just Another Pretty Face', *New York Times* (6 May 2002): https://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/06/arts/not-just-another-pretty-face-is-deceptive-portrait-tied-to-shakespeare.html.

[393] For an example of long hair as part of a costume, see Robert Peake, *Lady Elizabeth Pope*, c.1615, oil on wood, 77.5 × 610 cm, Tate Britain, London.

Wriothesley was between seventeen and twenty years old.[394] By this time, the young earl had finished studying at St John's College, Cambridge, was increasingly embedded in literary and theatrical society in London (while studying at Gray's Inn), and was making more frequent appearances at court.[395]

The painting is usually attributed to John de Critz the Elder, a Netherlandish émigré artist who was working independently in the court from the 1590s onwards.[396] While the 1590s represent a gap in documentation of de Critz's career, the limited documentary evidence suggests that it may have been at this time that the artist first entered into Robert Cecil's employment.[397] Being a close friend of Henry Wriothesley, this places him in the right *milieu* to have also painted the earl at this time. De Critz seems to have mainly painted portraits, yet his travel to France and possibly Italy, where he collected art on behalf of Francis Walsingham, suggests a certain amount of knowledge of continental art that may also have informed the *Cobbe Portrait*.[398] Finding evidence on stylistic grounds, however, is more difficult. De Critz signed no works and his oeuvre is contested.[399] Many elements of his technique are shared by other Netherlandish artists at work in England, including Lucas de

---

[394] Catherine MacLeod initially objected to this dating, believing the collar to be from c.1600. Evidence of earlier examples were then presented and the objection cleared, in Riding, 'Not Just Another Pretty Face'.

[395] Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl,* 35. Wriothesley may have met Shakespeare at Gray's Inn. See Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), 228.

[396] For John de Critz's biography, see Mary Edmond, 'John de Critz, the Elder (d.1642), Serjeant-Painter', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, XIV (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 225-227; Mary Edmond, 'Limners and Picturemakers — New Light on the Lives of Miniaturists and Large-scale Portrait-painters Working in London in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Walpole Society* 47 (1978-80): 60-224. For recent work on de Critz, see Robert Tittler, 'Three Portraits by John de Critz for the Merchant Taylors' Company', *The Burlington Magazine* 147 (2005): 491-493.

[397] While 'it is difficult to be confident about de Critz's whereabouts before 1607… there is nothing to suggest that this was a period of inactivity for the artist'. De Critz was paid for a portrait of Robert Cecil in 1602, and his workshop was likely well established by the early 1590s. See Edward Town, ''Whilst he had his perfect sight'—new information on John de Critz the Elder', *The Burlington Magazine* 154, No. 1312 (2012): 482-486.

[398] Caroline Rae and Aviva Burnstock, 'A Technical Study of Portraits of King James VI and I attributed to John de Critz the Elder (d.1642): Artist, Workshop and Copies', in *European Paintings 15th-18th Century: Copying, Replicating and Emulating*, ed. Erma Hermens (Copenhagen: Archetype Publications in association with CATS, 2014), 58; Town, 'Whilst he had his perfect sight', 482.

[399] Rae and Burnstock, 'A Technical Study', 58.

Heere, his teacher, and Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, a fellow pupil in the workshop of de Heere, who was related to de Critz by marriage.[400] Yet the technique seen in the *Cobbe Portrait* equally does not disqualify this attribution. De Heere was working abroad by this time, and Gheeraert's work, by contrast, is typically more delicately painted, and decoratively patterned. De Critz was also prone to depicting sitters with thin, visible veins, seen, for example, on Wriothesley's temple, and on Anne of Denmark's décolletage in his portrait, while his characteristic, long, 'rubbery' depiction of fingers is seen in the *Cobbe Portrait* (fig. 53).[401] Recent technical analysis has drawn attention to certain details, like the artist's use of two or three white dashes as highlights in the pupils, which can also be seen here.[402] While the quality of the *Cobbe Portrait* does not match de Critz's best work, recent evidence suggests there may have been great variation in his work, as exemplified by the portraits he produced for the Merchant Taylors' Company, depending on assistants' involvement and the work's scale and payment.[403] This attribution therefore remains plausible both on circumstantial and stylistic grounds, accurately capturing the status and training of the kind of artist from whom Wriothesley was likely to have commissioned this portrait.[404]

Gender Construction in the *Cobbe Portrait*

Despite previously being thought to depict a female member of the same family, after the sitter's identification, art and costume historians were quick to deny any ambiguous effects that may have been produced by the sitter's gender presentation.[405] Alastair Laing, an advisor on paintings and sculpture to the National Trust, claimed in an interview that the painting was 'perfectly normal apart from the earring and the hair'.[406] For Peter Holland, at

[400] Ibid., 59.
[401] Tittler, 'Three portraits', 493.
[402] Rae and Burnstock, 'A Technical Study', 61.
[403] Tittler, 'Three portraits', 493.
[404] '…as early as 1598 Francis Meres had listed de Critz alongside Isaac Oliver and Nicholas Hilliard as those in England 'very famous for their painting', in Town, 'Whilst he had his perfect sight', 482.
[405] Alastair Laing first suggested this portrait was a man rather than a woman, in Riding, 'Not Just Another Pretty Face'.
[406] 'Painting Sparks Bard Sexuality Debate', BBC News, 22 April, 2002: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/1943632.stm

the Shakespeare Institute in Birmingham, however, 'many young men in that time had long hair', and this portrait 'seems to be a very normal picture of a fashionable young man'. He argues that previous errors in determining the sitter's gender were based on 'lack of knowledge about Elizabethan painting'.[407] The textile and fashion historian, Susan North, similarly confirmed that the lace collar and jewellery 'are frequently seen in portraits of men of this time'.[408]

It is true that, in the late Elizabethan period, men's and women's fashions increasingly converged upon a shared silhouette, consisting of wide hips, a slim, tapered waist, broad shoulders, a ruff and a tall hat or headwear.[409] More explicitly blurring the lines between gendered costume, codpieces and large beards went out of fashion for men, while women adopted elements of traditional menswear, namely hats and doublets of the kind worn in this portrait, creating a shared, more androgynous, silhouette.[410] In this respect, the late-sixteenth-century, youthful male silhouette, influenced by French fashions, is strikingly different from the traditional portraits of older bearded officials and aristocrats, often wearing heavy robes and chains of office, inherited from the Henrician period. While androgynous fashions were increasingly popular, however, this does not counteract their potential gender ambiguity for contemporaries.

---

[407] Ibid.

[408] Ibid.

[409] Ronnie Mirkin notes that 'the fluidity of gender categories is visually evident, structurally built into, the costume of the age' in Ronnie Mirkin, 'The Portrait of Elizabeth Cary in the Ashmolean Museum: 'Cross Dressing' in the English Renaissance' in *Renaissance Theatre: Texts, Performance, Design: English and Italian Theatre*, I, ed. Christopher Cairns (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 77-106, 79. Charles Breward has identified a 'Fluidity between male and female styles of dressing from the 1580s onwards', in Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, 42.

[410] This new, compact silhouette, without codpieces, is seen, for example, in Isaac Oliver's portrait of the *Three Brothers Browne*, 1598, watercolour on vellum, mounted on card, 22 × 24 cm, Burghley House, Stamford. See Eleri Lynn, *Tudor Fashion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), 51; Willett Cunnington and Phillis Cunnington, *Handbook of English Costume in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), 90. These styles were criticised for their effeminacy and French influence. Barnabe Riche describes how a man in French fashions created a 'womany' appearance: 'It was my fortune to walk through the Strand towards Westminster, where I met one who came riding towards me… apparelled in a French ruff, a French cloak, French hose, and in his hand a great fan of feathers, bearing them up very womany against the side of his face', quoted in Orgel, *Impersonations*, 85.

The adoption of long hair by men was enough, as William Prynne argued in 1628, to make them 'Womanish… even in the very length, and Culture of their Lockes', degenerating them into 'Virginians, Frenchmen, Ruffians, nay, Women, in their Crisped-Lockes, and Haire'.[411] Similarly, John Bulwer argued that 'The Haire in a more speciall manner was given Woman for a covering', which nature allowed them 'in recompence of their smoothnesse and want of a Beard'.[412] A smooth, shaven face and men wearing earrings, were also particular signs of effeminacy for moralists. As Bulwer argued, there is 'no warrant for' 'augmenting the beauty of the Eare, to shamefully loade it with Jewels and other materials', a practice which he likens to barbarous nations, and women.[413] He is even more explicit about shaving: 'Shaving the Chin is justly to be accounted a note of Effeminacy… For what greater evidence can be given of Effeminacy than to be transformed into the appearance of a woman, and to be seen with a smooth skin like a woman, a shamefull metamorphosis!'[414] Contemporary sources therefore suggest that, at least for some, the smooth cheeks, long hair, doublet, and earring seen in this portrait were not just 'fashionable' for men, but introduced new, even threatening, levels of gender ambiguity.

While long hair certainly became more fashionable in the late Elizabethan period, this style is relatively under-represented in men's portraiture. Wriothesley is one of a handful of young men depicted with long hair, especially in miniatures, and few rival this length. This style can be seen, for example, in two miniatures of young men by Nicholas Hilliard (fig. 54, 55). Yet a similar style of long, loose hair is equally worn by young, virginal women in portraits that likely relate to marriage or bethrothal, or sometimes melancholy.[415] Both men

---

[411] Prynne, *The Unlovelinesse,* Sig. A4^{r}.

[412] John Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis: Man Transform'd: or, The Artificial Changeling* (London: William Hunt, 1654), 57-8.

[413] Ibid., 156.

[414] Ibid., 198-9.

[415] Examples of long hair in portraits carrying associations of virginity include the anonymous *Coronation portrait of Elizabeth I*, c.1600, National Portrait Gallery, London; Robert Peake, *Lady Anne Pope*, c.1615, oil on wood, 57.1 × 44.5 cm, Tate Britain, London; Attributed to William Larkin, *Portrait of a Lady in Green*, c.1610, oil on panel, 78.8 × 62.6 cm, Private Collection; Peter Oliver, *Venetia Stanley, Lady Digby*, 1615-1622, miniature on vellum with ivory case, 24.2 × 26.3 cm, V&A, London. For more on long hair in the *Coronation Portrait*, see John King, 'Queen Elizabeth I:

and women wore lovelocks over one shoulder, although this may have formed part of a range of fashions that became popular among women for their masculine appeal, from the late-sixteenth to early-seventeenth century.[416] On men, however, they were often criticised as effeminate.[417] Similarly, beardlessness became more common, yet other similar portraits typically include a moustache, as seen in Hilliard's miniatures.[418] While Elizabethan men also wore earrings, as women did, they often paired then with beards. Walter Raleigh, for example, was also depicted wearing an earring, which was one of the many changes to men's costume that was attacked for its effeminacy, and yet, paired with his dagger-shaped beard in his unattributed portrait from 1588, this does not create a remarkably androgynous effect (fig. 56). While the fashion and art historians quoted above may have been at pains to deny Wriothesley's androgyny—perhaps due to its frequent association with homosexuality, and the resulting conclusions that could follow about the sitter or Shakespeare's sexuality—textual and visual evidence contradicts Holland's assertion that comments on the painting's gender ambiguity were based on 'lack of knowledge of Elizabethan painting'.

In fact, close visual analysis and attention to artistic context reveal that the *Cobbe Portrait* enhances the gender ambiguity of the costume in several ways. Against the backdrop of the black doublet, for example, the sitter's hand-to-heart gesture highlights his long fingers, which are often idealised in descriptions of feminine beauty from this period.[419] These

---

Representations of the Virgin Queen', *Renaissance Quarterly* 43, No. 1 (1990): 30-74, 43. These associations were not unique to England. See Alison Rowland, 'To Wear a Virgin's Wreath: Gender and Problems of Conformity in Early Modern Germany', *European Review of History* 1, No. 2 (1994): 227-232.

[416] Jemma Field identifies Anne of Denmark's hairstyle in her portrait by Paul van Somer as a love lock, in Field, *Anne of Denmark*, 54.

[417] Margaret Pelling described how the Fitzwilliam miniature depicts Wriothesley with a lovelock style, possibly styled using tongs, in Margaret Pelling, ''The Very Head and Front of My Offending': Beards, Portraiture and Self-Presentation in Early Modern England', in *New Perspectives on the History of Facial Hair: Framing the Face*, ed. Jennifer Evans and Alan Withey (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 59.

[418] Nicholas Hilliard, *Portrait of an Unknown Youth in Yellow*, c.1585-90, watercolour on vellum in an ivory case, 6.6 cm diameter, V&A, London, forms a rare exception.

[419] Hands (and by extension gloves) were immortalised as objects of desire by Petrarchan poetry. See for example, *Canzoniere 199*, in Francesco Petraca, *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The Rime sparse and Other Lyrics*, transl. Robert Durling (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 344-345;

delicate effects are further heightened by the vein at the sitter's temple—a marker of beauty that some women would even mimic with makeup. In *The Fayre Mayde of the Exchange* (1607), one character accuses another of 'Painting the veins upon thy breasts with blew' to attract a suitor. The university play, *Lingua* (1607), attributed to Thomas Tomkis, even includes 'painting blew vaines' as a crucial step for preparing a boy actor to play 'a nize Gentlewoman'.[420] The Master of the Countess of Warwick's *Portrait of Helena Snakenborg* exemplifies this ideal of pale, translucent skin, with visible veins, also seen at her temple (fig. 57). The *Cobbe Portrait* subscribes to a palette of reds, whites, black and blonde hair, popularised by Petrarchan poetry, that became conventional for depicting female beauty in late Elizabethan court portraiture.[421] As Gary Taylor has argued, this complexion may have been considered 'effeminate' for men.[422] The youthful, bright quality of his skin is emphasised by white highlights, depicting light reflecting off his under-eyes, nose and eyes. Like in the *Triple Profile Portrait*, the portrait is cropped at waist height, denying the viewer the sight of breeches or skirts, which would have foregrounded the sitter's gender. The overall effect emphasises the sitter's feminised delicacy.

Wriothesley's portrait can be compared, for example, with a miniature of an unknown woman by Peter Oliver, which shows a similar combination of doublet, long hair and earring (fig. 58). Another miniature by Isaac Oliver depicting a woman, possibly Elizabeth Touchet, wearing a similar black doublet with a white lace collar, this time trimmed with gold, paired with a masculine hat, presents her wearing her hair in the same lovelock style over one

---

Romeo wishes 'that I were a glove upon that hand,/ That I might touch that cheek!' in Shakespeare, 'Romeo and Juliet': https://shakespeare.folger.edu/shakespeares-works/romeo-and-juliet/.

[420] For these examples and others, Kimberly Poitevin, 'Inventing Whiteness: Cosmetics, Race, and Women in Early Modern England', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 11, No. 1 (2011): 71-2.

[421] Artistic parallels to the Petrarchan tradition have been studied in Cropper, 'On Beautiful Women', 374-394. How this cannon could also affect images of men in Italian art has been explored in Campbell, 'Eros in the Flesh', 629-662. '…in descriptions of English women's use of cosmetics, the colors red and white dominate', in Poitevin, *Inventing Whiteness*, 69. When Dudley Carleton expressed his displeasure at Queen Anne's performance in *The Masque of Blackness*, he suggested that the black paint covering the ladies' skin 'became them nothing so well as their red and white', quoted in C.H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson ed., *Ben Jonson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), 448.

[422] Gary Taylor, *Buying Whiteness: Race, Culture, and Identity from Columbus to Hip-Hop* (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2005), 36.

shoulder and playing with the ends, employing the same gesture as Wriothesley (fig. 59). The jewellery, from the black beads on her wrist, often worn by women in mourning, to her earrings, worn in both ears, however, suggest that the sitter is a woman and her masculine costume and loose hair might allude to melancholy, possibly romantic, as will be discussed. This comparison demonstrates the extent to which androgynous fashions could blur the lines between genders in portraits and miniatures. These effects were seen with greater frequency in women's portraiture, likely because it was commonplace in England to praise a woman's ability to transcend the limitations of her sex to demonstrate what were considered masculine virtues, as will be discussed in the next chapter. By contrast, rhetoric that drew attention to men's femininity was rarely intended to flatter, although, as will be seen, there were exceptions.

It may be tempting to dismiss these effects as simply the result of careful depiction of a genuinely androgynous, youthful sitter. Wriothesley's beauty, beardlessness and age were indeed commented on by contemporaries. John Sandford praised Wriothesley's appearance in a Latin poem when the Queen visited Oxford in 1592: 'There was present no one more comely, no young man more outstanding in learning, although his mouth scarcely yet blooms with tender down'.[423] Yet this risks ignoring artistic conventions which demonstrate how unusual this heightening of ambiguous effects was in men's portraiture. Portraits of Elizabethan boys instead often referenced their future masculine roles, for example holding weapons, or depicting them wearing hunting clothing, rather than in ways that exaggerate their ambiguous beauty.[424] While each individual element was not unprecedented in men's portraiture, the confluence of long hair, beardlessness, clothing that could have been worn by a man or woman and visual techniques that add to this gender ambiguity is unusual. Dismissing Wriothesley's androgynous depiction and description as simply true to life also fails to take into account the constructed nature of much contemporary commentary. John

[423] Quoted in Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl*, 36.

[424] See Marcus Gheeraerts, *Portrait of Lady Anne Pope with her Three Children*, 1596, oil on canvas, 203.6 × 121.7 cm, National Portrait Gallery (Loan from a Private Pollection), London; Marcus Gheeraerts, *Barbara Gamage and her Children*, c.1596, oil on canvas, 203.2 × 259 cm, Penshurst Place, Kent.

Sandford likely selected his praise in terms that evoked classical admiration of androgynous beauty, that he judged would flatter and appeal to him, as too might the *Cobbe Portrait*.

As this portrait was probably undertaken at the sitter's instigation, and primarily seen by viewers in his company, who were likely to recognise the subject, this raises the question of how these allusions to feminised portraiture conventions functioned when the sitter's true gender was known. Since the sitter is recognisable, his face presented fully to the viewer, the gender ambiguity in this portrait should instead be understood as of a subtler form than that seen in the case of the *Triple Profile Portrait*. The fact that the painting likely remained in Wriothesley's own possession, passing through family inheritance into the Cobbe collection, suggests that a reaction based on deception and recognition of the sitter was unlikely to be the primary way of viewing this portrait. The portrait's gender ambiguity, created through costume, colour and other ambiguous cues, should perhaps instead be understood as adding an extra layer of allusion to feminised beauty and women's portraiture conventions. This type of gender ambiguity finds parallels in the poetry and literature that Wriothesley patronised, in which the appeal of young men is described as a kind of feminised beauty. Before exploring these works, however, it is worth pausing to examine in greater depth the extent to which this portrait departs from conventional portraiture.

Visual Parallels

Comparison with similar works helps to judge the novelty of the *Cobbe Portrait* and how it may have been understood by its original audience. This portrait shares some aspects in common with contemporary depictions of melancholic youths. Melancholy was a condition of sadness, disaffection or inertia that was considered to be caused by a humoral excess of black bile.[425] While forming a physiological imbalance, the vogue for melancholy in courtly portraits in the late sixteenth century has been well-documented as a way for sitters to mark themselves out as fashionably disaffected, or artistically and philosophically

[425] In *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), Robert Burton discussed the prevalence of melancholy: 'a disease so frequent ... in these our daies', quoted in Angus Gowland, 'The Problem of Early Modern Melancholy', *Past & Present* 191 (2006): 77.

inclined.[426] Melancholic sitters are often depicted wearing black, with artfully disarrayed or neglected clothing, often with unbrushed hair or unbuttoned doublets and large hats. Typically, they are shown resting their head on their hand, and usually in an outdoor setting, which was considered to be most conducive to contemplation.[427] Nicholas Hilliard depicted Henry Percy in this guise in 1595, shown lying down in undone black and white clothing, his head on his hand, his book lying nearby, in a landscape which may allude to philosophical concepts of harmony, further foregrounding his scholarly and melancholic nature (fig. 60).[428] Henry Slingsby was also depicted in the costume and pose of melancholy, with black clothing, a large hat and loose and unkempt hair, both in a miniature by Hilliard and in a full-scale portrait in the Fitzwilliam Museum (fig. 61, 62). In the easel portrait, he even performs a hand-on-heart gesture similar to Wriothesley's hand on his hair.

Since these portraits share some features in common with Wriothesley's, it is worth questioning whether the different mode of masculinity which he presents in the *Cobbe Portrait* is simply a melancholic one. Margaret Pelling has recently noted the overlap between melancholy men, youth, beardlessness and long hair.[429] Juliana Schiesari has suggested that men afflicted by melancholy performed a mode of masculinity, characterised as the *vita contemplativa* rather than the *vita activa*, which may have been considered a comparatively feminised state, due to its inertia.[430] While sharing some features of

---

[426] For the 'culture' of melancholy in the court, encouraged by the 'hospitable environment provided by learned philosophical and spiritual discourse', see Gowland, 'The Problem', 114. For more on the connection between art, philosophy and melancholy, see Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art* (London: Nelson, 1964); Douglas Trevor, *The Poetics of Melancholy in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Laurinda Dixon, *The Dark Side of Genius: The Melancholic Persona in Art, c.1500-1700* (University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013).

[427] For melancholic sitters in Elizabethan art, see Roy Strong, *The Elizabethan Image: An Introduction to English Portraiture, 1558-1603* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 134-156; Elizabeth Goldring, ''So lively a portraiture of his miseries': Melancholy, Mourning and the Elizabethan Malady', *The British Art Journal* 6, No. 2 (2005): 12-22.

[428] For more on this composition, see Strong, *The Elizabethan Image*, 147-9.

[429] In melancholic portraits 'one consistent motif is male youth', Pelling, 'The Very Head', 58.

[430] Juliana Schiesari has shown how melancholia, interpreted as 'creative lack', sometimes interpreted as 'appropriating the feminine', in Juliana Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell

fashionably melancholic costume and gesture, then, as well as depicting youthful sitters, who were perhaps more prone to melancholy, the overall effect of Wriothesley's portrait appears deliberately androgynous and more intimate or romantic.[431] Compared to Slingsby's portrait, Wriothesley's gesture speaks more strongly to romance, due to the tactile combing of the hair, especially combined with his pink cheeks and lips: further traits of feminine beauty. Slingsby's hair is shorter and he is depicted with a beard, cultivating his appearance of deliberate dishevelment. While, as Margaret Pelling argues, a beardless and youthful appearance in melancholic portraits may indeed speak to 'sexual attractiveness', these works equally speak to intellect and young courtier's alienation.[432] The greatest overlap with Wriothesley's portrait and melancholic imagery is with portraits depicting sitters in a state of 'love-melancholy', sharing the motifs of melancholy, but differentiated by the greater weight placed on romantic symbolism.

This is demonstrated by comparison with a miniature by Hilliard from c.1590-3, which shows a blonde, beardless young man, looking out at the viewer, with his hand under his shirt, placed at his heart, beneath a pink fur or feather trimmed cloak, which matches the pink of his lips (fig. 54).[433] His dark and shining eyes are emphasised by the unusual black background, which, alongside his unkempt clothing and the gesture seem to speak to love-melancholy.[434] While the sitter remains unattributed, with no inscribed age or date to help trace him, the limited palette and cropping at shoulder height creates a similar emphasis on youthful, pale skin, pinks, blacks and unusually smooth cheeks as Wriothesley's portrait.

University Press, 1992), 11. See also Anne-Julia Zwierlein, 'Monsters of the Mind: Early Modern Melancholia and (Cross-)Gendered Constructions of Creativity', in *The Literature of Melancholia: Early Modern to Postmodern*, ed. Martin Middeke and Christina Wald (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 35-49.

[431] For Raphaelle Costa de Beauregard, men's pale cheeks could connote 'a fair complexion, or a melancholy mood for lovers', as seen in Wriothesley's miniature by Hilliard, in Costa de Beauregard, *Silent Elizabethans*, 50.

[432] Pelling, 'The Very Head', 60.

[433] Goran Stanivuković invokes this portrait, alongside another example, as registering 'the period's fascination with young men in visual arts and poetry', in Goran Stanivuković, 'Portrait Miniature Painting, the Young Man of Shakespeare's Sonnets and Late Elizabethan Aesthetics', *English Studies* 95, No. 4 (2014): 370.

[434] For more on the romantic connotations of this miniature, and its black background, see Costa de Beauregard, *Silent Elizabethans*, 94.

Romantic symbolism may explain why the iconography that Wriothesley adopted in this early portrait finds its closest parallel in sixteenth-century courtly miniatures. Miniatures were often exchanged as part of a gift-giving culture, to strengthen and visualise personal ties and affections, especially friendship and love.[435] The strongest parallels to the *Cobbe Portrait* are Hilliard's pictures of young, fashionable, and amorous gentleman, like an anonymous sitter from 1597 (fig. 55). The inscription places him at the age of twenty-two and, despite his light moustache, he is depicted as comparably pale and unusually smooth-cheeked. His long, loose hair and earring add to his feminised beauty, further developed by the reappearance of the same pink-trimmed cloak—perhaps suggesting it was a prop that belonged to Hilliard rather than his sitters—again harmonising here with the reds and pinks of his collar and lips. This time, the sitter's hand is not on his heart, but rests on this trim of the cloak, close to the border of the miniature, creating a tactile and intimate interplay, suggesting immediacy. These miniatures show a similar drawing out of youthful, feminised male beauty to the *Cobbe Portrait*. This attests to the fact that the amorous potential of youth may have particularly commended it at court, as these effects are played up especially in private miniatures, with romantic connotations.[436]

The greater prominence of androgyny in these examples of romantic iconography suggests that a slightly feminised appearance may have been used to evoke the absent, female, object of affection, paradoxically the lover's body. In a similar way, the masculine costume in Oliver's portrait of a woman performing the same lovelock to heart gesture as seen in the *Cobbe Portrait* may also have had a synecdochal function (fig. 59). The masculine hat, when

---

[435] For intimacy and miniatures, see Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics*, 67-110; John Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance* (London: Phaidon Press, 1966), 255. The miniature as 'ideal love token' is discussed in Catherine MacLeod, 'A Thing Apart: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portrait Miniatures', in *Elizabethan Treasures: Miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver*, ed. Catherine MacLeod (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2019), 6-19, 16.

[436] As Catherine MacLeod suggests, 'demonstration of loyalty and affection could, of course, take place in relation to a portrait on any scale, but there seems to have been a particular etiquette involved in requesting to look at and showing portrait miniatures…', in MacLeod, 'A Thing Apart', 15. As Margaret Pelling argues, 'In terms of pleasing early modern women, this youthful look, offering the promise of a beard without the beard itself, may have been well judged', in Pelling, 'The Very Head', 58.

combined with the black clothing and beads, which evoke mourning, suggests that the tactile contact with the hair, as well as masculine elements of costume, may have functioned to evoke a male relation—for example, a departed husband. In the case of Wriothesley, the hair-to-heart gesture may similarly be intended to evoke an absent beloved. Although funereal symbolism is missing from Wriothesley's portrait, these comparisons suggest that sometimes the iconographies and costumes associated with the opposite gender were employed as a way of evoking the absent lover or relation. In these cases, the body of the sitter in the portrait becomes a hybrid, standing for both halves of the real, imagined or remembered couple at once.

Few portraits, however, seem to create these effects on a larger scale, and miniatures, by contrast, represented a more private medium, particularly suited to these personal tributes and memories.[437] The choice of full-scale format, associated with a more public statement, is unusual. The reasons why Wriothesley may have created this androgynous portrait, which mobilised romantic symbolism on a greater scale, and in more ambiguous ways, than his contemporaries, may lie in his documented interest in Ovidian literature that thematised gender ambiguity.

English Ovidianism

Wriothesley's portrait, and the androgynous fashions depicted in it, can likely be traced to the same origins as many Elizabethan literary works that thematised androgyny and gender ambiguity: the Ovidian revival. Both poetic descriptions and portraits were guided by a general distrust of explicit bodily gender ambiguity, which instead was the preserve of accounts of monsters or medical curiosities.[438] In English poetry and art, gender ambiguity was cultivated instead through imprecise and ambiguous description, described by Jenny Mann as a 'blurring' effect, particularly of long hair and facial characteristics, like blushing cheeks and lips, and youthful, moist skin—the same features that the artist highlights in the *Cobbe Portrait*.[439] Wriothesley's portrait seems to match the extent and kind of gender

[437] Stanivuković, 'Portrait Miniature Painting', 376.
[438] Mann, 'How to Look', 69.
[439] Ibid., 74.

ambiguity seen in the works of Ovidian poets, not by literal blurring but by selective inclusion or cropping.

As Cora Fox has noted, *Metamorphoses* was one of most influential of the 'reborn' texts of the renaissance.[440] Ovidianism played a crucial role in sixteenth and seventeenth-century European culture both on the Continent and, from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, in England. A number of new full and partial translations of this text emerged in this period, and authors like Francis Beaumont, Christopher Marlowe and Shakespeare wrote eroticising epyllia, taking inspiration from individual Ovidian tales, like *Venus and Adonis* and *Hero and Leander.*[441] Ovidianism in English literature and culture reached its peak in the 1590s.[442] With these translations and adaptations came a transliteration of Ovidian concepts into English guises.[443] For this reason, the term 'Ovidianism' rose to prominence in studies of English literature in the 1990s to 2000s as a way of referring not just to direct translations or imitations of Ovid, but the looser cultural transformations and themes that were repeatedly taken up by English authors, including transformation and flux, gender ambiguity, extremes of emotion, desire, and the weakness of humans in the face of external forces (exemplified by the whims of the gods).[444] Ovidian stories therefore offered a lens through which to consider current events, including shifts in the conception of gender, and gendered hierarchies.[445] These themes were no doubt brought to the fore in England by the

---

[440] Fox, *Ovid*, 2.

[441] Goran Stanivuković, 'Introduction', in *Ovid and the Renaissance Body*, ed. Goran Stanivuković (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 5. As Raphael Lyne writes, translation 'effects a reinvention (or rediscovery) of the source as an English writer. Imitations of Ovid in the period seem to attend to just this process, striving to produce something highly English from the transaction, and increasing the vernacular 'store'' in Raphael Lyne, *Ovid's Changing Worlds: English Metamorphoses 1567-1632* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 10.

[442] Cora Fox, *Ovid*, 2; Starks-Estes, *Violence,* 8.

[443] Ibid.

[444] See Raphael Lyne, *Ovid's Changing Worlds*; Stanivuković, *Ovid and the Renaissance Body*; Liz Oakley Brown, *Ovid and the Cultural Politics of Translation in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Victoria Rimell, *Ovid's Lovers: Desire, Difference, and the Poetic Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Cora Fox, *Ovid*; Sarah Carter, *Ovidian Myth and Sexual Deviance in Early Modern English Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[445] The 'Ovidian body reflects and reciprocally reconstructs renaissance conceptions of sexual difference in multiple ways', in Fox, *Ovid*, 8. In *Haec Vir*, the mannish woman is refered to as 'most couragious counterfet of Heracles and his Distaffe', Anonymous, *Haec Vir: Or, The Womanish-Man*

challenges posed by Queen Elizabeth I's status as an unmarried, female monarch.[446] The concept can also help to bridge the gap between literary accounts of androgyny, their visual equivalents and how contemporaries might have considered them—themes which have so far received little attention in art history. In the case of the *Cobbe Portrait*, androgynous fashions, and perhaps makeup, may have appealed to the youthful male beauty often described by Ovid.

Elizabethan literature from the late sixteenth century presents many examples of young men whose beauty blurs the lines between sexes in ways that parallel Wriothesley's portrait. In Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, 1598, the opening description of Leander highlights his 'dangling tresses that were never shorne', 'orient cheekes and lippes', creating an appearance that is so ambiguous that 'some swore he was a maid in mans attire,/ For in his lookes were all that men desire'.[447] Based on this description, A.L. Rowse suggested that Wriothesley was the muse for Leander.[448] Although this relationship has not been substantiated, Rowse's speculation nonetheless highlights how Wriothesley's appearance echoed the youthful, often feminised protagonists of Ovidian poetry. In Shakespeare's *Sonnet 20*, the object of the narrator's affection, the 'master-mistress' of his 'passion', is described as possessing a 'woman's face', despite being 'A man in hue,/ all hues in his controlling,/ Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.'[449] The same author's Adonis, in *Venus and Adonis*, forms a similar type, whom Venus addresses as 'Thrice-fairer than myself' and 'more lovely than a man', reversing the gendered dynamic of Petrarchan love poetry by attempting to seduce him with verses on his red and white lips and cheeks,

---

(London: John Trundle, 1620) Sig. A3^{v}. For Philip Stubbes, 'Women may not improperly be called Hermaphroditi, that is, monsters of both kindes, half women, half men', in Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London: Richard Jones, 1583), 74.

[446] Cora Fox analyses how Elizabeth's later reign deployed Ovidian metamorphosis to both represent political flexibility and destabilise gender stereotypes in reference to the Sudeley entertainments, 1592, possibly authored by Lyly, and Lyly's late 1580s play *Love's Metamorphosis*, in Fox, *Ovid*, 28; 41-58.

[447] Marlowe, '*The Complete Works*, I, 190.

[448] Rowse, *Shakespeare's Southampton*, 78.

[449] Shakespeare, *The Sonnets*, 20.

'more white and red than doves or roses'.[450] Similarly, Thomas Edwards in his poem, *Narcissus*, 1595, a frequent parallel for Adonis in early modern literature, describes the beautiful but prideful protagonist as 'as nice as any she alive'.[451] In *As You Like It*, Phoebe falls for the 'sweet youth' Ganymede, Rosalind in disguise, who she prefers to the 'man' Silvius, complimenting his 'complexion' in Petrarchan comparisons, usually reserved for women: 'There was a pretty redness in his lip,/ A little riper and more lusty red/ Than that mixed in his cheek…'.[452] As these literary comparisons suggest, a young man's appeal was localised in particular in a pretty face, comprising of a pale complexion, red cheeks and lips, and long fair hair. The result is a classic Petrarchan colour scheme, seen in Wriothesley's portrait, while an emphasis on facial beauty that blurs the lines between genders is also paralleled in the portrait's half-length format. As in France previously, these literary descriptions of androgyny drew on classical precedents to idealise, employing comparisons that were drawn mainly from Ovidian models.

There are many reasons why a male courtier might have chosen to present in this androgynous guise. Taking its form from Ovidianism, the social conditions of the Elizabethan court may also have relied upon a redefinition of masculinity and its traditional presentation, which may also have commended a more androgynous appearance, at least for those young enough to perform it. In the context of Elizabeth's court, youthful and ambiguous fashions may have been a way for male courtiers to allude flatteringly to their

---

[450] William Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*, in William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Poems: Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece and the Shorter Poems*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones and H.R. Woudhuysen (London: Thompson Learning, 2007), 125-230, 132. As for the impact of Petrarch on English poetry, 'specifically, the courtly mistress as blushing and refusing, and codified poetic competition between men', see Susan Wiseman, 'Rethinking Renaissance Loves', *Textual Practice* 33, No. 8 (2019): 1263-1275.

[451] Quoted in Mario Digangi, ''Male deformities' Narcissus and the Reformation of Courtly Manners in Cynthia's Revels', in *Ovid and the Renaissance Body*, 103.

[452] William Shakespeare*, As You Like It*, ed. Alan Brissenden (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 185-186. For more on androgyny in Shakespeare, see Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity*, 155. Jonathan Bate sees not just androgynous themes in Shakespeare, but even style, as he traces an 'aesthetics of hermaphroditism', consisting of the combination of opposites, through his work. See Jonathan Bate, 'Elizabethan Translation: The Art of the Hermaphrodite', in *Translating Life: Studies in Transpositional Aesthetics*, ed. Shirley Chew and Alistair Stead (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 34.

dependence on the Queen, or highlight their possession of attractive and youthful qualities.[453] This fed into the language of desire used by courtiers and the Queen, borrowing in particular from Petrarchan love poetry and Ovid, to represent the supplication of courtiers to the monarch.[454] It is easy to imagine, then, how, in the Elizabethan court, greater stock may have been placed in the ability of male courtiers to pass themselves off as youthful, beautiful love objects, allowing them to claim an erotic currency that could govern their social success. Maria Heywood, for example, considers the popularity of an increasingly youthful and athletic physique as a tactic to attract 'the Queen's favour' in the Elizabethan court.[455] By representing a deviation from the traditional markers of masculine authority (imposing build, a beard), this particular form of youthful male beauty may also have been intended as particularly non-threatening, in order to avoid highlighting Elizabeth I's uneasy negotiation of gender in relation to the traditional position of male authority, the crown.

As an expression of deference to a powerful monarch, youthful male beauty ideals may have been linked to a cross-continental redefinition of masculinity that responded to the changing role of courtiers, which has been summarised as a move away from the traditional military duties of courtiers, replaced by an increasing reliance on social life at court, and by extension the monarch at its centre.[456] This placed courtiers in a subordinate, and by extension feminised, position in relation to the monarch, according to renaissance

---

[453] See the subversion of gender to these ends in Lyly's court entertainments in Fox, *Ovid*, 41-658. For Jonathan Bate, Lyly 'became the first to introduce sustained Ovidianism into English drama', quoted in Mark Dooley, 'Inversion, Metamorphosis, and Sexual Difference: Female Same-Sex Desire in Ovid and Lyly', in *Ovid and the Renaissance Body*, 59.

[454] See Amina Alyal, 'There's Something about Diana: Ovid and the Development of Reformation Poetics', in *The Survival of Myth: Innovation, Singularity and Alterity*, ed. Paul Hardwick and David Kennedy (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 65-89, 67.

[455] Heywood, *Stuart Style*, 83.

[456] Giuliano de' Medici exemplifies this by praising Monseigneur d'Angouleme, the future King François I, who he hopes will make letters flourish in his kingdom together with arms in Castiglione, *The Book*, 88. See Olga Zorzi Pugliese, 'The French Factor in Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier (Il libro del cortegiano): From the Manuscript Drafts to the Printed Edition', *Renaissance and Reform*, New Series 27, No. 2 (2003): 23-40, 30.

taxonomies that saw activity as masculine and passivity as feminine.[457] Castiglione highlighted the ambivalence at the heart of the courtier's role, by comparing courtiers to 'caged birds'.[458] Changes to the renaissance role of the courtier have therefore been linked to parallel changes in dress, towards a more youthful silhouette.[459] Equally, however, this self-styling as youthful and more androgynous could communciate defiance. Ovid's risky, playful, and sexual episodes, originally published in the face of increasingly conservative Augustinian social reforms, may have accorded with the early modern poets and playwrights, and the courtiers who patronised them, who wanted to self-style in a similarly rebellious and urbane guise, while also providing an authoritative precedent for the exploration of potentially transgressive themes including gender inversion or ambiguity.[460]

---

[457] This gendered binary derives from the Aristotelian tradition, in which 'The duality male/female is therefore paralleled by the dualities active/passive, form/matter, act/potency, perfection/imperfection, completion/incompletion, possession/deprivation'. See Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion*, 8.

[458] Castiglione, *The Book*, 130.

[459] Elizabeth Currie linked the development of a more slim-fitting and tailored silhouette with a growing youth culture around the young Medici, bound up with the communication of military athleticism when otherwise denied an outlet during peace time, in Elizabeth Currie, *Fashion and Masculinity*, esp. 3, 134-9. See also Jennifer Richards, ''A wanton trade of living'? Rhetoric, Effeminacy, and the Early Modern Courtier', *Criticism* 42, No. 2 (2000): 185-206. While the ideal of the masculine traditional warrior persisted, 'the ideal courtier was expected to dress magnificently and fully display rank through conspicuous consumption', in Mirkin, *The Portrait of Elizabeth Cary*, 80. David Kuchta charts the emergence of a new sartorial regime of 'conspicuous consumption' in men's dress. Although display itself was not gendered at this time, the artifice of *sprezzatura* presented a particular challenge to traditional masculinity due to its 'created naturalness', in Kuchta, *The Three-piece Suit*, 26-7; 68-9. Art historians such as Philip Sohm have similarly drawn attention to how *sprezzatura* itself relies on ideas about concealing artifice, traditionally associate with women's deceptions, from using makeup to Michelangelo's critique of oil painters concealing their brushstrokes as feminine, in Sohm, 'Gendered Style', 761.

[460] As Georgia Brown argues, 'Classical models, like Catullus and Ovid, encourage the association of eroticism, marginality and transgression with rhetorical skill', in Georgia Brown, *Redefining Elizabethan Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 129. Lisa Starkes-Estes similarly argues that Ovid formed an 'ambivalent model' for Elizabethan writers, being both 'revered and notorious', in Starkes-Estes*, Violence*, 9. For Heather James, 'Ovid's audacity was in some ways easier to handle when treated strictly as a matter of moral licentiousness', rather than 'The political license of the poet who dramatically relinquished the mantle of Vergil and epic imperialism', in Heather James, 'Ovid and the Question of Politics in Early Modern England', *English Literary History* 70, No. 2 (2003): 344. Agnes Lafont argues that 'erotic classical mythology allows Shakespeare and his contemporaries to stage different kinds of desires and polymorphous passions in an enticing way for the modern audience', in Agnes Lafont ed., *Shakespeare's Erotic Mythology and Ovidian*

While this general trend for an Ovid-inspired, youthful gender ambiguity may explain the adoption of this styling amongst men, it does not, however, account for why comparatively few men were painted in these fashions, or why the *Cobbe Portrait* thematises these parallels. Wriothesley, however, was closer than many to the literary world of the Ovidian revival, acting as patron and possibly muse for works that foregrounded youthful, gender-ambiguous beauty.

Wriothesley's Patronage

In the 1590s, Wriothesley was establishing a reputation as a learned literary patron. He had just finished his education at St John's, during which he was also tutored in Latin, and in Italian by John Florio.[461] After graduating MA, he was admitted into Gray's Inn, whose members were considered 'special patrons of the theatre, deeming themselves cognoscenti of the stage'.[462] It was likely at this time that Wriothesley made Shakespeare's acquaintance, and writers began to dedicate works to the earl.[463] Indeed, many of the works already cited as featuring examples of gender-ambiguous protagonists have been directly and indirectly linked to Wriothesley.

Renaissance Culture (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 13. See also Brown, *Redefining*, 177. As Jonathan Bate writes, Ovidian poetry enacts the 'dissolution of the conventional barriers of gender, for in these stories women take the active role usually given to men and young men always look like girls' in Jonathan Bate, 'Sexual Perversity in 'Venus and Adonis'', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 23 (1993): 88.

[461] Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl*, 29-30. Giulia Harding and Chris Stamatakis, 'Shakespeare, Florio, and Love's Labour's Lost', in *Shakespeare, Italy, and Transnational Exchange: Early Modern to Present,* ed. Enza De Francisci and Chris Stamatakis (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 33.

[462] Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl*, 30.

[463] See John Clapham, *Narcissus. Siue amoris iuuenilis et præcipue philautiæ breuis at que moralis descripto* (London: Thomas Scarlet, 1591); Barnabe Barnes, *Parthenophil and Partenophe*, 1593; William Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*, 1593, and William Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece*, 1594, in Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Poems,* 125-230; 231-383; Thomas Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traveller, 1594*: *or, the Life of Iacke Wilton; Newly corrected and augmented*, 2e (Menston: Scolar Press, 1971); William Burton, *The most delectable and pleasaunt history of Clitiphon and Leucippe: written first in Greeke, by Achilles Statius, an Alexandrian: and now newly translated into English, by W.B.* (London: Thomas Creede, 1597).

On account of these dedications, some literary critics have argued that the protagonists of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and Clapham's *Narcissus*, both works dedicated to Wriothesley, were based on him. In 1593, Shakespeare dedicated *Venus and Adonis* and, the next year, *Lucrece*, to Wriothesley. The plot of *Venus and Adonis*, in which Adonis rejects Venus's advances, finds a parallel in the seventeen-year-old earl's refusal to marry Lord Burghley's granddaughter, Lady Elizabeth Vere, incurring a five-thousand pound fine for disobeying his guardian.[464] Literary scholars have therefore debated whether Shakespeare's dedication of the poem to Wriothesley constituted an attempt to gain the lasting patronage of this young and potentially sympathetic courtier, or an intervention into the earl's life, veiled in poetry, at the encouragement of his mother or guardian.[465] If the latter, it followed *Narcissus*, written by Lord Burghley's Clerk in Chancery, John Clapham, likely on Burghley's request, which recounted the Greek legend of a beautiful young man who perishes through self-love.[466] As Lisa Starkes-Estes and Jonathan Bate have argued, however, *Venus and Adonis* may have been intended to flatter Wriothesley with parallels with the youthful and attractive protagonist, or to simply provide licentious entertainment.[467]

---

[464] Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl*, 1–2, 39.

[465] The poem has attracted so many contradicting interpretations that 'The number of published interpretations bears witness to the variety of possible answers; but no one interpretation works for more than one aspect of the poem', in Lucy Gent, 'Venus and Adonis: The Triumph of Rhetoric', *Modern Language Review* 69 (1974): 721. Patrick Murphy, 'Wriothesley's Resistance: Wardship Practices and Ovidian Narratives in Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis', in *Venus and Adonis: Critical Essays*, ed. Philip Kolin (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 1997), 325. Catherine Belsey, however, sees the critical impulse to draw a moral from this poem as stemming from the text's open-ended problematisation of love and lust, in Catherine Belsey, 'Love as Trompe-l'oeil: Taxonomies of Desire in Venus and Adonis', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46 (1995): 258.

[466] Akrigg suggests that the poem was commissioned by Burghley as a rebuke for his refusal to marry Elizabeth Vere, in Akrigg, *Shakespeare and the Earl*, 31-35; 195-6. Charles Martindale and Colin Burrow, however, do not see a positive pro-marriage or sex message in *Narcissus*, although it admonishes self-love, in Charles Martindale and Colin Burrow, ''Clapham's 'Narcissus': A Pre-Text for Shakespeare's 'Venus and Adonis'? Text, Translation, and Commentary', *English Literary Renaissance* 22, No. 2 (1992): esp. 150-151.

[467] For Lisa Stark-Estes, a homoerotic reading emerges, based on the dedication to Wriothesley, with Venus as a 'spurned Petrarchan lover', Stark-Estes, *Violence*, 79. François Laroque questions whether the poem was intended as a 'perverse paradox' of role reversal, intended to amuse, or a 'flamboyant plea' for 'hedonistic philosophy', in François Laroque, 'Erotic Fancy/Fantasy in Venus and Adonis, A Midsummer Night's Dream and Antony and Cleopatra', in *Shakespeare's Erotic Mythology*, ed. Agnes Lafont (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 63. At the time, contemporaries most commonly commented on

It is also at this time that Shakespeare likely began work on sonnets addressed to a fair youth, whom he describes in *Sonnet 20* as having 'a woman's face with nature's own hand painted', and further poems dedicated to 'W.H.', which, some have argued, may have referred to Wriothesley by reversing his initials.[468] Evidence for Wriothesley's direct inspiration of these poets is far from conclusive and relies on a somewhat outdated assumption that a 'real' model for Adonis must have existed in Shakespeare's life.[469] The frequency with which Wriothesley is compared to these figures, however, suggests some shared ground, although it is worth reconsidering the direction of this influence. It may have been the case that Wriothesley styled himself deliberately to evoke comparison with the protagonists of classical and contemporary literature. Or, due to the importance of Ovid as a cultural reference across many arts and genres at this time, it is perhaps more likely that these literary figures and portraits of Wriothesley from the early 1590s may have drawn inspiration from the common root of Ovidianism, forming parallel homages to figures described as beautiful due to their androgyny.[470]

The success of Shakespeare's choice of the earl as dedicatee can be inferred by his continued patronage, as the author included a more intimate dedication to *Lucrece*, a year later.[471] The parallels between dedicatee and subjects suggest that a particularly youth-

---

the poem's erotic effects. In *Runne and a Great Cast*, 1614, Thomas Freeman described the poem, 'Who list read lust there's Venus and Adonis, / True modell of a most lascivious leatcher', quoted in Laroque, *Erotic Fantasy*, 64.

[468] The identification of Wriothesley with the youth of the sonnets began with Nathan Drake, in Drake, *Shakespeare*, 62. For the continuation of this theory, see Honan, *Shakespeare*, 361; Roy Winnick, ''Loe, here in one line is his name twice writ': Anagrams, Shakespeare's Sonnets, and the Identity of the Fair Friend', *Literary Imagination* 11, No. 3 (2009): 254–277. It has been suggested that Shakespeare's *Sonnet 16* refers to Nicholas Hilliard's *Portrait of Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton*, 1594, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. See Mary Edmond, *Hilliard and Oliver: The Lives and Works of the Two Great Miniaturists* (London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1983), 95-96.

[469] For Sidney Lee, 'It was doubtless to Shakespeare's personal relations with men and women of the Court that his sonnets owed their existence', in Sidney Lee, *A Life of William Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 83.

[470] Against the assumption that this period was visually impoverished. See Gent, *Picture and Poetry*, esp. 43-5.

[471] 'In the early 1590s *Narcissus* was the only tangible evidence that Southampton might be a welcoming patron for erotic narrative poems', in Martindale and Burrow, 'Clapham's *Narcissus*', 151.

centric, eroticising and gender-ambiguous form of presentation may indeed have appealed to or flattered Wriothesley, not only physically but intellectually. As Georgia Brown has argued, Wriothesley 'cultivated the image of an aesthete, with strong interests in new artistic trends', including Ovidian epyllia. In this context, the poem's 'sophisticated indulgence in the erotic charms of both male and female reflect this image'.[472] If the attribution to John de Critz is correct, the earl may have found in this artist someone familiar with the Ovidian tradition, through his access to art on the Continent and able to translate something of its key components. On 14 October 1582, for example, John de Critz sent Walsingham two paintings from Paris, one of which was 'a poetical story taken out of Ovid, where Neptune took Coenis by the seaside and having ravished her for some amends changed her into the form of a man'.[473] This description suggests that he was aware that the Ovidian source, as well as the sexual subject, may have helped to add intrigue to this purchase for a sophisticated patron and that gender fluidity was a key aspect of Ovidian narratives. Sophistication, as demonstrated by its rarity in English portraiture, and its elite literary parallels, may have motivated the *Cobbe Portrait*.

The rebellious, erotically and socially transgressive reputation of Ovid may also have appealed to the young earl, influencing his patronage of English Ovidian writers and parallel cultural acts, like this portrait. This reputation was inherited from a medieval tradition of moralising editions of Ovid. Although Ovid and other transgressive authors from antiquity were used selectively to teach rhetoric in schools, his works continued to form a target for moralists in the early modern period.[474] Stephen Gosson took aim at Ovidian poets who used 'fables to shew theyr abuses' and 'disperse their poyson through all the worlde'.[475] Equally, this reputation as a transgressive poet could be leveraged by writers seeking to

---

[472] Brown, *Redefining*, 114.

[473] Quoted in Susan James, *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art, 1485-1603: Women as Consumers, Patrons and Painters* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 129.

[474] For this tradition, see Lyne, *Ovid's Changing Worlds*, 19. As Susan Wiseman writes, 'until the Restoration, Ovid remained politically corrupting and correspondingly exciting', in Susan Wiseman, ''Romes Wanton Ovid': Reading and Writing Ovid's 'Heroides', 1590–1712', *Renaissance Studies* 22, No. 3 (2008): 303. For the ambivalent reputation of Ovid in 1590s England, see Daniel Moss, ''The Second Master of Love': George Chapman and the Shadow of Ovid', *Modern Philology* 111, No. 3 (2014): 460-461.

[475] Quoted in James, 'Ovid and the Question of Politics', 345.

style themselves as similarly avant-garde and novel. As Georgia Brown has argued, 'Classical models, like Catullus and Ovid, encourage the association of eroticism, marginality and transgression with rhetorical skill, and sanction the shameless processes whereby eroticism is elaborated to interrogate the precise nature of literary activity.'[476] It is for this reason that even those who worked in an Ovidian tradition paid reference to this transgressive reputation. Thomas Nashe, for example, argued in *The Anatomie of Absurditie*, 1589, that Ovid's exile should have been enough to warn others away from imitation of his works, yet followed this with a quotation from Ovid.[477] Shakespeare seems to have drawn on these transgressive associations in his dedication of *Venus and Adonis* to Wriothesley, through the language of censorship. As he writes, 'I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your Lordship, nor how the world will censure me…'.[478] For a patron like Wriothesley, this dedication, although playfully apologetic, aligns him with those of similar transgressive, avant-garde taste.[479]

We can therefore construct Wriothesley as the kind of patron of the arts for whom an air of transgression may have appealed. While, as Murphy has argued, there was nothing necessarily 'revolutionary' about his refusal to marry his guardian's choice of bride, as this action fell within his legal rights, rebellious acts also seem to have shaped his later life.[480] In 1598, he was imprisoned for an erotic and social transgression—his secret marriage to the pregnant Elizabeth Vernon, without the permission of the Queen.[481] Similarly, in 1601, he

---

[476] Brown, *Redefining*, 129. For the use of Ovid in school, see James, 'Ovid and the Question of Politics', 344-346.

[477] 'Might Ovid's exile admonish such idlebies to betake them to a new trade, the press should be far better employed', in Thomas Nashe, *The Anatomie of Absurdities* (London: I. Charlewood, 1598), Sig. A1 ^{v}. For playful subversion of quotes from Ovid in *The Unfortunate Traveller*, see Anthony Ossa-Richardson, ''Ovid and the 'free play with signs' in Thomas Nashe's 'The Unfortunate Traveller'', *The Modern Language Review* 101, No. 4 (2006): 952-955.

[478] Shakespeare, 'Venus and Adonis', 128.

[479] Anna Bryson has shown that a liberal education had joined the traditional values of lineage and courage as key attributes for a noble to possess by the sixteenth century, in Anna Bryson, 'The Rhetoric of Status: Gesture, Demeanour and the Image of the Gentleman in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England' in *Renaissance Bodies*, 145-6.

[480] Murphy, *Wriothesley's Resistance*, 324.

[481] Cooper, *Searching for Shakespeare*, 128.

joined the Essex rebellion against Elizabeth I.[482] It is for these reasons that Lawrence Stone characterised Wriothesley as among the young aristocrats who were 'in open rebellion against the conservative establishment', Maria Heywood included him among the 'less acceptable group' of young courtiers in James I's circles, and Alistair Bellany associated him with 'discontented noblemen of the younger sort' at court.[483] Wriothesley therefore seems to have been an anti-authoritarian figure and this may have been something that he cultivated in portraits like the *Cobbe Portrait*, which broke with pictorial convention to create an Ovidian, youthful appearance. Indeed, Georgia Brown has noted this echo between Shakespeare's epyllia and Wriothesley's self-image: 'as his very image echoed the radicalism of the genre and made its own challenge to the standards and traditions of the status quo'.[484]

Wriothesley's other artistic commissions suggest that his portraits sometimes conveyed an anti-authority stance. In a portrait also attributed to John de Critz, likely dating from before 1603, Wriothesley is depicted imprisoned for his role in the Essex rebellion (fig. 63). He appears older than in the *Cobbe Portrait*, but is still sporting only a light beard, and wearing a similar combination of black doublet with white ruff. Once more, his hand is foregrounded, silhouetted against his doublet, although this time, it draws attention to his red coral bracelet and ring, while his arm appears to be held in a sling—possibly an allusion to an injury sustained in battle.[485] While the ring may evoke a personal relationship, whether relating to family or a gift, the coral may be an illusion to Christ's suffering. A Bible is also presented behind him, perhaps designed to draw a parallel between Wriothesley's suffering and that of Christ. The barred windows and cat, sometimes used as an emblem of captivity due to the cat's perceived independence, add further allusions to imprisonment and resistance.[486] This interior is placed in context by the depiction of the Tower of London in the top right corner, and the motto, 'in vinculis invictus' ('in chains, unconquered'). That

---

[482] Ibid.

[483] Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of Aristocracy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 582. For instances of his quick temper, see Richard Goulding, 'Wriothesley Portraits: Authentic and Reputed', *Walpole Society*, 8 (1919-20): 29; Heywood, *Stuart Style*, 75.

[484] Brown, *Redefining*, 114.

[485] Cooper, *Searching for Shakespeare*, 128.

[486] Ibid.

this image may have been understood as speaking to resistance is further supported by the poetry written on his release. In 1603, Samuel Daniel celebrated the earl's release from captivity, emphasising his courage under duress, suffering and God-given patience to withstand punishment 'for what his conscience knows/ Not to be ill', so that 'the more he endures, the more his glory grows'.[487] Highlighting continued resistance, this poem reflects the tone and themes of the portrait in the Tower. Although responding to the specific context of his imprisonment, this portrait evidences how the patron could project anti-authoritarian themes in art to provide a new gloss on adverse circumstances. The *Cobbe Portrait* seems to have communicated a nexus of associations that may have appealed to the earl, from rebelliousness and transgression to youthful beauty, and Ovidian connotations, of which sexuality was only one strain.

That he commissioned works that were fairly unusual for an English patron is illustrated most clearly by an anonymous portrait of his wife, *Elizabeth Vernon at her Toilette*, c.1600.[488] This likely draws inspiration from the *toilette* paintings of Fontainebleau, as no other paintings exist from early modern England depicting women dressing or undressing (fig. 64).[489] Yet Vernon's portrait is full length and avoids the characteristic nudity seen in Fontainebleau toilette scenes. The pictorial space is rendered too sharply in perspective, and the surrounding objects seem to cluster and float, suggesting that the artist had some difficulty undertaking this unusual composition. It is possible, then, that Wriothesley saw a similar painting while in France and requested that Elizabeth be depicted along similar lines.[490] This painting speaks to his later admiration and patronage of forms of continental

---

[487] Samuel Daniel, *Panegyric Congratulatory to King James* (1603), quoted in Margot Heinemann, 'Rebel Lords, Popular Playwrights, and Political Culture: Notes on the Jacobean Patronage of the Earl of Southampton', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 21 (1991): 69.

[488] For past literature on this painting, see Jane Adlin, *Vanities: Art of the Dressing Table* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013), 6; James, *The Feminine Dynamic*, 130-133.

[489] For more on the *toilette* paintings, see Elise Goodman-Soellner, 'Poetic Interpretations of the 'Lady at Her Toilette' Theme in Sixteenth-Century Painting', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 14, No. 4 (1983): 426-442; Isabelle Bardiès-Fronty, Michèle Bimbenet-Privat and Philippe Walter ed., *Le Bain et le Miroir, Soins du corps et l'estethique de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance* (Paris: Gallimard, 2009), 302–303. It is 'a startling departure from the normal portrait patterns for women in England', in James, *The Feminine* Dynamic, 132.

[490] Wolftal, *In and Out*, 63.

art that were not commonly seen in England and which, in this new context, seemed to push erotic and social boundaries.[491]

The *Cobbe Portrait* seems a similar blend of unusual ambition, where the concept behind the painting may have been supplied by the patron, and slightly naïve execution, seen, for example, in the overly long, slightly boneless look of Wriothesley's hands, which also show signs that the artist shifted their position. These works confirm that Wriothesley's commissions were idiosyncratic, and that he was particularly concerned with manipulating his representation to respond to political and personal events, taking inspiration from foreign works and perhaps, in the case of the *Cobbe Portrait*, from literature inspired by Ovid. The *Cobbe Portrait*'s added references to feminised beauty might also, through its troubling of gender categories, and the strong connection which gender fluidity had with the stories of Ovid and his imitators, have held anti-authority or transgressive connotations.[492]

Compared with the patron's other portraits, this portrait was unusual in the extent of its gender ambiguity. His later portraits most commonly presented him in a scholarly or military guise. Increasingly, he wore a moustache, but kept his signature long hair until after his release from imprisonment in 1603, when James I came to the throne. This moment marks a particular shift in his self-presentation, as he adopted a beard of the same style as James I and seems to have cut his hair in 1605. It may well be that his youthful and rebellious persona was no longer as advantageous or desirable in this new social setting, where his release and success relied directly on the King. During this period of renewed social advancement in the court, he seems to have adapted his style strategically to mimic the monarch's, and his portraits also show an increase of military themes and iconography. In one portrait in Dyrham Park, for example, attributed to the studio of Marcus Gheeraerts, an older Wriothesley stands with one hand on his hip, the other resting on a table, beside a

[491] It is 'a small oil painting meant to be hung in a private closet or bedroom antechamber', in James, *The Feminine Dynamic*, 130.

[492] For Sarah-Maria Schober, gender ambiguity in the early modern period was inherently anti-authority, as it defied early modern organisation of knowledge into categories, in Schober, 'Hermaphrodites in Basel', 299.

large plumed helmet (fig. 65). His hand hovers by his sword, and around his neck he wears the order of the garter, which he was awarded in 1603. While still wearing clothing in the dominant fashion of the era, and his ear piercing remains, he cultivates a more masculine and military presence. This is all the more apparent in the portraits of Wriothesley not just in tilting armour, as he was depicted in 1600, but in plate (fig. 66). These changes reflected his growing military role, but also helped to forge the more masculine persona that both supported and commended him for these positions.[493]

While these changes may reflect a general cultural move away from Ovidian themes in literature, poetry and court entertainments, they also suggest that Wriothesley adapted his appearance and patronage to best serve his circumstances. At the same time, his literary patronage also shifted to foreground expansionist conceits.[494] This supports the idea that, during Elizabeth I's reign, it may have been more beneficial to self-style as a young, attractive and romantic man, of which androgyny formed a part, in a climate that privileged youthful male beauty. Later, he fashioned in a way that instead reflected his new status in court, and, with age, may have courted less controversy. Given Wriothesley's tendency to commission art and literature that corresponded, or even sought to shape, events in his life, it may be possible to push this interpretation further, to suggest a reading that anchors the *Cobbe Portrait* more firmly in recent events, and to address the romantic symbolism that has been noted but not yet fully explored. As seen in literature, Ovidian references in art may also have provided a vocabulary with which to frame unconventional contemporary events: in this case, perhaps the spurning of the early marital match and with it the guardian's authority.

[493] See Heinemann, 'Rebel Lords', 67.

[494] Examples of his later literary patronage with military themes is Thomas Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West*, *Fortune by Land and Sea*, 1607-9, and *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*, 1607. See Ibid., 74.

Romance and Resistance in the *Cobbe Portrait*

In Ovidian erotic poetry and literature, youthful ambiguity of looks often comes to function as a marker of as of yet unspecified sexuality.[495] It is striking that beautiful and androgynous protagonists, such as Shakespeare's Adonis or Marlowe's Leander, are presented as previously unpreoccupied with sex, or even initially resistant, occupying the passive role usually played by the cold mistress of Petrarchan poetry.[496] For Jonathan Bate and others, this immaturity could hold erotic potential, as the reader is often encouraged to read the ambiguous looks of the protagonists and their lack of sexual interest as excitingly unformed erotic potential.[497] Following this reading, the balance of masculine and feminine elements of costume in Wriothesley's portrait might also speak to unspecified erotic potential, or even self-sufficiency. That gender ambiguity could be used to signify completion is supported not just by Ovidian youths, but by the cultural currency of Plato's androgyne, and the use of the hermaphrodite as an emblem of marriage, signalling the completed couple in 'one flesh'.[498] By styling as an attractively androgynous Ovidian youth, Wriothesely could leverage gender ambiguity to read, as in Ovidian epyllia, as evidence of romantic potential,

---

[495] See Leontes's 'Edenic and pre-sexual' description of childhood in *The Winter's Tale*, discussed in Orgel, *Impersonations*, 15.

[496] For reinforcement and challenge to gendered roles in Petrarchan poetry see Heather Dubrow, *Echoes of Desire: English Petrarchism and Its Counterdiscourses* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), esp. 38. As Jim Ellis argues, often 'in these (Ovididan) poems the aggressive female wooer is simply the flip side of the Petrarchan mistress', in Jim Ellis, 'Imagining Heterosexuality in the Epyllia', in *Ovid and the Renaissance Body*, 52.

[497] Bate, 'Sexual perversion', 90. This stands in contrast with interpretations that situate the epyllia as only pandering to male desire. See, for example, the idea that the feminine beauty of both Salmacis and Hermaphroditus in Francis Beaumont's treatment of the myth was designed 'for the titillation of men', in Sarah Carter, ''Not...Perfect boy nor perfect wench'; Ovid's Hermaphroditus and the Early Modern Hermaphrodite', in *The Survival of Myth*, 104. Bruce Smith therefore argues that these figures permit a 'temporary freedom' for the projection of sexual desires that 'flow out in all directions, towards all the sexual objects that beckon in the romantic landscape', quoted in Edward Berry, *Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 50.

[498] On the androgyne as an emblem for marriage, see Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 20-21; Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance*, 140-41; Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (New York, NY: Norton, 1968), 202. For more on this emblem, see Rothstein, 'Mutations of the Androgyne', 413.

rephrasing his refusal to marry and, as contemporary reports attest, current disinterest in marriage, not as frigidity, but eroticised romantic potential.

Alternatively, however, the romantic iconography in this portrait, including the earring, made up of two intertwined ribbons, could be a genuine gesture towards a beloved. If dating from slightly later, c.1595, for example, this portrait could have been an early gift to Elizabeth Vernon.[499] Aged twenty-two in 1595, this portrait would then exaggerate the sitter's youth and beardlessness in comparison with contemporary portraits and miniatures. In this case, the portrait may instead be understood as less personal and idiosyncratic, and more broadly representative of conventional romantic portraiture. This would indicate a broader tension at the heart of romantic portraits in this period, namely the evocation of the beloved through the lover's own body, and the resulting gender ambiguity. This is exemplified by the lovelock, and the tactile contact with the hair, but also could be figured by the adoption of masculine hats by women, as seen in the miniature by Oliver, the wearing of jewellery by men, or the heightening of red cheeks, lips, and blue veins, not often seen in men's portraits outside of a romantic context. These tropes of romantic iconography paradoxically transform the lover's body into a gender hybrid, feminising young men, or masculinising women, in order to evoke or pay tribute to an absent person of the opposite sex. The portrait, then, may represent a difference in extent rather than type of presentation, translating similar tropes seen in romantic miniatures onto a larger format. Contemporary moralists, often dismissed as hyperbole, may even have had this paradox of romantic iconography in mind when warned that love effeminated men.[500] Since this portrait's closest visual parallels were miniatures, this potentially ambiguous romantic iconography, relying on evoking gender hybridity, was perhaps typically considered best

[499] Ibid.

[500] William Prynne suspects this motivation behind lovelocks: 'In like manner men who are thus polled, betray that they desire to seeme faire to those whome they study to please, whiles they cut away some of their Haire, and compose the rest in such a manner, as may make them seeme more beautifull among Women and Children, whose praise they doe affect: which is an Effeminate, Womanish, Voluptuous, and Unmanly thing', in Prynne, *The Unlovelinesse*, 6-7. For more on the relationship between love and effeminacy, see Anthony Fletcher, 'The Male Body, Courtship and the Household in Early Modern England', *History* 84, No. 275 (1999): 423.

confined to a small-scale medium, whose viewing and meaning was tightly controlled by its owner.

Conclusion

This case study has aimed to elucidate a rarely studied portrait in the history of art. Rather than dismissing its central gender ambiguity as either representing no exaggeration of current fashions, or simply the result of personal sexuality, this chapter has grounded this portrait in broader cultural appreciation of androgynous male beauty at a specific moment in the English court, when Ovidianism was at its peak. At the same time, however, this portrait pushes gender ambiguity further than can often be seen in large-format male portraits. From the sitter's literary and artistic commissions, it seems likely that these ambiguous effects were deliberate strategies, employed to create a flattering parallel to the image of the androgynous and unattainable youth seen in the Ovidian poetry and books that he patronised, perhaps designed to show his recent refusal to marry in a positive light. The resulting portrait was likely deliberately ambiguous, capturing effects of facial beauty seen in poetry to flatter youths, creating an elite and sophisticated, Ovidian portrait. In this way, this chapter has sought to shed light on this portrait, which is overwhelmingly employed in scholarship for its ability to illustrate a literary connection to Shakespeare, by drawing together literary sources and its art historical parallels. As a portrait of a patron with strong literary interests, this image allows us to uncover parallels to the gender ambiguity that is so prevalent in the literature of the period, and perhaps even shed light on the nature of early modern approaches to gender ambiguity in both literature and visual art.

Masculine Women in Early Modern English Prints, c.1620

Introduction

In 1617 Queen Anne of Denmark was portrayed by Paul van Somer in hunting clothing. Like other women's riding costumes, this was adapted from men's doublets and hats (fig. 67).[501] Within a few years, the costume had become associated with masculine women in prints and polemics.[502] These fashions are illustrated on the titlepage of the most famous example, *Hic Mulier (or the mannish woman)*, 1620, in which the masculine woman admires her newly trimmed hair in a mirror, while a barber brandishes his scissors nearby (fig. 68). The similarities between the Queen's portrait and the caricature are striking. Both wear cropped hair, or hair styled to appear cropped, broad-brimmed hats with feathers, doublet-inspired bodices, and boots—all items that were criticised for their manliness.[503] In Anne's portrait, the masculine elements of the costume add to her general air of self-possessed authority, cultivated through her assertive pose, standing with one hand on hip, the other restraining her hunting dogs—a common convention for portraying men's command over their passions in elite male English and continental portraits.[504] In the pamphlet, however, these

[501] For more on this, see Field, 'Anna of Denmark', 50-55.

[502] Previous attacks on women in print had been generic and followed the pattern of the 'querelle des femmes' seen abroad. For an overview of sixteenth-century continental attacks on and defences of women, see Amanda Capern, *The Historical Study of Women: England 1500-1700* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 31-50; Barbara Baines ed., *Three Pamphlets on the Jacobean Antifeminist Controversy*, Facsimile (New York, NY: Delmar, 1978), v-xiii, v; Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 294. Anonymous, *Hic Mulier*; see also Anonymous, *Haec Vir*, entered seven days after in the Stationers' Register, in Edward Arber ed., *Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London: 1554-1640 A.D.*, III (London: Privately Printed, 1876), 310.

[503] The author of *Hic Mulier* describes how lately women have been 'Exchanging the modest attire of the comely Hood, Cawle, Cuyfe, and Handsome Dresse or Kerchiefe, to the cloudy Ruffianly broad-brim'd Hatte, and wanton Feather, the modest upper parts of a concealing Straight gowne, to the loose, lascivious civill embracement of a French doublet' worn with 'most ruffianly Shorn lockes', in Anonymous, *Hic Mulier*, Sig. A4^{r-v}.

[504] See Field, 'Anna of Denmark', 50. For more on the masculinity of this pose, see Joaneath Spicer, 'The Renaissance Elbow', in *A Cultural History of Gesture: From Antiquity to the Present Day*, ed. Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 84-128. Zirka Flipczak has examined the adoption of this pose to deliberately masculine effect in early modern women's portraits in Zirka Filipczak, 'Portraits of Women who 'do not keep strictly to the Masculine and Feminine Genders, as they call them', in *Pokerfaced Flemish and Dutch Baroque Faces Unveiled*,

clothes demonstrate Hic Mulier's unnatural deviation from her gender, made explicit by the neglected child at her feet. This chapter addresses how and why women's riding wear that drew inspiration from male fashions developed into a popular visual shorthand for 'bad women'. It explores how the kinds of elite representations that glamorised gender ambiguity, epitomised by the *Triple Profile Portrait*, the *Cobbe Portrait of Henry Wriothesley* and Anne of Denmark's portrait, could attract popular scrutiny and criticism, especially during periods of political and social instability.

These masculine fashions were widely described in printed polemics as monstrous subversions of natural and god-given hierarchies.[505] Authors drew attention to the inability to tell their wearers apart from men, often anchoring their objections in biblical authority, as Deuteronomy 22 forbids that men and women wear the apparel of the other gender.[506] Despite its ridicule in printed texts, contemporary portraiture attests to the popularity of these masculine fashions on elite and middling women from the 1570s onwards. Variations of the costume are worn, for example, by an unknown lady in a portrait in 1619, in a portrait attributed to Robert Peake, c.1620, and in a later portrait of Lady Lawley attributed to John Souch from c.1630 (fig. 69, 70, 71). By 1620, these fashions had even caught the attention of King James I, as John Chamberlain wrote to Dudley Carleton: 'Yesterday the bishop of London called together all his clergie about this towne, and told them he had express commandment from the King to will them to inveign vehemently against the insolencies of our women, and theyre wearing of brode brimed hats, pointed dublets, theyre hayre cut

---

ed. Katlijne Van der Stighelen, Hannelore Magnus and Bert Watteeuw (Belgium, Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 229-248.

[505] '…women be chaunged into mens appareell, that is thought a Courtly comlymes, which almightye God doth condemne in his lawe, for great abhomination: The woman shall not weare that which belongeth or pertayneth to the man (sayth the Lord) (as Dublet & breeches & such lyke) neyther shall a man put on womens apparell, for all that doe so, are an abhomination vnto the Lorde', Anthony Anderson, *The Shield of our Safetie: Set foorth by the Faythfull Preacher of Gods hoyle Worde* (London: H. Jackson, 1581), Sig. 4^{v}.

[506] 'It is writte in the 22 Deuteronomie, that what man so ever weareth womans apparel is accursed, and what woman weareth mans apparel is accursed also...Wherefore these Women may not improperly be called Hermaphroditi, that is, monsters of both kindes…', in Stubbes, *The Anatomie*, 74.

short or shorne, and some of them stilettoes or poniards, and such other trinckets of like moment'.[507]

While literary critics and historians have puzzled for decades over the sudden density of references to gender confusion and subversion in the early seventeenth century, there has been no significant study of this costume and its uses in visual culture.[508] Literary evidence for anxiety over gender confusion has attracted many conflicting interpretations, often centered around determining the historical basis that supposedly lay behind anxiety about cross-dressing.[509] Art history possesses the potential to contribute to this topic, by providing tools to analyse the visual aspects of these satires and applying its long history of theorising the relationship between images and their real-life referents.[510] Previously, attempts to explore the extent to which these references were representative of actual fashions have come unstuck, largely because the subtlety of the visual evidence has left these trends overlooked. For a modern audience, there is no mistaking Hic Mulier's skirt for breeches, yet the follow-up pamphlet, introducing the effeminate man, *Haec Vir*, asserts that if not for his beard, 'hardly would there be any difference between the fayre Mistris and the foolish

---

[507] Quoted in Baines, 'Introduction', vii.

[508] The *Hic Mulier* pamphlets have received much attention in New Historicist studies of gender in early modern England, centring on the boy actor on the Shakespearean stage. See Cressy, 'Gender Trouble', 438-442; Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 66-93; Levine, 'Men in Women's Clothing', 121–43; Howard, 'Crossdressing', 418–40; Dollimore, 'Subjectivity, Sexuality and Transgression', 53–81; Orgel, 'The Subtexts', 12–26.

[509] In 1988, Jean Howard asked 'How many people cross-dressed in Renaissance England?', in Howard, 'Crossdressing', 418. This question resonates through much of the literature on the subject, and was taken up especially by Dekker and van der Pol, who explicitly 'decided to study the reality rather than the image of female cross-dressing', in Dekker and van der Pol, *The Tradition*, 2. See also the recent special issue on early modern trans studies, Simone Chess, Colby Gordon, and Will Fisher ed., *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 19, No. 4 (2019). Ann Oakley calls the *Hic Mulier* pamphlet's tone 'strongly feminist' in Ann Oakley, *Sex, Gender and Society* (Farnham: Ashgate, 1972), 18. Michael Shapiro, however, questions '...whether heroines who donned male disguise were thereby empowered to behave more assertively or whether they were confined all the more tightly in a masculine vision of the world', in Michael Shapiro, *Gender in Play on the Shakespearean Stage: Boy Heroines and Female Pages* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 3. For David Cressy, however, cross-dressing demonstrates that the gender 'system was robust enough to play with', in Cressy, 'Gender Trouble', 464.

[510] For exceptions that note this costume, see Jones, *The Print*, 36, 353; Mirkin, 'The Portrait of Elizabeth Cary', 50-55.

Servant' (fig. 72).[511] While art history has studied more overt instances of gender inversion, such as traditional world-turned-upside down prints, often featuring an obviously cross-dressed man with a distaff and a woman wearing breeches, seventeenth-century masculine costume for women, being based on real-life fashions, is subtler.[512] The gendered associations of clothing, however, like gender itself, are contextually and historically defined.[513] Other elements of clothing in the early modern period could be as important as breeches and skirts for making visible the wearer's gender. By reappraising what constituted gender confusion and drawing out the gendered associations of clothing for contemporaries, the masculine woman emerges as a prominent figure in visual art as in literature and on stage. By combining attention to the language in these pamphlets with art historical analysis of this costume in portraits and prints, this chapter explores the significance of these fashions and their cultural associations, with a view to enriching our understanding of art in this period.

As these associations were numerous and far from stable, this chapter charts the shifting connotations of this costume in prints, from a flattering symbol of masculine virtue in elite portraits to a sign of religious and social decay in Jacobean England, and its growing royalist associations in the Civil War. While at its origin, the iconography of the masculine woman was rooted in fashions that travelled across courts and classes throughout Europe, in prints, masculine costume developed into an idiosyncratic, politically and contextually defined iconography in England.[514] This was fed by preexisting fears about women usurping male privileges, which found particular impetus in England in the sixteenth century, as the reign

---

[511] Anonymous, *Haec Vir*, Sig. C1^{v}.

[512] For world-turned-upside-down motifs in broadsheets, see David Kunzle,'World Upside Down: The Iconography of a European Broadsheet', in *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*, ed. Barbara Babcock (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 39-94; and in England, Jones, *The Print*, 268-314; Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 286-314; Peter Lake and Michael Quester, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post- Reformation England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 54-58.

[513] For Judith Butler, 'gender is in no way a stable identity… rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time-an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts', in Butler, 'Performative Acts', 519. For gender as a historical category, see Joan Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category', 1068.

[514] For similar masculine hats in Germany and France, see Rublack, *Dressing Up*, 248-252; Ferguson, *Queer (Re)Readings*, 93-146.

of an unmarried queen, Elizabeth I, galvanized literary and artistic depictions of female authority.[515] This chapter treats these printed sources as not just reflecting a reality of widespread masculine costumes that blurred the boundaries between sexes, but as a cipher for fears about fashion, class, status, national identity, social changes and shifting ideas about gender relations.[516] This stemmed especially from attempts to control Elizabeth I's legacy in the reign of James I, growing anxiety about identity deception in growing urban centres, and the social disintegration seen to stem from the King's peaceful foreign policy.[517] In this climate, appealing indeterminacy could be taken for threatening anonymity, or a sign of weakening social hierarchies, just as, under the strain of the French Wars of Religion, gender-ambiguous presentation in the court of Henri III became increasingly criticised. These English printed sources on masculine women, however, remain comparatively understudied in art history, despite their potential to shed light on the shifting connotations of gender ambiguity, across time, different audiences and media.

The wider reach and understanding of these styles in art can only be fully explored using popular prints—objects that particularly require an approach that is open to ambiguity.[518]

---

[515] In order to occupy a role previously only held by men in England, that of unmarried ruler, it has long been recognised that Elizabeth's speeches and fashions merged both traditionally masculine and feminine tropes to allow her to claim the legitimacy of a male heir, as self-proclaimed 'prince'. See Beemer, 'The Female Monarchy', 258-274. Susan Frye influentially addressed how gender intersected with the construction of the Queen's 'two bodies', encouraging her promotion of chastity as well as traditional princely values, in Frye, *Elizabeth I*, 12-16. See John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against Monstrous regiment of women* (Geneva: J. Pollain and A. Rebul, 1558).

[516] Rachel Trubowitz, for example, argues that pamphlets and prints addressing the gender debate in the early seventeenth century 'helped to mold an increasingly literate English population into an imagined commonwealth of engaged writers and readers, both male and female', in Rachel Trubowitz, *Nation and Nurture in Seventeenth-Century English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 67.

[517] As Sharon Achinstein observes, pamphlet writers 'composed their audiences in supreme acts of fantasy, addressing their works to a public, demanding that their audiences read and respond to contemporary issues; they also presented models for public debate by fighting pen-battles in print', Achinstein, *Milton*, 4.

[518] For accessibility of broadside prints, see Watt, *Cheap Print*, 11; Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 91. The potential of print to reach a broad audience, through printed books and satire, has often been explored in reference to its significance for early modern reformations. See Mark Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda and Martin Luther* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994); Robert Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German*

Despite the demonstrable fear of ambiguity seen in these publications, taken together, the prints of the first decades of the seventeenth century generated a multivalent iconography of masculine women, capable of speaking to multiple themes across political agendas. These popular prints ironically demonstrate the necessity of adopting an approach that is sensitive to multiple, often contradictory meanings and their developments over time. This is all the more vital as their authorship was often anonymous, if not deliberately veiled to escape censorship, and woodcut illustrations were often designed to be open, to facilitate reuse.[519] These prints therefore form an ideal case study for demonstrating how to recover the ambiguity that certain fashions once held, for exploring the context in which gender ambiguity could become threatening and how an approach that allows for multiple meanings and ambiguity can shed light on ephemeral, multi-authored prints. To begin, it is worth reviewing the origins and key elements of this costume.

Origins in Riding Costume

Costume historians have long noted the emergence of trends of masculine, equestrian-inspired clothing under Elizabeth I, particularly from the 1570s onwards.[520] Riding clothes

---

Reformation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), esp. 1-14; David Davis*, Seeing Faith, Printing Pictures: Religious Identity During the English Reformation* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 1-20.

[519] For 'satirical anonymity', which grew more prevalent after the Marprelate controversy, see Mary North, 'Early Modern Anonymity', *Oxford Handbooks Online* (November 2015): 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.013.12, 6-12. For censorship, see Achinstein, *Milton*, 11-13; in the Marprelate Controversy, see Joseph Black, 'The Rhetoric of Reaction: The Martin Marprelate Tracts (1588–89), Anti-Martinism, and the Uses of Print in Early Modern England', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28 (1997): 707–725; Arul Kumaran, 'Robert Greene's Martinist Transformation in 1590', *Studies in Philology* 103 (2006): 243–263. See also Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 32, and Mary North, *Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2003) 139–158. For censorship under James I, see Cyndia Clegg, 'Checking the Father: Anxious Paternity and Jacobean Press Censorship', in *Printing and Parenting in Early Modern England*, 2e, ed. Douglas Brooks (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 299. For more polarising prints in the Civil War, see Tamsyn Williams, ''Magnetic Figures': Polemical Prints of the English Revolution', in *Renaissance Bodies*, 86-110.

[520] Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe*, 142, 144. For more on elite women's hunting and riding accessories in England see Anna Reynolds, *In Fine Style: The Art of Tudor and Stuart Fashion*, Exh. Cat. (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2013), 258-263. For the European context of elite women riding and hunting see Zanetti, 'Holding the Reins', 125-143, 126; Zanetti, 'From the King's Hunt', 250-268;

were typically green or darker coloured and of sturdier fabrics and looser construction for durability and greater mobility.[521] The silhouette tended to be governed by the dominant fashions of the day. Without a female riding habit as precedent, however, noble women's hunting clothes seem to have adapted male styles for practicality and style. Durability for hunting lies behind other developments of this costume, including the shift towards lower-topped, broader brimmed hats in the late sixteenth century. Lady Willhoughby, for example, sending a low crowned hat back to her husband from London in 1573, wrote that this latest style was 'not high crowned, so that when he rides a hunting he may go under bushes and never pull it off'.[522]

These styles were not unique to England. As Evelyn Ackerman has explored, women wore similar fashions and posed in portraits wearing them in Holland, where it was also considered bold and masculine for women to wear large hats of this type, and in both locations this was considered typical for protection while horseback riding or outdoors.[523] While no English doublets survive that have been altered to fit women, survivals of such garments can be found abroad, including a doublet in Nuremberg from c.1585 which has been reappraised as for a woman due to cut and size.[524] Yet these styles may have gained particular traction in England because of their popularisation by Elizabeth I. A doublet-inspired upper part is famously worn by Elizabeth I in the *Darnley* portrait, c.1575.[525] These fashions spread in the Elizabethan court, and doublets and masculine hats can be seen in

---

Lois Schwoerer, *Gun Culture in Early Modern England* (London: University of Virginia Press, 2016), 128.

[521] Anna Reynolds suggests that green was one of the most popular colours for hunting clothes, as contemporary portraits confirm, in Reynolds, *In Fine Style*, 258.

[522] Quoted in Alice Friedman, 'Inside/Out: Women, Domesticity, and the Pleasures of the City', in *Material London, ca. 1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 239.

[523] Evelyn Ackerman, 'Costume is the Key: Seventeenth Century Miniature Portraits with Costume Overlays', *Dress* 34, No. 1 (2007): 68.

[524] Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe*, 117.

[525] Other depictions of Elizabeth I in similar masculine riding costume include two woodcut prints in George Gascoigne, *The Noble Art of Venerie*, 2e, (London: Thomas Purfoot, 1611), 91, 133, and a portrait commissioned by Robert Dudley for Kenilworth Castle, c.1575, now in Reading Museum. For more on this portrait, see Elizabeth Goldring 'Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I and the Earl of Leicester for Kenilworth', *The Burlington Magazine*, 147, No. 1231 (2005): 654-660.

court artist George Gower's portraits of Elizabeth Knollys, Lady Leighton, 1577, Elizabeth Littleton, Lady Willoughby, 1573, and Elizabeth Cornwallis, Lady Kytson, 1573 (fig. 73, 74, 75).[526]

At the early stages of this fashion, before its widespread criticism, masculine clothing was linked largely to function and would have been the preserve of elite women. While women of all social strata would have ridden horses for transport, the paraphernalia surrounding horse riding turned a necessity into a leisure activity. Inventories confirm that mainly wealthy women owned doublets, waistcoats or jerkins and safeguards for riding.[527] Anne Buck's research into clothing in Bedfordshire Inventories from 1617-20 confirms that these items were only found in the inventories of wealthy widows like Annis Smyth, the widow of a yeoman, who owned clothes that 'reflect her status', including hats, waistcoats and riding wear, and Elizabeth Atterton of Warden, who also owned safeguards and riding dress, marking out her economic status.[528] Being painted wearing these clothes could communicate the wearer's membership of an exclusive socio-economic group, who hunted and rode for pleasure on private land, as in Paul van Somer's portrait of Anne of Denmark.

It is likely that these portraits, like those of aristocratic men in hunting costume, exploit the associations of hunting with military training and masculine virtue. The link between hunting and war was a commonplace from antiquity, kept in circulation by hunting manuals, thanks to Xenophon's equation of hunting with war.[529] In light of this, it is unsurprising that

---

[526] Karen Hearn speculated of the portrait of Lady Kytson, 'as she is wearing rather than carrying her gloves, she is presumably dressed for outdoors, as indicated also by her tall, masculine hat', in Karen Hearn, *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England 1530-1630*, Exh. Cat. (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1995), 103.

[527] Valerie Cumming, for example, identified that a doublet, a cloak, and two safeguards were commissioned from a tailor for princess Elizabeth Stuart's wedding trousseau in 1625, and provision was made for a further two riding gowns, in Valerie Cumming, 'The Trousseau of Princess Elizabeth Stuart', in *Collectanea Londiniensia: Studies in London Archaeology and History Presented to Ralph Merrifield*, ed. Joanna Bird, Hugh Chapman, and John Clark (London: London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, 1978), 323.

[528] Anne Buck, 'Clothing and Textiles in Bedfordshire Inventories, 1617–1620', *Costume* 34, No. 1 (2000): 29, 31.

[529] Dianne Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics During the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 36.

hunting clothes took military inspiration. That masculine hats made military reference is illustrated by the portrait of Richard Drake by George Gower (fig. 76). The sitter is depicted in armour, looped with chains of office. His morion helmet, resting to his side on a *trompe l'oeil* shelf, echoes the shape of the high-peaked hat on his head, made explicit by their ostrich feather plumage. The martial force of this portrait is underscored by the sitter's motto 'Tousiours prest a servir' (always ready to serve). As Elizabeth Currie has shown, male fashion more generally was often martial-inspired.[530] When adopted by women, the military associations of these hats and doublets seem to have remained. Portraits like van Somer's of Anne of Denmark therefore signal 'participation in the hunt, an activity performative of aristocratic masculinity via its use as training for war'.[531]

That adopting elements of masculine costume may have served as a mode of female idealisation seems to lie behind the early development of such fashions under Elizabeth I. These fashions presented Elizabeth in the guise of elite male predecessors, allowing her to address the 'problem of how masculine identity could be asserted by a virgin queen'.[532] In renaissance thought, virtues were symbols of virility, suggested by the etymological link between the word 'virtue' and 'vir,' Latin for 'man'.[533] Virtue covered a whole range of 'male' attributes, including action, efficacy, personal strength and order, in contrast with 'female' virtues, such as modesty and chastity.[534] These virtues were considered male traits, even when displayed by a woman. This logic is employed, for example, by Daniel Tuvill in *Asylum Veneris*, *or A Sanctuary for Ladies*, 1616, written as a rebuke to the popular anti-women pamphlets, who praises Elizabeth I, 'that wonder of hir Sex', for her prudence,

---

[530] Currie, *Fashion and Masculinity*, esp. 5-10, 135.

[531] Sara Ayres, 'A Mirror for the Prince? *Anne of Denmark in Hunting Costume with Her Dogs* (1617) by Paul van Somer', *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 12, No. 2 (2020): DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2020.12.2.2.

[532] Gilbert, *Early Modern Hermaphrodites*, 54. Belsey and Belsey, 'Portraits of Elizabeth I', 12. Yet 'Elizabeth's own allusions to her mascula vis were usually displaced into her filial identification with Henry VIII', in Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth*, 159.

[533] For more on virtue, see Woodall, 'In Pursuit of Virtue', 6-24.

[534] See, for example, Suzanne Hull on Richard Brathwaite's *The English Gentlewoman*, a 'representative model' of the 'ideal, modest woman' as a 'wife and mother', in Suzanne Hull, *Chaste, Silent & Obedient: English Books for Women, 1475-1640* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1982), 32-3.

moderation, 'Heroicall virtues of hir Minde and the wonderfull profoundnesse of hir Wit'.[535] As Stephen Orgel has argued, 'acting like a man' was therefore a commendable part of acting like a woman, and especially for those in positions of traditionally male authority, like monarchs.[536] The martial connotations of hunting therefore subtly hint at masculine valour. That riding items constituted part of masculine fashions is made explicit by their appearance on the masculine-attired heroine, Moll Cutpurse, in *The Roaring Girl*, who appears 'in a frieze jerkin and black saveguard'—specific items for riding.[537]

Masculine fashions attracted some early criticism in print when worn by women, beginning in the late sixteenth century. George Stubbes, for example, complained in *The Anatomie of Abuses*, 1583, of women in 'dublets & Jerkins... appropriate onely to man'.[538] At this early stage, this costume may have even gained some negative associations in art. The costume was employed with moralising connotations in Isaac Oliver's *Allegorical Scene*, c.1590-1595 (fig. 77). Here masculine headwear is worn by sexually assertive women like the lute-player on the right, this instrument being a common symbol of desire, and most prominently by the woman pouncing on the man just behind the group on the left.[539] That this allegory is meant to be seen as a comic inversion is suggested by the elements of world-turned-upside-down imagery, like the small dog aggressing a larger one seen in the foreground. This scene even borrows elements of its composition from an earlier drawing by Oliver of satyrs chasing nymphs, yet crucially reverses the gender dynamic (fig. 78). The women in this miniature literally take the place of the male satyrs seen in the dominant positions. It therefore seems that even at this early stage, hats were beginning to be used to single out sexually predatory women through their hunting associations, which fed into then-current love metaphors of the pursuer and the pursued, with Petrarchan connotations. At this time, however, much chastisement of this costume was largely generic, and followed patterns of literary models from abroad. Masculine fashions were usually listed alongside other

[535] Tuvill, *Asylum* Veneris, 104.
[536] Orgel, *Impersonations*, 35.
[537] Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl*, ed. Elizabeth Cook (London: Bloomsbury, 1997), 30.
[538] Stubbes, *The Anatomie*, 72-3.
[539] Contrary to the theory that the pair represent 'maternal love', in Hearn, *Dynasties*, 131.

offenses of habit, from large ruffs to makeup.[540] The censure of the masculine woman by moralists in the 1570s and 1580s paled in comparison to the wealth of criticism surrounding the updated versions of these fashions in 1620.

Unlike masculine costume for women, it is nearly impossible to deduce a similar iconography of the contemporary effeminate man. This is demonstrated by the close similarity between the illustration of Haec Vir, and the titlepage of Richard Brathwaite's conduct book, depicting a model of masculine virtue, *The English Gentleman*, 1633 (fig. 79). Both wear broad-brimmed hats, dagger shaped beards, doublets with lace collars and cuffs, baggy breeches, trimmed with ribbons, and slippers topped with pom-poms. Notably, several attributes associated with effeminate men, including long hair, a smooth chin, and earrings, as discussed in reference to *The Cobbe Portrait of Henry Wriothesley*, are missing from the depiction of Haec Vir.[541] Haec Vir appears to be a conventional illustration of a fashionable gentleman, best differentiated not by dress but by attributes. While the gentleman holds a cane, an appropriate outdoor accoutrement for someone of his aristocratic status, Haec Vir holds a racket and shuttle cock. Such games were often cited as shorthand for idle amusement, with moralising connotations, seen, for example, among the fancies evaporating from a nobleman's head, placed in the doctor's furnace, in a print by Martin Droeshout of *Dr Panurgus* curing his patients of follies, c.1620 (fig. 80).[542] Haec Vir therefore deviated from Brathwaite's gentleman in his attributes, which suggest leisure, and perhaps, by extension, effeminacy. As Richard Brathwaite summarised, 'Idlenesse maketh of men, women, of women, beasts, of beasts, monsters'.[543] Indeed, effeminate men were traditionally marked out by attributes in popular prints, especially their adoption of female labour, such as childcare or spinning with a distaff, if not shown fully cross-dressed,

---

[540] See Philip Stubbes, who includes masculine clothing among many other 'abuses' of apparel, in Stubbes, *The Anatomie*, esp. 72-4.
[541] See Will Fisher on long hair and effeminacy, in Fisher, *Materialising Gender*, 137.
[542] For more on this print, see Jones, *The Print*, viii; Mary George and Frederic Stephens, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, I (London: British Museum Press, 1870), 82; Anthony Griffiths, *The Print in Stuart Britain: 1603-1689* (London: British Museum Press, 1998), 146-148; Helen Pierce, *Unseemly Pictures: Graphic Satire and Politics in Early Modern England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 6-18.
[543] Richard Brathwaite, *The English Gentleman* (London: John Haviland, 1630), 32.

informed by the iconography of Hercules and Omphale. It may therefore be the case that this traditional genre was more resistant to contemporary guises, while the newer attention on the masculine woman allowed this iconography to develop in line with current fashions. The contemporary effeminate did not become a recognisable visual and literary trope until the pamphlets of the Civil War.[544] Criticism instead focused in the 1620s on the female, 'Amazonian' wearers of doublets, large, feathered hats and cropped hair. This begs the question, what was it about this costume that became so unpalatable in Jacobean England? To address this, we will turn to some of the most prominent language and imagery used in the prints and pamphlets of c.1620.

The Controversy of 1620

The resulting effect of this masculine clothing is described in pamphlets as gender confusion. Forming the first known example of the mixed gender Latin joke 'hic mulier' in 1615, Thomas Adams in his moralising book on the state of his age, *The Mystical Bedlam, or The World of mad-men*, lamented recent lack of sexual distinction: 'The proud man? or rather the proud woman: or rather haec acquila, both he and shee. For if they had no more evident disctinction of sexe, then they have of shape, they would be all man, or rather all woman: for the Amazons beare away the Bell: as one wittily, Hic mulier will shortly bee good latine…'.[545] Barnabe Rich in his moralising book, *My Ladies Looking Glasse*, 1616, similarly finds contemporary 'strumpet like' male fashions and 'ruffian like' women's clothing 'so sutable and like in fashion, that there is no more difference to be seene, then is betweene a hoorse shoe, and a Maares shoe...'[546] Taking up the *Hic Mulier* theme, John Taylor published popular verses on the problem of discerning the gender of those in masculine fashions in *The Whip of Pride*, 1621, rhyming about 'Virago Roaring Girles, that to their middle,/ To know what sexe they were, was halfe a Riddle'.[547] Finally, Richard

[544] For the increasing attention paid to effeminate men in prints from the late 1620s, see Alistair Bellany, 'Mistress Turner's Deadly Sins: Sartorial Transgression, Court Scandal, and Politics in Early Stuart England', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 58, No. 2 (1995): 207-209.
[545] Adams, *Mystical Bedlam*, 50 or Sig. N1^{v}.
[546] Barnabe Rich, *My Ladies Looking Glasse* (London: Thomas Adams, 1616), 21.
[547] John Taylor, *Superbiae Flagellum, Or, The Whip of Pride* (London: G. Eld, 1621), Sig. C6^{r}.

Brathwaite lamented the gender equivalence of dress in his times: 'What neare resemblance and relation hath womans to mans: suting their light feminine skirts with manlike doublets?'[548] Given the subtlety and long establishment of masculine-inspired riding costume for women, it is worth questioning the meaning and motivations behind these statements.

It is possible that these attributes genuinely obscured the wearer's gender in the eyes of early modern observers. Some authors have argued that the weight attributed to clothing and other non-bodily markers of sex was greater before the advent of modern, biological and usually genital-based models of sexual distinction. According to Will Fisher, developing Peter Stallybrass and Ann Jones's ideas of 'investiture' and 'prostheses', clothing materialised gender along with other, more corporeal features and both were essential to discerning sex.[549] For these authors, this emphasis was largely the result of how sex was conceived of in the humoral system, and in particular the 'one-sex' model, drawing on Thomas Laqueur's one-sex model of sexual difference that persisted into the renaissance.[550] Indeed, if sex was conceived of as a sliding scale of humoral possibilities, then potentially clothing may have played an even greater role in staking out and maintaining gender difference.[551]

While the one-sex model has been challenged, early modern plays and literature do suggest that clothing played a stronger role than today in making identity visible. Many written and staged narratives hinge on the ability of characters to disguise themselves effectively through the addition of just one item of clothing, usually a hat. In *The Alchemist* (1610), for example, Ben Jonson mocked the hyperbolic discourse surrounding headwear and identity as the Spanish Don, Surly's 'lewd hat' is enough to make him 'look'st like Antichrist' in the

---

[548] Richard Brathwaite, *The English Gentleman and English Gentlewoman*, 3e (London: John Dawson, 1641), 276.

[549] Fisher, *Materialising Gender*, 13. Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 2, 11; 79.

[550] See Laqueur, *Making Sex*, esp. 63-113. For the challenge to this view, see Schleiner, 'Early Modern Controversies', 180-191.

[551] See also Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity*, 151.

eyes of Subtle.[552] Henry Wotton, employed as a spy to gather information about the Vatican, writes that 'I entered Rome with a mighty blue feather in a black hat which, though in itself were a slight matter, yet surely did it work in the imaginations of men three great effects: First, I was by it taken no English... secondly, I was reputed as light in my mind as in my apparel (they are not dangerous men that are so) and thirdly, no man could think that I desired to be unknown who, by wearing that feather took a course to make myself famous through Rome in a few days.'[553] Clearly headwear was far from a 'slight matter', and a cunning selection was enough to camouflage Wotton's nationality, occupation and character. Philip Stubbes even began his invective against abuse of apparel with a long description of hats and the status confusion that supposedly arose when they were worn 'indifferently' by 'servingmen' and 'countreymen'.[554] Demonstrating that the effects of clothing could be enough to disguise gender, David Cressy explored the strange case of a male servant, admitted to a birthing room in women's clothing, who was only discovered through the recognition of his mistress's dress by a relative.[555]

The idea that clothing visibly manifests identity, and that misleading apparel can have drastic implications for recognition, is underscored by the existence of sumptuary laws for most of this period. Regardless of their effectiveness, these laws were founded on the notion that clothing speaks directly to identity and mismatched apparel results in confusion and deceit.[556] It is therefore plausible that the adoption of hats, cropped hair and doublets by women was enough to spark confusion for some observers, at least under certain circumstances. It is possible, for example, that when viewed quickly on the street, as some early modern writers suggest, gender may briefly have been questioned. As Thomas Adams argues in *The Mystical Bedlam*, 1615, 'there is no great difference', between men and women in masculine clothes, and certainly not when viewed 'out of a Coach', although this effect of fleeting confusion is not recreated in the English portraits showing these

---

[552] Quoted in Robert Lublin, *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage: Visual Codes of Representation in Early Modern Theatre and Culture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 104.
[553] Quoted in Maija Jansson, 'The Hat is No Expression of Honor', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133, No. 1 (1989): 26-27.
[554] Stubbes, *The Anatomie,* 45.
[555] Cressy, *Agnes Bowker's Cat*, 94-6.
[556] For more on sumptuary legislation see Currie, 'Introduction', 5; Peck, *Consuming Splendour*, 3.

fashions.[557] It may therefore be the case that the increase in negative attention paid to androgynous fashions stemmed from the greater difficulty in discerning the gender of these individuals.

Yet even those pamphleteers who suggest that the result of these fashions was gender confusion ultimately refer to the wearers as women, and the focus on how accessories, and especially headwear, mislead as to identity may have other causes. As Jones and Stallybrass suggest, the head formed a particular site of anxiety not due to its physical repercussions for identifying someone, but for its symbolic resonance. In appropriating the head, a 'symbol of patriarchal authority', women appropriated the authority of masculine archetypes, like the king, father, and husband.[558] Evelyn Welch has also shown that the attention placed on accessories in moralising texts in early modern Italy was driven by 'the ease with which they could be adapted and disseminated', rather than just by the greater work done by these items in materialising identity.[559] Accessories were a particular point of anxiety since they represented the most obvious site of fashion. The language used to describe women who wore masculine fashions in England also suggests that there was more behind the backlash that just new difficulty discerning gender.

The *Hic Mulier* pamphlet, for example, berates the exposure of the subject's breasts, 'the loose lascivious civil embracement of a French doublet, being all unbuttoned to entice', leveraging the reputation of the French as licentious to criticise the foreign and sexual connotations of this costume. Fashions that flaunt cleavage were frequent targets for moralists writing against masculine fashions, like William Vaughan, who described the fashion for 'certaine Ladies' to dress 'with their breasts nakedly discouered, with their haire cut like a Tomboy'.[560] Whether exposed breasts were seen as virtuous or transgressive, masculine or feminine, was contextually dependent, governed largely by class and context. Ladies could masque at court in costumes that exposed their breasts to represent allegories,

---

[557] Adams, *The Mystical* Bedlam, 50 or Sig. H1^{v}.
[558] Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 79.
[559] Welch, 'Art on the Edge', 242.
[560] William Vaughan, *The Golden Fleece* (London: Printed by William Stansby, Miles Flesher, and another, 1626), Sig. Hh2^{v}.

and allegorical portraits and personas bared cleavage in art, as in Isaac Oliver's *Portrait of a Lady, Masqued as Flora,* c.1575-1617 (fig. 81).[561] The Venetian ambassador commented on Anne of Denmark's partiality to a plunging neckline, describing how her dress laid her chest 'bare down to the pit of her stomach'. [562] The same standards were not observed across all social strata, and similar styles attracted greater anxieties when worn by lower classes.[563] Exposed breasts could as easily denote virtuous allegorical personas as prostitution.[564]

Stephen Orgel has therefore argued that, paradoxically, exposed breasts—anatomical markers of femininity—gained masculine connotations for early moderns, precisely because they spoke to brazen and active sexuality.[565] While women were considered weak-willed, to act on desires was to act like a man, since action itself was conceptualised as a male trait, attributed to body heat. In this way, the cultural coding of excess of desire as masculine was rooted in medical culture and also figured through masculine fashions, as seen in images of prostitutes.[566] John Taylor, for example, explicitly explains the frontispiece to another of his pamphlets, *The World runnes on wheeles*, as depicting the devil and a whore dragging the sphere of the universe. It is notable that she wears 1620s masculine fashions (fig. 82). These

---

[561] For more on this and other masquing miniatures by Oliver, see Heather Hughes, ''Masqued' Identity at the Stuart Court: Isaac Oliver's Masquing Portraits of Anne of Denmark', in *Fashioning Opera and Musical Theatre: Stage Costumes from the Late Renaissance to 1900*, ed. Valeria De Lucca (Venice: Fondazione Giorgio Cini, 2014), 74-5. These courtly trends still found censure from outside. Anthony Anderson urged courtiers to reform their fashions, 'Give eare to this you Courtly Madams, which daunce in mens dublets to the wante of womanhood', in Anderson, *The Shield*, Sig. 4^{v}.

[562] Quoted in David Lindley, *The Trials of Frances Howard: Fact and Fiction in the Court of King James* (London: Routledge, 1993), 7.

[563] For masculine costume as demonstrating virtue on elite women, see Ayres, 'A Mirror for the Prince?'. For its ambivalence on lower classes, see Orgel, *Impersonations*, 100.

[564] Rachel Trubowitz calls the breast an 'inherently unstable cultural signifier', in Trubowitz, *Nation and Nurture*, 75.

[565] Orgel, *Impersonations*, 119-120.

[566] Thomas Stoughton also explicitly sexualises these trends, suggesting that women cut their hair so that 'they may be taken for yong men in long coates, the rather because some of them also weare boots and spurres, and swords by their sides, that being so taken they may also be bed-fellowes to such yong men, and so play the harlots with them, as holy Pope Ioane did', quoted in Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 82. In Thomas Dekker's *The Honest Whore*, Part I, 1604, the prostitute Bellafront goes dressed as a page. Similarly, the prostitutes in Thomas Middleton's *Your Five Gallants*, 1602-08, dress as shield-boys. See Valerie Lucas, ''Hic Mulier': The Female Transvestite in Early Modern England', *Renaissance and Reformation*, New Series 12, No. 1 (1988): 70.

clothes therefore seem to have been targeted not just for appropriating masculine elements, but for their combination with low-cut bodices and shorter skirts. The rendering of women more erotically appealing through these styles was seen as the flaunting of desire or sexual advertisement. In this way, exposed breasts were an ambivalent symbol, capable of communicating virginity and maternity, virtue and transgression, masculinity and femininity. The same style of bodice that was berated as masculine on Hic Mulier could therefore be worn virtuously by the woman on the titlepage of Richard Brathwaite's *The English Gentlewoman*, 1631, depicted as a paragone of virtue (fig. 83). When placed in parallel with the notorious cross-dressed heroine of Middleton and Rowley's *The Roaring Girl*, depicted in breeches in this 1611 illustration, Hic Mulier seems to share as much with the gentlewoman (fig. 84). These similarities suggest that, while no one attribute denoted the masculine woman, a confluence of contextually dependent signs subtly differentiated the virtuous from the sinful, as exemplified by the case of the shifting connotations of cleavage.

Military and heraldic language is also used throughout much of this literature. In *The Whip of Pride*, Taylor calls the masculine woman captain, and 'lietenant' (sic), and references ensignes and arming.[567] This Amazonian language was often used to fashion the wearers of these clothes as warrior women. Alexander Niccholes in *A Discourse, of Marriage and Wiving* (1620), for example, describes how acquiring these fashions for women drained men's 'bodies and purses': 'When for his Amason he must prouide,/ Aponiard or Silletto for her side…'.[568] Examples of historical or mythological dominant women, whether Amazons or female rulers, were never far from the thoughts of those seeking a framework to contextualise contemporary masculine fashions. Contemporary Amazonian figures were also visualised in these fashions. In the anonymous play *Swetnam the Woman-hater, Arraigned by Women*, 1620, which takes as its subject a fictional trial of the real-life misogynist pamphlet writer, Joseph Swetnam, when one character crossdresses and blends

[567] Taylor, *Superbiae Flagellum*, Sig. C6^{r}.

[568] Alex Niccholes, *A Discourse, of Marriage and Wiving: And Of the greatest Mystery therein contained: how to chuse a good Wife from a bad* (London: Printed by G.Eld for Leonard Becket, 1620), Sig. B2^{v}.

in with the other women arraigners, he is described as 'attired like an amazon'.[569] The frontispiece depicts these women at the trial (fig. 85). It is clear from the hats, doublets and weapons that the Amazonian fashions referred to are the kind seen in the *Hic Mulier* pamphlet.[570]

Linked to these associations of active sexuality and martial prowess, the masculinity of women was often seen as inversely proportional to that of men. The language of proportional gain and loss of the genders runs throughout the discourse surrounding masculine women. Thomas Heywood, for example, begins a chapter on war-like women in *The Gynaikeion*, 1624, with a short catalogue of types of male cowardice with historic examples, since 'I know not better how to expresse the boldnes of women, than by shewing you the feare of men, nor can I more plainly illustrat the valor of one sex than by putting you in mind of the cowardise of the other.'[571] John Bulwer figures the dominance of Amazons in similar terms which emphasise the ground lost by men, and the reversal of gendered norms that this constituted: 'they had an intent withall in that feminine Common-wealth of theirs, to avoid the Domination of men, to lame them thus in their Infancy… that (they) might any way advantage their strength over them, and made only that use of them, that we in our world make of women.'[572] Richard Brathwaite moved quickly from his brief lament of the lack of gender distinction in recent fashion, 'What neare resemblance and relation hath womans to mans: suting their light feminine skirts with manlike doublets?', straight to the example of the Assyrian Queen, '*Semiramis*, that victorious Princesse' who 'commanded all to weare *Tyres* upon their heads, and to put upon them womans apparell without distinction, that she might reigne securely without exception'.[573] Lack of differentiation in clothing is again painted as paving the way for female domination. As

---

[569] Quoted in Capern, *The Historical Study of Women*, 49.
[570] Ibid.
[571] Thomas Heywood, *Gynaikeion: or, Nine Bookes of Various History. Concerninge Women* (London: printed by Adam Islip, 1624), 204.
[572] Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis*, 517-8.
[573] Brathwaite, *The English Gentleman and English Gentlewoman*, 276. As Judith Richards has explored, the Amazons and exempla like Semiramis were deeply ambivalent at this time, since 'one feared consequence of 'improper' female domination was the probable concomitant, the feminisation of males', in Judith Richards, ''To Promote a Woman to Beare Rule': Talking of Queens in Mid-Tudor England', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28, No. 1 (1997): 101-121, 111.

Natalie Zemon Davis has argued of world-turned-upside-down imagery, disobedient or willful women often carried implications of implied male critique.[574] These historical and mythological exempla were therefore easily co-opted as metaphors for current political and social events.[575]

Social and Political Context

Martial themes and comparisons between the masculinity of women and effeminacy of men are best explored in relation to shifts in context that occurred after the death of Elizabeth and the accession of James I. It is in the context of James I's pacifism, mounting political discontent, growing nostalgia surrounding Elizabeth I, and attempts to control her legacy, that the link between masculine fashions and Elizabeth I came under particular scrutiny. It is no coincidence that we see the dual flourishing of the Amazonian myth of Elizabeth I at the same time as royal initiative comes out against masculine fashions on women.

While Elizabeth's legacy was anything but stable at James I's accession (the issue of an heir had come to dominate the end of her reign), growing discontent with the King spurred a reevaluation. As early as 1607, the Venetian Ambassador to the Government of Venice described James I's relative unpopularity: 'He does not caress the people nor make them that good cheer the late Queen did, whereby she won their loves… The result is he is despised and almost hated.'[576] This intensified in particular with the commencement of the Thirty Years' War in 1618. At this time, James I was increasingly condemned for both his pro-Spanish policy and toleration of Catholicism, as his desire to be seen as *a Rex Pacificus* was seen as making the nation effeminate.[577] John Reynolds, urging the King to undertake

[574] Natalie Davis, 'Women on Top: Symbolic Sexual Inversion and Political Disorder in Early Modern Europe', in *The Reversible World*, 150-152.

[575] See also John Knox, who articulated his fears about female rule in terms which make the link between female strength and male weakness explicit, claiming that the current political situation was metamorphosing regular women into Amazons, and men into women, in John Knox, *The First Blast*, Sig. B3^{r}.

[576] Quoted in Julie Crawford, 'Fletcher's *The Tragedie of Bonduca* and the Anxieties of the Masculine Government of James I', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 39, No. 2 (1999): 366.

[577] For John Hoskins, effeminate men 'had rather the Common-wealth then their haire should bee disordered', and 'Kingdomes might be conquered, whilest ruffes are a pinning', in John Hoskins,

the Palatine War in 1624, plays on this theme to stage a direct, emasculating comparison between the peaceful James and militant Elizabeth, asking: 'Our famous Elizabeth did beate Spaine, and shall our Royall and Potent King JAMES feare it?'.[578] That so 'potent' a king could not fill the shoes of a woman is ridiculed in a bid to move him to action.

The growing dislike for the King and his pacifist policies was accompanied by a shift in drama, the visual arts and historical texts during the 1620s and 1630s. As Elizabeth I increasingly became the focus of Protestant nostalgia, she was idealised as a military figure.[579] Within her own lifetime, the Queen was usually portrayed in ways that aligned her with peace. In *The Allegory of Tudor Succession*, attributed to Lucas de Heere, c.1572, for example, Elizabeth I enters the scene from the right, ushering in personifications of Peace, whose hand she holds, and Plenty, who follows behind (fig. 30). Those few representations of the Queen in the guise of a virago that were produced during her reign were the products of protestant foreigners and not officially sanctioned. One such (likely Dutch) engraving from 1598 depicts Elizabeth I as Europa, her body formed by a map of the Continent, wielding a sword and spectre, in the guise of an Amazon, defending the Protestant cause (fig. 85). As Louis Montrose has argued, while this representation may have been celebrated by Protestant reformers abroad, it is at odds with the image usually created and circulated by the Queen and her court, which avoided these ambivalent, potentially monstrous comparisons with Amazons.[580] The militant Amazonian myth of Elizabeth in England was instead largely the product of the Jacobean imagination, conjured to fulfil political needs. It was at this time, for example, that Elizabeth's armour and speech first gained importance in accounts of the defeat of the Spanish at Tilbury as the Queen's supposed militant

---

Sermons Preached at Pauls Crosse and Else-where (London: Printed by William Stansby for Nathaniel Butter, 1615), 49. See Marina Hila, 'Dishonourable Peace: Fletcher and Massinger's The False One and Jacobean Foreign Policy', *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 72, No. 1 (2007): 21; Alexandra Gajda, 'Debating War and Peace in Late Elizabethan England', *The Historical Journal* 52, No. 4 (2009): 887.

[578] Quoted in Hila, 'Dishonorable Peace', 22.

[579] Susan Frye, 'The Myth of Elizabeth at Tilbury', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 23, No. 1 (1992): 95.

[580] Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth*, 155. 'To represent Elizabeth as a woman warrior while she was alive was a delicate proposition', in Julia Walker, 'Bones of Contention: Posthumous Images of Elizabeth and Stuart Politics', in *Dissing Elizabeth: Negative Representations of Gloriana*, ed. Julia Walker (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1988), 258-9.

Protestantism became an icon of national unity.[581] These militant, Protestant exaggerations of her legacy are epitomised by Thomas Cecil's *Truth Presents the Queene with a Lance* c.1622, in which the Queen, on horseback in full plate armour, tramples the dragon of Catholicism, while the Armada takes place behind her (fig. 87).[582]

James I made many attempts to curb Elizabeth I's threat to the new dynasty, famously moving her body from the more central vault of Henry VII, to the north aisle of Henry VII's chapel in Westminster Abbey in 1606.[583] In Jacobean masques, Elizabeth was usually represented by Diana, and forced to give way to the King, represented as the sun.[584] At the same time, representations of powerful women were increasingly censored. A *Masque of Amazons*, prepared by Lady Hay for New Year's Night, 1617-18, was cancelled as, according to Chamberlain, 'neither the Queen nor King did like or allow of it'.[585] While a *Masque of Queens*, featuring Amazons, had been permitted in 1609, by this later date such representations of strong women were becoming increasingly problematised.[586] As James I was trying to establish his dominance over the kingdom and minimise his predecessor's legacy, female militarism was increasingly seen as a threat to male pacifism. As seen earlier, James I even personally asked preachers to condemn these fashions. Printed polemics might therefore be seen as part of this royal-sanctioned condemnation of masculine fashions. There may, however, have been more subversive motives behind some of these printed attacks.

The gender and class deceptions supposedly performed by women wearing masculine fashions also allowed the theme to function as a cipher for broader fears. Criticism of

---

[581] Laura Schechter, ''As liuing now, equald theyr vertues then': Early Modern Allusions, Boudicca, and the Failure of Monologic Historiographies', *ESC: English Studies in Canada* 39, No. 2-3 (2013): 181-2.
[582] For more on this image, see Walker, 'Bones of Contention', 252.
[583] Effie Botonaki, 'Elizabeth's Presence in the Jacobean Masque', in *Representations of Elizabeth I in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Alessandra Petrina and Laura Tosi (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 142.
[584] Ibid., 142.
[585] Quoted in John Nichols, *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities, of King James the First, His Royal Consort, Family and Court*, III (London: J.B. Nichols, 1828), 453.
[586] For the *Masque of Queens*, see Botonaki, 'Anne of Denmark', 145-147.

masculine fashion spoke, for example, to fears about dissembling as seen in the often repeated image of not being immediately able to tell the gender of wearers of these clothes.[587] The leniency that the King was seen to afford Catholics may have deepened anxieties surrounding hidden identities, spurred especially by attempts to broker a Spanish match, which were brought to bear on this costume.[588] Beyond a puritan circle, fears of popery also manifested, brought to light, for example, by the thwarted attempt by English Catholics to assassinate the King in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.[589] Against the backdrop of fears of creeping Catholicism, the visibility of inner disposition became all the more urgent in the eyes of radical and moderate Protestants alike.

Anxiety about dissembling was deepened by demographic changes in London, as the city became a hub for the gentry who once resided in the country. Between 1596 and 1640, as many as seventeen royal proclamations urged 'noblemen, knights, and gentlemen of qualitie' to leave London and return to their duties in the country, to little avail.[590] Concerns about aristocratic women in masculine, hunting-inspired costume were no doubt linked to the fears of autonomy that the riding habit and weapons seemed to proclaim, especially in the city, where women were enjoying new freedoms.[591] From shopping to theatre-going, the city created a cluster of leisure activities that could be enjoyed without male company and with these came fears about the moral consequences for women's chastity and modesty.[592] By 1575, the same Lady Willhoughby who had sent the hat back from London to

---

[587] As Stuart Clark has noted, Calvinist language of 'dissembling' ran through English discourse on the visual, in Clark, *Vanities*, 90.

[588] David Trim, 'Calvinist Internationalism and the Shaping of Jacobean Foreign Policy', in *Prince Henry Revived: Image and Exemplarity in Early Modern England*, ed. Timothy Wilks (Southampton: Southampton Solent University Press, 2007), 239.

[589] For popular fears over Catholic conspiracies, including the Gunpowder Plot, see Alistair Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England: News, Culture and the Overbury Affair, 1603-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 202-4

[590] Quotation from the proclamation of December 1615, quoted in Elizabeth Griffith and Jane Whittle, *Consumption and Gender in the Early Seventeenth-Century Household: The World of Alice Le Strange* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 17.

[591] Ibid.

[592] 'Traditionally excluded from public life, from government affairs, law courts, the pulpit, women enter the public sphere of early seventeenth-century London by going to market, both to buy and to

her husband was beginning to provoke his distrust for her preference to stay in the city with her maid. Her husband not only feared the costs of this lifestyle, but had concerns about her morality: 'London standing in the eye of the world, it would not stand great with her credit to be still riding in the streets'.[593] Indeed, for a woman to move alone through the city could evoke associations of shamelessness or even prostitution. As Barnabe Rich wrote in 1616, 'The harlot is moveable… now she is in the house, now in the streetes, now she lieth in waite in every corner, she is still gadding from place to place, from company to company.'[594] It is likely that other elements of this costume produced anxiety due to the social transgression that they represented. While Dueteronomy forbids the cutting of women's hair, for example, women would have had to go to a barber shop, as seen in the frontispiece to Hic Mulier, to seek services usually provided by men and for men and letting their hair loose in public in the process.[595] In this way, the masculine costume spoke to a physical and social autonomy that contravened convention and further fed concerns that city life was eroding traditional morality.

The growing presence of the gentry in London, and the increasing accumulation of the middling sort in the city in search of work prospects, brought the classes into greater contact and further spread these fashions beyond class divides. While it has been argued that the middling sort did not seek to emulate the elite, but rather pursued their own, more modest, aesthetic, Ulinka Rublack and Elizabeth Currie have shown that following fashion trends was not the unique preserve of the elite in this period.[596] While the nobility in early seventeenth century London wore fashions related to leisured life on hunting estates as a sign of status, like their Elizabethan counterparts, these styles increasingly came to be worn by those outside of the small elite originally seen pioneering these trends in portraits like

---

sell', in Karen Newman, 'City Talk: Women and Commodification in Jonson's Epicoene', *English Literary History* 56, No. 3 (1989): 507.

[593] Friedman, 'Inside/Out', 239.

[594] Barnabe Rich quoted in Joseph Monteyne, 'Enveloping Objects: Allegory and Commodity Fetish in Wenceslaus Hollar's Personifications of the Seasons and Fashion Still Lifes,' *Art History* 29, No. 3 (2006): 431.

[595] For hair, gender and sexuality, see Fisher, *Materialising Gender*, 129-137.

[596] Ulinka Rublack highlights the role of 'urban dwellers' in creating 'concentrated markets for goods', in Rublack, *Dressing Up*, 4; Currie, 'Introduction', 10.

those by George Gower. This was especially true of less costly items, such as masculine hats, as seen in Isaac Oliver's *Portrait of an Unknown Woman*, c.1600, who appears to be of middling status (fig. 88).[597] This indicates that there may have been some truth to the author of *Hic Mulier*'s assertion that these fashions could be 'seen from Capitoll to Cottage'.[598] The stigma attached to this costume was strongest for elite women, whose independence in the city formed one gendered strain of the debate surrounding nobility's shift towards the capital, and the middling sort who increasingly possessed the resources to rival the gentry in the city, generating fears about the inability to discern between classes. Already in 1583, Philip Stubbes complained that clothing appropriate only to nobility was being abused by lower ranks 'So that it is verie hard to knowe, who is noble, who is worshipfull, who is a gentleman, who is not'.[599] A nation of masculine-attired women seemed not only to assert a masculine dominance that the King was mocked and criticised for lacking, but to claim the privileges of hunting and the aristocracy, violating class hierarchy.[600]

This was added to by the association of these fashions with scandals that publically undermined James I's appearance of control over his court. Wearers of masculine fashions were repeatedly described in moralising literature as 'ruffianly' and contemporary criminals were even pictured in this costume.[601] Between 1616 and 1620, the artist Simon de Passe

---

[597] Jane Huggett demonstrates how hats could be seen in increasing numbers in women's inventories in Elizabethan Essex, showing how 'by the later period this fashionable item was filtering down the social scale', Jane Huggett, 'Rural Costume in Elizabethan Essex: A Study Based on the Evidence from Wills', *Costume* 33, No. 1 (1999): 80.

[598] Anonymous, *Hic Mulier*, Sig. B2^{r}.

[599] Stubbes, *The Anatomie,* 20.

[600] As George Chapman parodied, 'tradesmen well 'tis known,/ Get with more ease than gentry keeps his own', in George Chapman, *The Work of George Chapman: Plays*, I, ed. Richard Shepherd (London: Chatto and Windus, 1874), 457. Anxiety about social mixing is discussed in Theodore Leinwand, *The City Staged: Jacobean Comedy, 1603-13* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1986) 17; David Underdown, 'The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England', in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 92; Lawrence Stone and Jeanne Stone, *An Open Elite?: England, 1540-1580* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 7.

[601] This may also be a pun on the figure's characteristic ruff. 'Deriving from the Italian noun ruffiano, male pander, ruffian here conjures up both masculinising of women and eruption of alien others into English state', in Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 83.

adapted his portrait of Frances Howard, who was tried and eventually convicted for the murder of the courtier Thomas Overbury, to capitalise on changes in the sitter's reputation (fig. 89, 90). He added only a beaver-skin hat with feather and cropped hair, using masculine fashions to portray her as a dangerous woman. This portrait came to be used as a model for a gentlewoman being purged by a doctor for the sin of 'manliness' in the print of *Dr Panurgus curing patients of their follies* in 1620 (fig. 80).[602] The association of these fashions with scandals allowed them to stand increasingly for the inversion of order on a broader level.[603]

Masculine women also acted as a channel for fears about otherness and identity, as well as commercial anxieties. Foreignness and monstrosity were closely related to fashion in contemporary texts. For Barnabe Rich in *My Lady's Looking Glasse*, for example, the monsters of Africa were nothing compared to women's fashions: '...but *England* hatcheth up every moneth a new *Monster*, every weeke a new *Sinne*, and every day a new *Fashion*: our *Monsters* are not bred in the *Desarts*, as those in Africa, but in every *Towne* and *Citty*.'[604] Masculine clothing was frequently described as uncivilised, barbaric and foreign. William Parkes, writing in 1612, described how women become masculine through lack of 'civility': 'how are our women (as it were) trans-formed into men, by degenerating from their sex, and from the vertue, modesty, and civility thereof, by their mannish complements, and ruffianly attires'.[605] The author of *Hic Mulier* similarly decried how masculine women's souls are 'fuller of infirmities then a horse or prostitute, and their mindes languishing in those infirmities: If this bee not barbarous, the naked Indian, or the wilde Irish.'[606] Such comparisons are reminiscent of John White's watercolour drawings from c.1585 of Pictish

---

[602] The *Hic Mulier* pamphlet even explicitly blamed her accomplice, Ann Turner, 'one cut from the Common-wealth at the Gallowes', and by association Frances Howard, one who is 'well knowne', as the originators of masculine fashions, Anonymous, *Hic Mulier*, Sig. A4 ^{v}.

[603] Peter Lake and Michael Quester characterise this popular imagery as 'concentrated little tableaux, bitter little stories, rooted in social locales familiar to all, in and through which contemporaries could obsess and fantasise about wider issues or order and disorder, authority and its abuse', in Lake and Quester, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 57. See Natalie Zemon Davis on the political significance of family hierarchies, in Davis, 'Women on Top', 151.

[604] Rich, *My Ladies Looking Glasse*, 120. See also Trubowitz, *Nation and Nurture*, 78.

[605] Quoted in Lucas, ''Hic Mulier': The Female Transvestite', 69.

[606] Anonymous, *Hic Mulier*, Sig. B1 ^{v}.

women warriors who stand naked, bearing weapons (fig. 91). Amazons increasingly gained foreign connotations in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, as travel accounts of the New World also famously reported Amazonian tribes, evoking the world-turned-upside-down topos.[607] These connotations may have been deepened by the depiction of Pocahontas wearing the fashions that soon became associated with the masculine woman in an engraving by Simon de Passe from 1616 (fig. 92). While these fashionable clothes were originally intended to establish familiarity rather than difference, and the lack of shading on the face in the engraving further adds to a europeanising effect by making her skin appear more pale, with the shifting connotations of this costume, it is likely that the widely circulated engraving may have deepened the associations of this costume with otherness.[608] Associating the influx of masculine fashions with a foreign invasion of barbarous customs underscores the martial implications behind the texts and, perhaps, their implied criticism of the King.[609]

While not explicitly stated, blame for these various inversions of social hierarchies might lie with James I, the self-proclaimed 'parens patriae' of England.[610] The first strong condemnations of these fashions seem to have been undertaken at the prompting of the King. Yet the King's initiative also appealed to confessional and social fears, creating a backlash to women's masculine fashions that spoke to broader issues, or could even form a

---

[607] For new impetus given to Amazon myths by accounts of alleged Amazon tribes in the New World, see Jo Eldridge Carney, ''Honoured Hippolyta, Most Dreaded Amazonian': The Amazon Queen in the Works of Shakespeare and Fletcher', in '*High and Mighty Queens' of Early Modern England: Realities and Representations*, ed. Carole Levin, Jo Eldridge Carney, Debra Barrett-Graves (Basingstoke: Plagrave Macmillan, 2003), 117.

[608] One contemporary account of this engraving, however, suggests that it misled as to the levels of wealth Pocahontas possessed, rather than any scandalous or gendered connotations of the clothing. John Chamberlain commented in a letter, 'Here is a fine picture of no fayre Lady and yet with her tricking up and high stile and titles you might thincke her and her worshipfull husband to be somebody…', John Chamberlain, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, II, ed. Norman Egbert McClure, (Philadelphia, PA: The American Philosophical Society, 1939), 56-7.

[609] The spread of supposedly Amazonian fashions into England therefore spurred what Rachel Trubowitz described as 'boundary panic', in Rachel Trubowitz, 'Cross-Dressed Women and Natural Mothers: Boundary Panic in Hic Mulier', in *Debating Gender in Early Modern England, 1500-1700*, ed. Cristina Malcolmson and Michoko Suzuki (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 187-8.

[610] James I to parliament in 1610, quoted in Ann Hughes, *Gender and the English Revolution* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 22.

critique of the King's policy.[611] It is perhaps the ambivalence and flexibility of the symbol of the masculine woman that commended it, utilising its multivalence to obscure its political critique.[612] These pamphlets and references were so widespread as to transform a fashion trend that had roots in styles from fifty years earlier into a recognisable iconography of 'bad women'.

Prints, Broadsides and Ballads

This iconography was particularly prevalent in satirical and moralising prints. Viragos, adulterers and scolds regularly donned hats and cropped their hair in world-upside-down, five senses and adapted continental prints, translating older genres into the current visual idiom. This is seen in an English woodcut of the European monsters, 'Fill Gut, & Pinch belly: One being Fat with eating good Men, the other Leane for want of good Women', printed by Edward Allde and published by Henry Gosson in 1620 (fig. 93).[613] An animal labelled 'Fill Gut' is seen devouring good husbands on the left in the foreground, while on the right a bony animal, 'Pinch belly', grows thin due to the scarcity of good women on which it feeds. In the background a group of men flock to their death, to be rid of 'bondage of Hell' in marriage to women, figured through scenes of domestic inversion. Hic Mulier costume is used to mark out the most domineering, central women in the foreground.[614] A contrast is formed between the good woman, in the jaws of Pinchbelly, and the bad woman on the left, safe from being devoured. The good woman wears a smaller, unfeathered, more modest hat, while the bad woman wears the kind of broad-brimmed, feathered hat berated by

[611] Against the view, epitomised by Valerie Lucas, that references to masculine women in texts 'assuage male anxiety about the pugnacious and ungovernable females who existed in the world beyond the stage in Early Modern England', in Lucas, ''Hic Mulier': The Female Transvestite', 80.
[612] Helen Pierce sees this multivalence as a character of much early modern satire, which was 'subtle and suggestive rather than overt', in Pierce, *Unseemly Pictures*, 18.
[613] For the tradition of these monsters in Europe, see Denny-Brown, *Fashioning Change*, 136-144; Malcolm Jones, 'Monsters of Misogyny: Bigorne and Chicheface—Suite et fin?', in *Marvels, Monsters, and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations*, ed. Timothy Jones and David Sprunger (Michigan, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002), 203-222; Watt, *Cheap Print*, 143-6.
[614] Mark Burnett, 'Fill Gut and Pinch Belly': Writing Famine in the English Renaissance', *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 21, No. 1 (1995): 21-44, 21.

moralists, on her equally divisive cropped hair. Her bodice is so low-cut that her breasts are fully exposed. She stands assertively, with her hands on her hips, and turns to taunt the man on her left, 'Farewell and be hang'd'.[615] His kneeling pose further emphasises her dominance in this scene. On the far left we see a similarly attired couple enacting the classic world-turned-upside-down struggle, the battle of the breeches. The woman asserts, 'I will be master', while the man relents, 'Thou shalt have the breeches'. This woodcut also survives in a finely engraved version by Reynold Elstracke for William Butler, which reproduces the composition, although the text is altered in places (fig. 94).[616] Due to its size and medium, this engraving would have been a prestigious object, while the woodcut would have been more cheaply produced and perhaps more widely circulated, indicating the popularity of the iconography.[617] In this way, English artists often added hats and short hair to common types of viragos in their adaptations of continental prints, suggesting the geographic specificity of this iconography.[618]

This costume was used above all to mark out sexually assertive women. It was perhaps for this reason that the imagery retained such popularity, offering the artist a contemporary mode of moralising, tinged with titillation. Jan Barra's image of *Sight* (fig. 95), in which the predatory woman is marked out by her hunting-inspired clothing, provides an example, while *Taste* takes a similar form (fig. 96). This sense is portrayed as a roaring girl in a beaver-skin hat with a feather, wearing a sword, with a glass of wine in one hand and a pipe in the other. The accompanying verse reads, 'This sence (incense) is non sense Though it Please my mind/ Yett Tis Not Proper for This Sex And Kind'. This woman is depicted breaching decorum in her masculine behaviour, in the form of drinking and smoking, while her

[615] The engraved version of this print changes this text to 'out cuckold'.
[616] Jones, *The Print*, 338-9.
[617] According to Tessa Watt, 'detailed copper engravings would yield only a few hundred copies, as opposed to the several thousand for a woodblock, and the time taken for each impression was longer', in Watt, *Cheap Print*, 141-142.
[618] See also *The Marriage Balance*, c.1628, published by Hugh Perry, which only survives in later impressions from c.1672, derived from a German etching from *Pugillus Facetiarum*, 1608, and *Woman and the Four Elements,* 1628, also derived from the Pugillus Facetiarum, in Jones, *The Print*, 323, 318.

clothing underlines her usurpation of masculine roles.[619] Five senses imagery, however, was often not only moralising, but gave occasion to linger on the attraction of women. Earthly senses were often personified by women, as their nature was seen as more physical, sensual and prone to sin.[620] This update of five senses imagery with masculine fashions draws out the uses of this iconography not just as critique, but for its erotic potential. It may have been the eroticism of this imagery that commended Jan Barra's depictions of the five senses to be used as the model for wall paintings by an unidentified artist for William Sparrow at Park Farm in Huntingdonshire, 1632. Only *Taste* and *Sight* survive from this series, preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig. 97).[621] Executed close to the patron's marriage, these images were likely intended to commemorate a wedding, and strike an appropriate combination of the erotic, moralising and instructional.[622]

When masculine headwear is seen on women in prints abroad, by contrast, the implications are often subtly different. Hat exchange, for example, with the woman adopting the hat of her often military lover, sometimes formed a symbol of erotic love in Netherlandish prints. In an engraving after Jacques de Gheyn, c.1610, an archer in military dress points his crossbow at the viewer (fig. 98). His elbow is guided by a milkmaid, balancing her pails from her shoulders, who wears a flamboyantly feathered, oversized hat which clearly formed part of the archer's uniform. A version of this couple can even be seen embracing on the left in the background, where he wears his hat, his crossbow lying discarded at his side. The sexual

---

[619] The resemblance of the smoking girl's clothes to those of Hic Mulier is noted in Craig Rustici, 'The Smoking Girl: Tobacco and the Representations of Mary Frith', *Studies in Philology* 96, No. 2 (1999): 164.

[620] For five senses imagery see Jones, *The Print*, 34-39.

[621] A letter from Daniel Garnett to Leigh Ashton, 24th September 1945, explains that two of the figures are of Mary Frith, the heroine of Middleton and Dekker's play, *The Roaring Girl*, in the object history notes at the Victoria and Albert Museum. For a summary of this past association, see Nancy Bunker, 'Feminine and Fashionable: Regendering the Iconologies of Mary Frith's 'Notorious Reputation'', *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 31, No. 2 (2005): 228- 229. It seems more likely, however, given the use of Barra's prints as a source, that these women simply referenced the roaring girl archetype.

[622] Bunker, 'Feminine and Fashionable', 228; David Garnett, 'The Sparrows of Hilton', *Records of Huntingdonshire* 9 (1979): 3. Similar sexual and moralising themes are present in the wall painting series of the prodigal son at Knightsland Farm, Hertfordshire, c.1600, and in the ages of man, presenting youth as the time for romance, seen on the walls of West Stowe manor, Suffolk, c.1575.

connotations of the print are made explicit by the Dutch caption, which puns on arrows and milk.[623] Connotations of active sexuality are attached, as she steers the crossbow and adopts his hat, while associations of hunting and sexual chase are evoked through the weapon. Yet this strain of imagery differs from English masculine costume, since hat exchange forms a more traditional and obvious instance of cross-dressing. The hat, after all, is not reflective of female fashion, but is an attribute, borrowed to figure sexual and power exchange. The development of masculine fashions into bad women iconography therefore seems culturally specific to England.

Demonstrating the transformation of these fashions into a recognisable iconography, variants of this figure came to illustrate popular seventeenth-century ballads. These were the cheapest and most accessible forms of print, read not only by those who purchased them, but known to the illiterate by song, and encountered on the walls of taverns and houses. While the relationship of woodcut images to text was 'general', illustrating related types rather than specific episodes, their selection was far from random.[624] That some blocks depicting masculine women, wearing contemporary costume, were carved in this period, and reused in a variety of ballads, demonstrates their wide-reaching connotations for contemporaries. One woodblock depicts a woman cutting a sinister figure (fig. 99). She wears a low-cut, doublet-like dress, with her breasts exposed. Her eyes are just visible beneath the shadow cast by her tall hat, the shape of which, along with her farthingale, probably place this woodblock's origins in the early seventeenth century, predating the broader brimmed hats associated with Hic Mulier. Her costume is close to that worn by 'mistress punckt', a prostitute, in Renold Elstrack's 1607 satirical print, *While maskinge in their folleis all doe passe, though all say nay yet doe ride the asse*, although the upper half is similar to the bare-breasted costume worn by the scold in Elstrack's engraving of *Fillgut and Pinchbelly* (fig. 100). The date range for the creation of this woodblock can be situated between c.1610 and 1620. The figure is depicted face-on, using a stark, bold, unmodelled

[623] Walter Liedtke, *The Milkmaid by Johannes Vermeer* (New York, NY: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2009), 15.
[624] Ruth Luborsky, 'Woodcuts in Tudor Books: Clarifying their Documentation', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 86, No. 1 (1992): 76; Watt, *Cheap Print*, 149.

style, which, combined with her pose and partially obscured face, lends this figure a sinister and confrontational air.

This woodblock was used extensively in a range of ballads from the early seventeenth century onwards, which mine the figure's potential to stand for a host of sins related to the masculine woman. The figure is used, for example, in a 'Lamentation of a new married man', c.1630, who, while he once led a full life, now devotes his time to pleasing his wife, who lives with comparative freedom (fig. 101).[625] Invoking world-turned-upside-down themes, the husband complains that while his wife is out late, dancing with 'lusty Youngsters', 'Now I must rocke the Cradle, / And hush the Childe asleepe'. The choice of the woman in masculine clothing as illustration draws on these themes of gender inversion, and wilful, lustful wives. A ballad from c.1623 on 'Mans Felicity and Misery', taking the form of a dialogue between two men, one who married a good wife and the other a bad one, who is described as a 'Whore', 'obstinate and froward', makes the 'bad wife' connotations of this image explicit.[626] On the right hand sheet, the masculine woman woodcut is paired with a generic, middling status man with a walking stick and bag, used in many ballads around this time (fig. 102). On the left, an early Elizabethan woodblock of a woman with a feather in her hair, large ruff, and a fan, a costume that denotes her status, is paired with a Jacobean gentleman with a feathered hat, baggy breeches and cloak, seen in an indoor setting, also used in other ballads at this time. The old-fashioned nature of the woman's traditionally feminine costume may have been intended as a foil to the more recent masculine and exposed fashions of the second woodcut. These two illustrations were likely paired to visualise the two couples, one with a good and the other a bad wife.[627]

---

[625] Anonymous, *The Lamentation of a new married man, briefely declaring the / sorrow and griefe that comes by marrying a young wanton wife* (London: A.M., 1630).

[626] Martin Parker, *Mans Felicity and Misery: / Which is, a good Wife and a bad: or the best and the / worst, discoursed in a Dialogue betweene / Edmund and Dauid* (London: F. Grove, 1623).

[627] It may also have been the bad wife connotations that commended the inclusion of this image on a ballad about various types, from sailors to painters, recently come off a ship in England, c.1631, which makes some references to 'bad wives', and the 'lewdest wife', in Anonymous, *A Sayler new come ouer: / And in this Ship with him those of such fame / The like of them, nere vnto England came, / Men of such qualitie and parts most rare, / Reading this Ditty, will shew you what they are* (London: Henry Gosson, 1631?).

A second woodcut employs similar clothing, originally intended to illustrate the 'scold' in *A Pleasant new Ballad you here may behold, / How the Devill, though subtle, was guld by a Scold*, 1601-1640 (fig. 103, 104).[628] The similarity of this costume to those worn by scolds and bad wives in popular prints from the 1620s suggests that this ballad might be more narrowly dated to c.1610-30, since this woodcut forms a rare instance of a specific illustration, depicting a scene from the ballad. A husband stands back, arms raised in fright, as a woman in her broad-brimmed hat, short hair, and low-cut doublet, rides off on the back of a black, horned, demon horse. In this ballad, the husband makes a deal with the devil for him to come disguised as a horse and rid him of his shrewish wife, but the tables turn when she kicks and pricks the horse into submission. The devil, preferring to be rid of her than suffer further, delivers her home. Her control is suggested by the woman's holding the reins in the woodcut, and a whip, while her costume further speaks to her shrewish behaviour and subversion of masculine control.[629] Another, less exaggerated illustration, with a broad brimmed hat with a prominent feather, short hair, large ruff, and an outdoor cloak, similarly only appears in ballads holding bad woman associations from 1623 onwards (fig. 105). One of these songs, for example, narrates the troubles of marriage, recounting historical instances of female betrayal, from Eve, to Delilah, to Sistera.[630] It outlines the hazards of a bad wife who bids her husband 'rock the Cradle'. The costume therefore likely primed the reader for these scenes of inversion.[631]

As these woodcuts suggest, the ability of these figures to speak to a host of feminine sins was deepened by the associations of their costume. The audience would approach these images with (potentially subconscious) knowledge of how they were previously deployed in

---

[628] Anonymous, *A Pleasant new Ballad you here may behold, / How the Devill, though subtle, was guld by a Scold* (London: Henry Gosson, 1601-1640).

[629] This woodcut was reused in two surviving later ballads from the 1660s-70s which required a woman on horseback or a scene of female travel, Anonymous, *The Crafty MISS; / Or, An Excise-man well fitted* (London: I. Deacon, 1671-1702); Anonymous, *A warning for married Women. / By the Example of Mrs. Jane* Renalds (London: F. Coles, T. Vere and W. Gilbertson, 1658-1664?).

[630] Anonymous, *The Batchelors Delight, / Being a pleasant new Song, shewing the happiness of a single life, and / the miseries that do commonly attend Matrimony* (London: F.G., 1623-1661).

[631] This ballad seems to have been popular, and survives in three copies: one in the British Library, London, National Library of Scotland, Crawford, and Houghton Library, Huth.

ballads, or how similar figures were used.[632] Those unable to read the text may also have been intended to gain some sense of its context through these bad women illustrations, speaking to a range of sins associated with female dominance, sexuality and assertion. Yet it is important to qualify this with the fact that even these stereotypes were deployed in ways that spoke to different aspects of these figures.

Even the woodcut invented for the frontispiece of *Hic Mulier* came to be radically repurposed in *A pleasant new Song, betwixt / The Saylor and his Loue*, 1624 (fig. 106).[633] In this ballad, a sailor's wife begrudges her husband for having left her for so long, before they are happily reconciled. On the left sheet, facing a military figure intended to stand for the sailor, the figure of the woman holding the mirror, with a child at her skirts, has been reprinted, without the half containing the barber brandishing scissors. In this context, the mirror ceases to read as a reflection, but could be intended to denote a picture of her absent lover, a common symbol in literature and art. The family group shifts from transgressive to virtuous, as the woman changes from neglectful mother to doting wife. It seems that the narrative potential of this half of the woodcut was intended to outweigh the moral connotations that her costume was originally intended to communicate. This suggests that viewers were attuned to the particular demands of ballad illustrations, ignoring information that was no longer relevant in an illustration's new context. The connotations of this costume were not only manipulated to suit new contexts, but also shifted over time, into the Civil War, as this costume increasingly spoke to contemporary fashions, or the hunting-inspired costume that came to be associate with cavalier women, worn, for example, by Henrietta Maria in portraits (fig. 107).

---

[632] '…the same characters in different settings seems to have enabled the gradual emergence of picture-personalities that were surprisingly complex and rounded', in Christopher Marsh, 'A Woodcut and Its Wanderings in Seventeenth-Century England', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 79, No. 2 (2016): 261. See also Alexandra Franklin, 'Making Sense of Broadside Ballad Illustrations in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in *Studies in Ephemera: Text and Image in Eighteenth-Century Print*, ed. Kevin Murphy and Sally O'Driscoll (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2013), 171.

[633] Anonymous, *A pleasant new Song, betwixt / The Saylor and his Loue* (London: John Grismond, 1624). This ballad's publisher was one of the ballad partners, from whom John Trundle, publisher of *Hic Mulier*, was independent. See Watt, *Cheap Print*, 76. This suggests that the woodcut from the frontispiece of *Hic Mulier* may have been owned by a shared source that was likely the printer.

Masculine Women's Clothing after the 1620s

The moralising writings, sermons and satirical prints against masculine women's clothing in the 1620s became less prevalent into the 1630s. Although no longer the explicit focus of prints, fashions resembling those in *Hic Mulier* continued to be worn.[634] As Marieke de Winkel noted, by the 1630s it 'had become the accepted wear of respectable matrons.'[635] Eventually they seem to have lost their relation to the specific political and social context that had made them subversive. Instead, under Charles I, prints increasingly turned on the figure of the effeminate man, a trend which intensified in the literature leading up to the Civil War, 1642-1651.[636] The implicit critique of effeminacy put forward in *Hic Mulier* became explicit, as prints focused attention on the competing modes of masculinity of the royalists and parliamentarians, each looking to undermine the other through emasculation.

The puritanical undercurrents seen in the earlier discourse around masculine women also came to the fore. While previously, puritans had remained a subset of the established church, with the ascendancy of William Laud as Bishop of London, 1628, and then Archbishop of Canterbury, 1633, puritans openly became considered enemies of the church.[637] While far from a united front, and facing increasing censorship by Laud, puritan voices could be heard championing parliamentarian causes in the face of perceived threat to Protestantism. The erosion of royal authority combined with long-running fears of popery, given new impetus by high church reforms, and Protestant defeats in the Thirty Years' War, to forge a vocal puritan opposition in print. The religious implications latent in

---

[634] See Wenceslaus Hollar's etchings of a *Wife of a London Artisan* and *Wife of the Mayor of London* in *Aula Veneris*, 1644. The idiosyncratic, moralising connotations that they once held may have escaped the foreign artist, for whom 'there was little of the moralist about him', according to Richard Godfrey's characterisation. Richard Godfrey, *Wenceslaus Hollar: A Bohemian Artist in England*, Exh. Cat. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 14, 77; 19.

[635] Marieke de Winkel, *Fashion and Fancy: Dress and Meaning in Rembrandt's Paintings* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 57.

[636] For the increasing attention on effeminate men in prints from the late 1620s, see Bellany, 'Mistress Turner's Deadly Sins', 207-209.

[637] John Coffey and Paul Lim, 'Introduction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, ed. John Coffey and Paul Lim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 4.

puritanical pamphlets on dress seem to have been brought into the open with added urgency. Women's clothing was no longer needed as a cipher through which to stage the religious fears which were now being used to attack royalists. In these politically polarised prints, the subtle and ambiguous masculine woman iconography, previously a veiled critique of a host of social and religious anxieties, became increasingly overshadowed by more explicit forms of criticism.

Against this background, hats instead may have increasingly demonstrated the wearer's political leanings, in both popular iconography and portraits. The hat that had developed from aristocratic hunting styles naturally became associated with the caricature of the cavalier, in chivalric costume, usurping its 'masculine woman' connotations. It is perhaps as a sign of loyalty that Lady Anne Fanshawe, for example, who became a royalist, decided to wear fashions that were worn by Henrietta Maria, including a feathered hat, in her portrait by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger in 1628 (fig. 108). Regardless of the similarities in clothes worn by royalists and parliamentarians in reality, on the pages of polarising prints, their differences were underscored. Royalists were caricatured as effeminate, lascivious knight-figures—as 'roaring boys'—in floppy, feathered hats, boots with spurs and riding coats, drawing out the connotations of the nickname, 'cavaliers'.[638] This contrasted with the short-haired, harshly masculine, capotain-wearing parliamentarians, as can be seen in a contemporary woodcut staging a direct confrontation of stereotypes (fig. 109). The political associations of elements of Hic Mulier costume therefore seem to have usurped the Amazonian ones of the 1620s. Ironically, the hat which had made women masculine in 1620 now marked out the 'effeminate' fop in 1640. This is demonstrated by the reuse of an earlier masculine woman woodcut, c.1616-20, in a pamphlet entitled *The Resolution of the Women of London to the Parliament…*,1642 (fig. 110). In this print, a domineering wife, marked out by a feathered hat, cropped hair and doublet, points at her cuckold husband, as shown by the horns that grow out of his hat.[639] Broad-brimmed hats therefore gained new royalist associations in the 1640s, allowing for this imagery to be recycled.

---

[638] For these 'competing modes of masculinity', see Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics*, 1-2.
[639] Anonymous, *The resolution of the women of London to the Parliament. Wherein they declare their hot zeale in sending their husbands to the warres* (London: William Watson, 1642), Sig. A2^{r}.

Conclusion

It would be an oversimplification to assume that the lack of moralisation over masculine fashions in the 1640s and 1650s suggests that they never had been problematic. The widespread critique of these fashions in the 1620s was spurred not just by their novelty, since they had roots in fashions under Elizabeth I, but by the negative connotations of the strong woman figure, and the resonance of the costume for communicating broader fears about ambiguity not only of gender, but of identity and social status. That the costume came to gain new meanings in the 1640s, the feathered hat speaking more to royalist allegiances and, in the eyes of many, effeminacy of men rather than masculinity of women, is testimony to the need to contextualise reactions to fashion and conceptions of gender. While the costume under Elizabeth I had contributed to the broader rhetoric of aggrandising women as exceeding the limitations of their sex, their recontextualisation in a period of rapid social change made them transgressive. Being linked to Elizabethan nostalgia, and seeming to imply the inadequacy of the King, and the effeminacy of men more broadly, this costume aggravated anxieties which were especially potent due to the discourse surrounding James I's pacifist foreign policy. Pamphlets and pulpit attacks on masculine women represent an attempt to exorcise the trend, and contain its subversive effects, likely prompted by the King. At the same time, the iconography of *Hic Mulier* could be used to critique the effeminacy of men, seen to stem from the 'poisoned fountain' of the court, for which the responsibility ultimately lay with James I as 'parens patriae'.[640] Variants of this iconography, once established, continued to hold sway. It is perhaps the ambivalence and flexibility of masculine woman symbolism that made it a powerful symbol to be adopted for various political, social and entertainment ends, masking political critique in ambiguity. This veiled critique became explicit in Civil War prints, rendering this ambiguous iconography obsolete.

[640] An extended form of this metaphor appears in John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, 1623. For more on this figuration of the corrupt court, see Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal*, 2.

Conclusion

This thesis has drawn together images of gender ambiguity with primary textual sources and scholarship on ambiguity, to illuminate the meanings of objects that have been particularly resistant to interpretation. This has aimed to reinstate the ambiguity that these representations once held for contemporaries and to address their oversimplification or neglect in art history. Despite the diversity of the case studies, all of the portrayals of gender ambiguity are united by their ability to provoke doubt, or sustain multiple interpretations, whether today, or only in the past, conforming with early modern definitions of ambiguity. Some key conclusions can be drawn by comparing the different uses of gender ambiguity raised in the chapters, and the French to the English case studies.

The breadth of the case studies has shown that gender ambiguity and its recognition are contextually dependent. As seen throughout this thesis, some behaviours or fashions, such as earrings or long hair on men, have retained their gender-ambiguous connotations to this day, while others, such as large hats and doublets on women, have lost these associations. Answering the question of what was considered gender-ambiguous in the past, and how it differs from today, therefore relies on contextually situating each portrayal. This thesis has aimed to amplify the need to question gender construction and norms throughout history, and to base a definition of gender ambiguity on historical traces of these norms and deviations drawn from literature and art.

This thesis has also demonstrated that early moderns thought of images of gender ambiguity as images, rather than as direct reflections of real life—although confusion between representation and reality could be inspired for certain political ends, as commentators suggested that masculine fashions on women were not just appealingly androgynous, practical, or suggestive of masculine virtue, but evidence of women's usurpation of male roles. While elite identity could shield the wearer of androgynous fashions from censure to a greater degree, as explored in reference to masculine women's fashions on the middling sort, representations of gender ambiguity could also go far beyond what was permitted in the street. The hermaphrodite could be a celebrated symbol of ideal qualities in early modern France, exemplified by the *Composite Portrait of François I*, yet

cases of intersex people or gender changes were treated at best as curiosities, and at worst as threats to social order, as shown by often cited examples like that of Marie Germain.[641] Visual representations of gender ambiguity, like their literary counterparts, functioned as spaces for exploration and fantasy, in which ambiguity and blurred boundaries were often appealing and intriguing, as seen in the *Cobbe Portrait* and *Triple Profile Portrait*. These portraits show how gender ambiguity in art was often in communication, competition, or shared a common root with, literature, which can therefore shed light on their meaning. These reflections address the central theme of how representations of gender ambiguity were related to observations of these phenomena in daily life.

These case studies have shown the need to work across literature and art history to construct the meanings and reception of gender ambiguity. This is seen in each chapter, as we traced the connotations of 'robustness' and grace behind cross-dressed Hercules and the implications for gendered style at Fontainebleau, how the *Triple Profile Portrait* competed with literary accounts of the *je-ne-sais-quoi* and the *Cobbe Portrait* played on English Ovidianism, and how the language in satirical pamphlets sheds light on how gender-ambiguous clothing became a cipher for various fears, including of gender usurpation, hidden identity, and foreignness. These examples highlight the need to turn to early modern definitions of ambiguity to explore these objects, all of which can be rooted in culturally specific types or uses of ambiguity. Historicising the language and meanings of gender ambiguity highlights the differences between the connotations of gender ambiguity today—now primarily associated with sexual and gender identity—and in the early modern period. In these case studies, gendered binaries often formed categories with which to communicate broader messages about identity, politics, style, art and culture. These gendered messages were unstable and, like emergent ideas about national identity, best communicated by comparison or combination, as French artists and writers, for example, defined national style as combining a masculine, 'robust' style, associated with Florentine artists, with a certain feminine 'grace'.

[641] Fisher, *Materialising Gender*, 14; O'Brien, 'Betwixt and Between', 128-129; Parker, 'Gender Ideology', 337-364; Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 66-7.

This thesis has argued that sexuality and gender identity were therefore not always the primary messages of gender ambiguity in art. Instead, gender ambiguity intersected with sexuality in unusual and sometimes surprising ways. Poetry and literature commending androgynous beauty drew on bisexual rhetoric from antiquity, forming another aspect of early modern revival of classical art and culture. Gender ambiguity is often described as attractive to women and men, as discussed in the *Triple Profile Portrait* and *Cobbe Portrait* chapters. This forms a corrective to previous literature that has stressed the role of homosexual desire in particular in depictions of androgynous boys. As seen in the portrait of Wriothesley, gender ambiguity could equally be used to communicate heterosexual love, as well as homosexual themes, and gendered ideas about romantic availability or resistance. Before androgyny, effeminacy, and sodomy were considered increasingly connected, gender ambiguity was capable of communicating desirability or weakness more generally, and the blurring or combination of other gendered binaries. This thesis has therefore expanded on Nagel and Pericolo's observation that 'sexuality… is one of the primary modes by which transgressions—transgressions of genre and gender, but also of social and aesthetic boundaries and of aesthetic roles, such as those of producer and recipient, patron and critic—are marked and expressed'.[642] This has aimed to complicate some of the previous literature on homosexuality and gender ambiguity, by demonstrating how these tropes had broader implications.

The comparative and often nationalistic nature of the messages communicated by gender ambiguity suggests that particular insights can be gained from the comparison of these themes in different geographic locations. The overlaps and divergences between the English and French case studies are particularly instructive. This comparison is made possible by their shared cultural apparatus, including their literary engagement with antiquity, which promoted gender-ambiguous themes in English and French art and literature, their artistic and fashion exchanges and frequent reliance on foreign artists, especially from the Netherlands. This suggests that classical revival played a significant role in popularising images of gender ambiguity in this period, even when visualised through then-

[642] Nagel and Pericolo, *Subject as Aporia*, 13.

contemporary fashions, as seen in the *Triple Profile Portrait* and the *Cobbe Portrait*. In these cases, likely foreign artists drew on native literary and artistic traditions to visualise gender ambiguity in portraits through contemporary fashions, yet also potentially drew inspiration from the classicising poetry in circulation in the English and French courts that glamorised gender ambiguity. These chapters therefore show the impact of pan-European androgynous clothing trends, as well as classical themes and Ovidian literature, on gender-ambiguous portraits. While these ideas circulated in France from the 1530s onwards, the *Cobbe Portrait* epitomises how the English court in the 1590s, inspired in part by French art and culture, came to draw upon similar conceits. The Queen and surrounding courtiers turned to Ovidian gender play to provide a new vocabulary for the issues raised by an unmarried female monarch, with similar results to those seen previously in the French court. These influences are particularly difficult to perceive in early modern England, where the visual tradition was less classicising, causing them to be overlooked in art history. This thesis has therefore sought to address this gap, by demonstrating how an Ovidian tradition impacted English visual culture, especially through the theme of androgynous youths.

Despite a certain amount of mutual influence and shared fascination with antiquity, these chapters also suggest how divergent artistic traditions could impact the depiction of gender ambiguity. While the *Triple Profile Portrait* uses compositional and costume features to leave the viewer poised between gendered interpretations of the sitters, Wriothesley's portrait is limited in its visual ambiguity, not fully obscuring identity or gender, but alluding to the sitter's beauty in terms drawn from women's portraiture and contemporary literature. The extent and kind of ambiguity produced in portraits like Wriothesley's was likely influenced by the lack of a tradition of visual ambiguity in England, and greater suspicion of it, spurred by the reformation. In early modern France, by contrast, there was greater engagement with visual ambiguity, guided in part by greater familiarity with Italian artists and art writing. Images of gender ambiguity in early modern France were therefore more self-reflexive, commenting on artistic themes and debates, like the *paragone* between poetry and visual art, or media, like sculpture and painting, as explored through the *Triple Profile Portrait* and Hercules and Omphale frescoes. Yet this comparison also raises the issue of England's reception of French art, as these themes and French influence were not always regarded positively.

This thesis suggests that English depictions of gender ambiguity were influenced by proximity to and rejection of French culture. The *Cobbe Portrait*, for example, may have been influenced by the artist's familiarity with Ovidian themes in continental art. Yet feminised style and courtly gender play, in currency in the French court from the reign of François I to Henri III, came to be viewed with particular suspicion during times of tension between England and France, greater nationalism, or heightened anti-Catholic sentiment. Negative responses to courtly gender play seem to map closely to these periods of particularly intense distrust, as seen in the case of Jacobean England. At this time, satires of masculine women criticised the Francophile gender play and androgynous clothing seen in the court of Elizabeth I, mocking the wearers of these fashions as foreign, affected and unnatural. The positive associations of gender play previously seen in France were subverted against the backdrop of the Thirty Years War and rising fears of popery.

More speculatively, the contrast between the subtler androgyny pursued by Elizabeth I in her reign, and the Amazonian myth that later developed around her, motivated especially by fears of James I's pacifist policies, suggests that popular and elite responses to gender ambiguity may have been particularly influenced by broader perceptions of times of peace and turbulence. Instability, whether social, religious, political, or military, seems to have often resulted in hostility to ambiguity, including of gender, as polarisation of public opinion bred fears about hidden identities. While the impact of periods of stability and disruption on depictions of gender ambiguity is complex, it seems that, as symbols of change itself, their demonisation often went hand-in-hand with fears about social and political upheaval. This helps address the question of when gender ambiguity formed a desirable form of self-presentation, or an enjoyable puzzle in art, and by whom, and when was it perceived as threatening.

While these themes are explored in early modern France and England, there is room for further study of how other cultures areas visualised gender ambiguity, and especially how forms drawn from antiquity were depicted and considered in areas like England, where there was not a strong tradition of classicising visual art. Ulinka Rublack, for example, has highlighted the existence of masculine headwear on women in patrician German

portraiture.[643] It remains to be explored whether these fashions also indicated the masculine virtue of the wearer, for example evoking Amazonian connotations, as in England. Sarah-Maria Schober suggests further scope, as she has demonstrated how hermaphrodites formed figures of ambiguity in early modern Basel, informing its imagery.[644] The social and artistic mileu of the Netherlands, where art historical work has drawn attention to meta-pictorial themes, may be another context in which gender ambiguity could have self-reflexive meanings.[645] It is therefore worth questioning whether gender-ambiguous figures in Hendrik Goltzius's *Allegory of Spring*, 1589, may evoke gender ambiguity as an artistic commentary, as seen in France.

These cases have aimed to expand and enliven the study of certain images that have often been mischaracterised and misunderstood by art historical methods, and to open up the possibility of further study. By demonstrating how early moderns often understood its portrayal through the theme of ambiguity, this thesis provides a new context for analysing gender ambiguity, especially in those areas where few direct accounts survive. Gender ambiguity forms a lens through which to view several issues at the heart of early modern culture, including uncertainty and flux, excess and moderation, emergent national identities and their related artistic and literary styles.

---

[643] Rublack, *Dressing Up*, 231-2, 248-252.

[644] Schober, 'Hermaphrodites in Basel', 299-327.

[645] For a selection of works on self-reflexivity in northern art Rothstein, 'The Problem', 143-173; Melion, 'Vivae dixisses virginis ora', 153-176; Ramakers, 'Art and Artistry', 164-192; Parshall, 'Some Visual Paradoxes', 97-104; Marr, 'Ingenuity and Discernment', 106-145; Joanna Woodall ed., *The Reflexive Imagery of Love in Artistic Theory and Practice, 1500-1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

Bibliography

Primary Sources

'Henry VI: February 1445'. In *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, edited by Chris Given-Wilson, Paul Brand, Seymour Phillips, Mark Ormrod, Geoffrey Martin, Anne Curry and Rosemary Horrox. London: Woodbridge, 2005. *British History Online*: http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/february-1445

Adams, Thomas. *Mystical Bedlam, or The World of Mad-Men*. London: George Purslowe, 1615.

Alberti, Leon Battista. *On Painting*. Translated by John Spencer. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967.

Alciato, Andrea. *Emblematum Libellus*. Venice: Aldus, 1546.

Anderson, Anthony. *The Shield of our Safetie: Set foorth by the Faythfull Preacher of Gods hoyle Worde*. London: H. Jackson, 1581.

Anonymous. *A Pleasant new Ballad you here may behold, / How the Devill, though subtle, was guld by a Scold*. London: Henry Gosson, 1601-1640.

Anonymous. *A pleasant new Song, betwixt / The Saylor and his Loue*. London: John Grismond, 1624.

Anonymous. *A Sayler new come ouer: / And in this Ship with him those of such fame / The like of them, nere vnto England came, / Men of such qualitie and parts most rare, / Reading this Ditty, will shew you what they are*. London: Henry Gosson, 1631?.

Anonymous. *A warning for married Women. / By the Example of Mrs. Jane* Renalds. London: F. Coles, T. Vere, and W. Gilbertson, 1658-1664?.

Anonymous. *Hic Mulier: Or, The Man-Woman*. London: John Trundle, 1620.

Anonymous. *Haec Vir: Or, The Womanish-Man*. London: John Trundle, 1620.

Anonymous. *The Batchelors Delight, / Being a pleasant new Song, shewing the happiness of a single life, and / the miseries that do commonly attend Matrimony.* London: F.G., 1623-1661.

Anonymous. *The Crafty MISS; / Or, An Excise-man well fitted.* London: I. Deacon, 1671-1702.

Anonymous. *The Lamentation of a new married man, briefely declaring the / sorrow and griefe that comes by marrying a young wanton wife*. London: A.M., 1630.

Anonymous. *The resolution of the women of London to the Parliament. Wherein they declare their hot zeale in sending their husbands to the warres*. London: William Watson, 1642.

Autels, Guillaume des. *Replique aux furieuses defences de Louis Meigret*. Lyon: J. de Tournes et G. Gazeau, 1551.

Aristotle. 'Categoriae'. In *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited by Richard McKeon, 7-39. New York, NY: Random House, 1941.

Aristotle. *On Sophistical Refutations, On Coming-to-be and Passing-away, On the Cosmos*. Translated by Edward Forster and David Furley. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955.

Baret, John. *An Alvearie Or Triple Dictionarie, in Englishe, Latin, and French: Very profitable for all such as be desirous of any of those three Languages*. London: Henry Denham, 1574.

Barocchi, Paul. *Scritti d'arte del Cinquecento*, I. Milan and Naples: R. Ricciardi, 1971.

Bellay, Joachim Du. *La Deffence et illustration de la langue Francoyse*. Paris: Arnoul L'Angelier, 1549.

Bellay, Joachim Du. *L'Olive*. Geneva: Droz, 2002.

Bouhours, Dominique. *Les Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène*, edited by Bernard Beugnot and Gilles Declercq. Paris: Champion, 2003.

Brathwaite, Richard. *The English Gentleman*. London: John Haviland, 1630.

Brathwaite, Richard. *The English Gentlewoman.* London: B. Alsop and T. Favvcet, 1631.

Brathwaite, Richard. *The English Gentleman and English Gentlewoman*, 3e. London: John Dawson, 1641.

Brantôme. *Les Dames galantes*, edited by Pascal Pia. Paris: Gallimard, 1981.

Bulwer, John. *Anthropometamorphosis: Man Transform'd: or, The Artificial Changeling*. London: William Hunt, 1654.

Burton, William. *The most delectable and pleasaunt history of Clitiphon and Leucippe: written first in Greeke, by Achilles Statius, an Alexandrian: and now newly translated into English, by W.B.* London: Thomas Creede, 1597.

Castiglione, Baldassare. *The Book of the Courtier*. Translated by George Bull. London: Penguin Classics, 1976.

Cellini, Benvenuto. *The Autobiography*. Translated by George Bull. London: Penguin Books, 1998.

Chamberlain, John. *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, II, edited by Norman Egbert McClure. Philadelphia, PA: The American Philosophical Society, 1939.

Chapman, George. *The Work of George Chapman: Plays*, I, edited by Richard Shepherd. London: Chatto and Windus, 1874.

Charles IX. *Édict du Roy, par lequel il érige et institue en tiltre d'offices formé des gardes des seaulx en toutes ses cours*. Paris: Jean Dallier, 1572.

Clapham, John. *Narcissus. Siue amoris iuuenilis et præcipue philautiæ breuis at que moralis descripto*. London: Thomas Scarlet, 1591: https://ezp.lib.cam.ac.uk/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezp.lib.cam.ac.uk/books/narcissus-siue-amoris-iuuenilis-et-præcipue/docview/2240892026/se-2?accountid=9851.

Desportes, Philippe. *Oeuvres de Philippe Desportes*, edited by Alfred Michiels. Paris: Adolphe Delahays, 1858.

Erasmus, Desiderus. *On Copia of Words and Ideas*. Translated by Donald King and David Rix. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1963.

Gascoigne, George. *The Noble Art of Venerie*, 2e. London: Thomas Purfoot, 1611.

Heere, Lucas de. *Théâtre de tous les peuples et nations de la terre avec leurs habits et ornemens divers, tant anciens que modernes, diligemment depeints au naturel par Luc Dheere peintre et sculpteur Gantois*. 16th century, Ghent University Library, Ghent, BHSL.HS.2466.

Henri III. *Édict du Roy, par lequel Sa Majesté octroye aux officiers de ses eauës & forests droict de chauffage, pour eux & leurs successeurs, suyvant le reiglement porté par iceluy*. Paris: Federic Morel, 1578.

Heywood, Thomas. *Gynaikeion: or, Nine Bookes of Various History. Concerninge Women*. London: Adam Islip, 1624.

Horace. *Odes and Epodes*. Translated by Niall Rudd. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Hoskins, John. *Sermons Preached at Pauls Crosse and Else-where*. London: William Stansby, 1615.

Knox, John. *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against Monstrous regiment of women*. Geneva: J. Pollain and A. Rebul, 1558.

Mander, Karel Van. *The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters, from the First Edition of the Schilder-boeck (1603-1604)*, I. Translated by Hessel Miedema. Doornspijk: Davaco, 1994.

Marlowe, Christopher. *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe, I: All Ovids Elegies, Lucans First Booke, Dido Queene of Carthage*, *Hero and Leander*, edited by Roma Gill. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Marlowe, Christopher. *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe, Volume II: Dr Faustus*, edited by Roma Gill. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

Middleton, Thomas. *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, edited by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Middleton, Thomas and Thomas Dekker. *The Roaring Girl*, edited by Elizabeth Cook. London: Bloomsbury, 1997.

Nashe, Thomas. *The Anatomie of Absurdities*. London: I. Charlewood, 1598.

Nashe, Thomas. *The Unfortunate Traveller, 1594*: *or, the Life of Iacke Wilton; Newly corrected and augmented*, 2e. Menston: Scolar Press, 1971.

Niccholes, Alex. *A Discourse, of Marriage and Wiving: And Of the greatest Mystery therein contained: how to chuse a good Wife from a bad.* London: G.Eld, 1620.

Ovid. *Fasti*. Translated by Anne Wiseman and Peter Wiseman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Ovid. *Metamorphoses*. Translated by David Raeburn. London: Penguin Classics, 2004.

Parker, Martin. *Mans Felicity and Misery: / Which is, a good Wife and a bad: or the best and the / worst, discoursed in a Dialogue betweene / Edmund and Dauid*. London: F. Groue, 1623.

Petraca, Francesco. *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The Rime sparse and Other Lyrics*. Translate by Robert Durling. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Philostratus the Younger. *Imagines, Callistratus, Descriptions*. Translated by Arthur Fairbanks. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969.

Plato. *The Republic: Book VII*, edited by W. H. D. Rouse. New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 1951.

Plato. *The Symposium*. Translated by M.C. Howatson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Pliny the Elder, *L'Histoire du monde de C. Pline Second... À quoy a esté adjousté un traité des pois et mesures antiques, réduites à la Françoise*. Lyon: C. Senneton, 1562.

Pliny, *Natural History, IX, Books XXXIII-XXXV*. Translated by Harris Rackman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952.

Prynne, William. *The Unlovelinesse, of Love-Lockes*. London: Publisher not Identified, 1628.

Rich, Barnabe. *My Ladies Looking Glasse*. London: for Thomas Adams, 1616.

Rider, John. *Bibliotheca Scholastica. A Double Dictionary*. Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1589.

Ronsard, Pierre de. *Les Amours, Leurs Commentaires: Texte de 1553*, edited by Christine de Buzon and Pierre Martin. Paris: Didier érudition, 1999.

Ronsard, Pierre de. Oeuvres *Complètes*, XII, edited Paul Laumonier. Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1946.

Ronsard, Pierre de. *Oeuvres Complètes*, XV, edited by Paul Laumonier, 67-76. Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1953.

Ronsard, Pierre de. *Les Oeuvres de Pierre de Ronsard: Texte de 1587*, I, edited by Isidore Silver. Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1966.

Shakespeare, William. *As You Like It*, edited by Alan Brissenden. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Shakespeare, William. 'Romeo and Juliet'. In *The Folger Shakespeare*, edited by Barbara Mowat, Paul Werstine, Michael Poston, and Rebecca Niles. *Folger Shakespeare Library* (October 31, 2020): https://shakespeare.folger.edu/shakespeares-works/romeo-and-juliet/.

Shakespeare, William. *The Sonnets*, edited by William Burto. Harmondsworth: Signet/Penguin 1964.

Shakespeare, William. 'Venus and Adonis'. In *Shakespeare's Poems: Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece and the Shorter Poems*, edited by Katherine Duncan-Jones and H.R. Woudhuysen, 125-230. London: Thompson Learning, 2007.

Stubbes, Philip. *The Anatomie of Abuses*. London: Richard Jones, 1583.

Taylor, John. *Superbiae Flagellum, Or, The Whip of Pride.* London: G. Eld, 1621.

Tiraboschi, Girolamo. *Storia della letteratura italiana di Girolamo Tiraboschi: Dall'anno 1500 fino all'anno 1600*, VII, Parte Quarta. Milan: Dalla Società Tipographica de' Classici Italiani, 1824.

Tuvill, Daniel. *Asylum Veneris or A Sanctuary for Ladies*. London: Edward Griffin for Laurence L'Isle, 1616.

Tyard, Pontus de. *Fables de Fleuves ou Fontaines, avec la description pour la Peinture, & les Eprigrammes*. Paris: Jean Richer, 1586.

Vasari, Giorgio. *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors & Architects,* VI. Translated by Gaston Du C. de Vere. London: Macmillan and the Medici Society, 1914.

Vasari, Giorgio. *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors & Architects,* IX. Translated by Gaston Du C. de Vere. London: Macmillan and the Medici Society, 1915.

Vasari, Giorgio. *Lives of the Artists*. Translated by George Bull. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965.

Vaughan, William. *The Golden Fleece*. London: William Stansby, Miles Flesher, and another, 1626.

Winckelmann, Johann. *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks*. Translated by Henry Fuseli. London: A. Millar, 1765.

Secondary Sources

'ambiguity, n.', *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021): https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/6144?redirectedFrom=ambiguity

'Painting sparks bard sexuality debate', BBC News, 22 April, 2002: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/1943632.stm

Ackerman, Evelyn. 'Costume is the Key: Seventeenth Century Miniature Portraits with Costume Overlays'. *Dress* 34, No. 1 (2007): 61-77.

Ackerman, James. *Distant Points: Essays in Theory and Renaissance Art and Architecture*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994.

Ackroyd, Peter. *Dressing Up: Transvestism and Drag: The History of an* Obsession. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1979.

Adams, Tracy and Christine Adams ed. *The Creation of the French Royal Mistress: From Agnès Sorel to Madame Du Barry*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020.

Adhémar, Jean. 'Aretino: Artistic Advisor to Francis I'. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17 (1954): 311-18.

Adlin, Jane. *Vanities: Art of the Dressing Table*. New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013.

Akrigg, George. *Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1968.

Alyal, Amina. 'There's Something about Diana: Ovid and the Development of Reformation Poetics'. In *The Survival of Myth: Innovation, Singularity and Alterity*, edited by Paul Hardwick and David Kennedy, 65-89. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.

Ames-Lewis, Francis. ‘Donatello's Bronze David and the Palazzo Medici Courtyard’. *Renaissance Studies* 3 (September, 1989): 235-251.

Andersen, Lisa. ‘Masquing/(Un)Masking: Animation and the Restless Ornament of Fontainebleau’. In *Ornament and Monstrosity in Early Modern Art*, edited by Maria Fabricius Hansen and Chris Askholt Hammeken, 177-202. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019.

Andersson, Benedikte. ‘Ronsard en grand Pan: L'imaginaire du dieu Pan dans les hommages rendus à Ronsard dans l'édition posthume de ses Oeuvres (1587)’. *Seizième Siècle* 3 (2007): 177-205.

Arber, Edward ed. *Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London: 1554-1640 A.D.*, III. London: privately printed, 1876.

Armstrong, Jane. *The Arden Shakespeare Miscellany*, London: Bloomsbury, 2011.

Arnold, Janet. *Queen Elizabeth’s Wardrobe Unlock’d*. Wakefield: Maney, 1988.

Auden, W.H. ‘Introduction’. In William Shakespeare, *The Sonnets*, edited by William Burto, xxxvii-lix. Harmondsworth: Signet/Penguin, 1964.

Ayres, Sara. ‘A Mirror for the Prince? *Anne of Denmark in Hunting Costume with Her Dogs* (1617) by Paul van Somer’. *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 12, No. 2 (2020): DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2020.12.2.2.

Baadji, Nadja. ‘Painting on Stone and Metal: Material Meaning and Innovation in Early Modern Northern European Art’. In *Almost Eternal*, 248-270.

Bailey, Amanda. *Flaunting: Style and the Subversive Male Body in Renaissance England*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.

Baines, Barbara, ed. *Three Pamphlets on the Jacobean Antifeminist Controversy*, Facsimile. New York, NY: Delmar, 1978.

Baker-Bates, Piers and Elena Calvill, ed. *Almost Eternal: Painting on Stone and Material Innovation in Early Modern Europe*. Leiden: Brill, 2018.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and his World*. Translated by Hélène Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

Bardiès-Fronty, Isabelle, Michèle Bimbenet-Privat and Philippe Walter ed. *Le Bain et le Miroir, Soins du corps et l'estethique de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*. Paris: Gallimard, 2009.

Barkan, Leonard. *Transuming Passion: Ganymede and the Erotics of Humanism*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991.

Barker, Elton and Joel Christensen. *Homer's Thebes: Epic Rivalries and the Appropriation of Mythical Pasts*, *Hellenic Studies Series* 84. Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2019: http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn3:hul.ebook:CHS_BarkerE_ChristensenJ.Homers_Thebes.2019.

Barolsky, Paul. *Infinite Jest: Wit and Humour in Italian Renaissance Art*. London: University of Missouri Press, 1978.

Barolsky, Paul and Andrew Ladis. 'The 'Pleasurable Deceits' of Bronzino's So-Called London 'Allegory''. *Notes in the History of Art* 10, No. 3 (1991): 32-36.

Barry, Fabio. 'Painting in Stone: Early Modern Experiments in a Metamedium'. *The Art Bulletin*, 99, No. 3 (2017): 30-61.

Bartle, Chris. 'Gay/Queer Dynamics and the Question of Sexual History and Identity'. *Journal of Homosexuality* 62, No. 4 (2015): 531-569.

Bartman, Elizabeth. ‘Eros's Flame: Images of Sexy Boys in Roman Ideal Sculpture, Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome’. *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome, Supplementary Volumes, The Ancient Art of Emulation: Studies in Artistic Originality and Tradition from the Present to Classical Antiquity* 1 (2002): 249-271.

Baskins, Cristelle. ‘Gender Trouble in Italian Renaissance Art History: Two Case Studies’. *Studies in Iconography* 16 (1994): 1-36.

Bate, Jonathan. ‘Elizabethan Translation: the Art of the Hermaphrodite’. In *Translating Life: Studies in Transpositional Aesthetics*, edited by Shirley Chew and Alistair Stead, 33-52. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000.

Bate, Jonathan. ‘Sexual Perversity in ‘Venus and Adonis’’. *The Yearbook of English Studies* 23 (1993): 80–92.

Beauregard, Raphaelle Costa de. *Silent Elizabethans: The Language of Colour in the Miniatures of Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver*. Montpellier: University Paul Valery, 2000.

Becker, Raymond de. *The Other Face of Love*. London: Neville Spearman, 1967.

Beemer, Cristy. ‘The Female Monarchy: A Rhetorical Strategy of Early Modern Rule'. *Rhetoric Review* 30, No. 3 (2011): 258-274.

Béguin, Sylvie, Jeane Guillaume and Alain Roy. *La galerie d’Ulysse à Fontainebleau*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985.

Bellany, Alistair. ‘Mistress Turner's Deadly Sins: Sartorial Transgression, Court Scandal, and Politics in Early Stuart England’. *Huntington Library Quarterly* 58, No. 2 (1995): 179-210.

Bellany, Alistair. *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England: News, Culture and the Overbury Affair, 1603-1660*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Belsey, Andrew and Catherine Belsey. 'Portraits of Elizabeth I'. In *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660*, edited by Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn, 11-35. London: Reaktion Books, 1990.

Belsey, Catherine. 'Love as Trompe-l'oeil: Taxonomies of Desire in Venus and Adonis'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46 (1995): 257-76.

Bennett, Bonnie, and David Wilkins. *Donatello*. Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1984.

Bentley-Cranch, Dana. *The Renaissance Portrait in France and England: A Comparative Study*. Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2004.

Bensoussan, Nicole. 'From the French *Galerie* to the Italian Garden: Sixteenth-century Displays of Primaticcio's Bronzes at Fontainebleau'. *Journal of the History of Colle*ctions 27, No. 2 (2015): 175–198.

Berger, Harry. 'Fictions of Pose: Facing the Gaze of Early Modern Portraiture'. *Representations* 46 (1994): 87-120.

Bergeron, David. *King James and Letters of Homoerotic Desire*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1999.

Berry, Edward. *Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Black, Joseph. 'The Rhetoric of Reaction: The Martin Marprelate Tracts (1588–89), Anti-Martinism, and the Uses of Print in Early Modern England'. *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28 (1997): 707–725.

Bliss, Joseph. 'Cellini's Satyrs for the Porte Dorée at Fontainebleau'. *Studies in the History of Art* 64 (2003): 72-93.

Blunt, Anthony. *Art and Architecture in France 1500-1700*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999.

Botonaki, Effie. 'Anne of Denmark and the Court Masque: Displaying and Authoring Queenship'. In *The Emblematic Queen: Extra-Literary Representations of Early Modern Queenship*, edited by Debra Barrett-Graves, 133-154. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Botonaki, Effie. 'Elizabeth's Presence in the Jacobean Masque'. In *Representations of Elizabeth I in Early Modern Culture*, edited by Alessandra Petrina and Laura Tosi, 140-157. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Boucher, Jacqueline. *La cour de Henri III*. Rennes: Ouest France, 1986.

Bray, Alan. *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*. London: Gay Men's Press, 1982.

Breitenberg, Mark. *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Breward, Charles. *The Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.

Brewer, Marilynn and Layton Lui. 'The Primary of Age and Sex in the Structure of Person Categories'. *Social Cognition*, 7: 3 (1989): 262-274.

Brown, Georgia. *Redefining Elizabethan Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Brown, Liz Oakley. *Ovid and the Cultural Politics of Translation in Early Modern England*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.

Bryson, Anna. 'The Rhetoric of Status: Gesture, Demeanour and the Image of the Gentleman in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England'. In *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660*, edited by Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn, 136-153. London: Reaktion Books, 1990.

Bryson, Norman. *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983.

Buck, Anne. 'Clothing and Textiles in Bedfordshire Inventories, 1617–1620'. *Costume* 34, No. 1 (2000): 25-38.

Bull, Malcolm. *The Mirror of the Gods: How the Renaissance Artists Rediscovered the Pagan Gods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Bunker, Nancy. 'Feminine and Fashionable: Regendering the Iconologies of Mary Frith's 'Notorious Reputation''. *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 31, No. 2 (2005): 211-258.

Bushnell, Rebecca. 'Effeminacy in Early Modern England'. In *Reconsidering the Renaissance*, edited by Mario Di Cesare, 339-354. Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1992.

Burke, Peter. *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Burnett, Mark. 'Fill Gut and Pinch Belly' Writing Famine in the English Renaissance'. *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 21, No. 1 (1995): 21-44.

Butler, Judith. 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory'. *Theatre Journal* 40, No. 4 (1988): 519-531.

Campbell, Stephen. ‘Eros in the Flesh: Petrarchan Desire, the Embodied Eros, and Male Beauty in Italian Art 1500-1540’. *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 35, No. 3 (2005): 629-662.

Campo, Robert. ‘Mannerist Conflict and the ‘Paragone’ in Ronsard's ‘Temple de Messeigneurs’’. *L'Esprit Créateur* 33, No. 3 (1993): 9-19.

Capern, Amanda. *The Historical Study of Women: England 1500-1700*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Caporicci, Camilla. ‘‘Your Painted Counterfeit’: The Paragone between Portraits and Sonnets in Shakespeare’s Work’. *Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare* 33 (2015): URL: http://journals.openedition.org/shakespeare/3526.

Carney, Jo Eldridge. ‘‘Honoured Hippolyta, Most Dreaded Amazonian’: The Amazon Queen in the Works of Shakespeare and Fletcher’. In ‘*High and Mighty Queens’ of Early Modern England: Realities and Representations*, edited by Carole Levin, Jo Eldridge Carney, Debra Barrett-Graves, 117-132. Basingstoke: Plagrave Macmillan, 2003.

Carter, Sarah. ‘‘Not...Perfect boy nor perfect wench’; Ovid’s Hermaphroditus and the Early Modern Hermaphrodite’. In *The Survival of Myth: Innovation, Singularity and Alterity*, edited by Paul Hardwick and David Kennedy, 90-109. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.

Carter, Sarah. *Ovidian Myth and Sexual Deviance in Early Modern English Literature*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Carthy, Ita Mac. ‘Grace and the ‘reach of art’ in Castiglione and Raphael’. *Word & Image* 25, No. 1 (2009): 33-45.

Cave, Terence. *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979.

Chamberlin, John. *Medieval Arts Doctrines on Ambiguity and Their Places in Langland's Poetics*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000.

Chastel, André. 'French Renaissance Art in a European Context'. *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 12, No. 4 (1981): 77-103.

Chastel, André. 'Le système de la galerie'. *Revue de l'art* 16-17 (1972): 143-150.

Chastel, André. *The Crisis of the Renaissance, 1520-1600*. Neuchatel: Skira, 1968.

Chess, Simone, Colby Gordon, Will Fisher ed. *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, *Special Issue: Early Modern Trans Studies* 19, No. 4 (2019): 1-308.

Chou, Emeline Sallé de. 'La Porte Dorée du château de Fontainebleau: nouvelles interprétatives de deux fresques peintes par Francesco Primaticcio'. *Seizième Siècle* 12 (2016): 113-123.

Clarke, John. *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.C.–A.D. 250*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007.

Clark, Stuart. 'Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft'. *Past & Present* 87 (1980): 98-127.

Clark, Stuart. *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Clegg, Cyndia. 'Checking the Father: Anxious Paternity and Jacobean Press Censorship'. In *Printing and Parenting in Early Modern England* 2e, edited by Douglas Brooks, 291-302. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016.

Coffey, John and Paul Lim. 'Introduction'. In *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism*, edited by John Coffey and Paul Lim, 1-16. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Cole, Michael. *Cellini and the Principles of Sculpture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Cole, Michael. 'The Figura Sforzata: Modelling, Power and the Mannerist Body'. *Art History* 24, No. 4 (2001): 520-551.

Cole, Michael. *Leonardo, Michelangelo, and the Art of the Figure*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014.

Colie, Rosalie. *Paradoxica Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.

Condren, Conal. 'The Study of Past Humour: Historicity and the Limits of Method'. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Humour, History, and Methodology*, edited by Daniel Derrin and Hannah Burrows, 19-42. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

Coonin, Victor. 'Beyond the Binary: Michelangelo, Tommaso de' Cavalieri, and a Drawing at Windsor Castle'. *Artibus et Historiae* 78 (2008): 254-266.

Cooper, Tarnya. 'Predestined Lives? Portraiture and Religious Belief in England and Wales, 1560-1620'. In *Art Re-formed: Re-assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts*, edited by Tara Hamling and Williams, 49-63. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007.

Cooper, Tarnya, ed. *Searching for Shakespeare*. London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 2006.

Cordellier, Dominique. 'La Porte Dorée à Fontainebleau'. In *Primatice: Maître de Fontainebleau*. Exh. Cat., edited by Dominique Cordellier, Bernadette Py, Ugo Bazzotti, and Marianne Grivel, 155-160. Paris: RMN, 2004.

Corry, Maya. *Masculinity and Spirituality in Renaissance Milan: the Role of the Beautiful Body in the Art of Leonardo da Vinci and the Leonardeschi*. PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2013.

Craven, Jennifer. '*Ut pictura poesis*: A New Reading of Raphael's Portrait of *La Fornarina* as a Petrarchan Allegory of Painting, Fame, and Desire'. *Word and Image*, 10, No. 4 (1994): 371-94.

Crawford, Julie. 'Fletcher's *The Tragedie of Bonduca* and the Anxieties of the Masculine Government of James I'. *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 39, No. 2 (1999): 357-381.

Crawford, Katharine. 'Love, Sodomy and Scandal: Controlling the Sexual Reputation of Henry III'. *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 12, No. 4 (2003): 513-542.

Crawford, Katharine. 'Sexuality: Of Man, Woman, and Beastly Business'. In *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Renaissance*, edited by Linda Kalof and William Bynum, 55-72. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014.

Crawford, Katharine. *The Sexual Culture of the French Renaissance.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Cressy, David. *Agnes Bowker's Cat: Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Cressy, David. 'Gender Trouble and Cross-Dressing in Early Modern England'. *Journal of British Studies* 35, No. 4 (1996): 438-465.

Croizat-Glazer, Yassana. 'The Role of Ancient Egypt in Masquerades at the Court of François Ier'. *Renaissance Quarterly* 66, No. 4 (2013): 1206-1249.

Cropper, Elizabeth. 'On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style'. *Art Bulletin* 58, No. 3 (1976): 374-394

Cropper, Elizabeth. 'The Place of Beauty in the High Renaissance and its Displacement in the History of Art'. In *Place and Displacement in the Renaissance*, edited by Alvin Vos, 159-206. New York, NY: State University of New York at Binghamton, 1995.

Cumming, Valerie. 'The Trousseau of Princess Elizabeth Stuart'. In *Collectanea Londiniensia: Studies in London Archaeology and History Presented to Ralph Merrifield*, edited by Joanna Bird, Hugh Chapman, John Clark, 315-328. London: London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, 1978.

Cunnington, Willett and Phillis Cunnington. *Handbook of English Costume in the Sixteenth Century*. London: Faber and Faber, 1954.

Curl, James. *The Egyptian Revival: Ancient Egypt as the Inspiration for Design Motifs in the West*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2005.

Currie, Elizabeth. 'Introduction'. In *A Cultural History of Dress and Fashion: In the Renaissance*, edited by Elizabeth Currie, 1-18. London: Bloomsbury, 2017.

Currie, Elizabeth. *Fashion and Masculinity in Renaissance Florence*. Bloomsbury: London, 2016.

Daston, Lorraine and Katharine Park. 'The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature: Sexual Ambiguity in Early Modern France'. *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly* 1, No. 4 (1995): 419-438.

Davis, David. *Seeing Faith, Printing Pictures: Religious Identity During the English Reformation*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Davis, Natalie. 'Women on Top: Symbolic Sexual Inversion and Political Disorder in Early Modern Europe'. In *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and* Society, edited by Barbara Babcock, 147-190. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978.

Dekker, Rudolf, and Lotte van der Pol. *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe*. London: Macmillan, 1988.

Dempsey, Charles. ''Et Nos Cedamus Amori': Observations on the Farnese Gallery'. *The Art Bulletin* 50, No. 4 (1968): 363-374.

Denny-Brown, Andrea. *Fashioning Change: The Trope of Clothing in High and Late-Medieval England.* Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2012.

DeVun, Leah. 'The Jesus Hermaphrodite: Science and Sex Difference in Premodern Europe'. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69, No. 2 (2008): 193-218.

Dickerman, Edmund and Anita Walker. 'The Choice of Hercules: Henry IV as Hero'. *The Historical Journal* 39, No. 2 (1996): 315-337.

Digangi, Mario. ''Male deformities' Narcissus and the Reformation of Courtly Manners in Cynthia's Revels'. In *Ovid and the Renaissance Body*, edited by Goran Stanivuković, 94-110. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

Dimier, Louis. *Le Primatice: peintre, sculpteur et architecte des rois de France*. Paris: E. Leroux, 1900.

Dixon, Laurinda. *The Dark Side of Genius: The Melancholic Persona in Art, c.1500-1700*. University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013.

Dollimore, Jonathan. 'Subjectivity, Sexuality and Transgression: The Jacobean Connection'. *Renaissance Drama* 17 (1986), 53–81.

Dooley, Mark. ‘Inversion, Metamorphosis, and Sexual Difference: Female Same-Sex Desire in Ovid and Lyly’. In *Ovid and the Renaissance Body*, edited by Goran Stanivuković, 59-76. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

Dowling, Linda. *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Drake, Nathan. *Shakespeare and his Times,* II. London: T. Cadell, 1817.

Dubrow, Heather. *Echoes of Desire: English Petrarchism and Its Counterdiscourses*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Duncan-Jones, Katherine. ‘Much Ado With Red and White; The Earliest Readers of Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis (1593)’. *Review of English Studies* 44, No. 176 (1993): 479–501.

Edmond, Mary. 'John de Critz, the Elder (d.1642), Serjeant-painter'. In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, XIV, 225-227. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Edmond, Mary. *Hilliard and Oliver: The Lives and Works of the Two Great Miniaturists*. London: Robert Hale, 1983.

Edmond, Mary. 'Limners and Picturemakers — New Light on the Lives of Miniaturists and Large-scale Portrait-painters Working in London in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries'. *Walpole Society* 47 (1978-80): 60-224.

Edmondson, Paul and Stanley Wells. *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Edwards, Mark. *Printing, Propaganda and Martin Luther*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994.

Elkins, James. ‘On Monstrously Ambiguous Paintings'. *History and Theory* 32, No. 3 (1993): 227-247.

Elkins, James. *Why Are Our Pictures Puzzles?: On the Modern Origins of Pictorial Complexity*. Abingdon: Routledge, 1999.

Ellis, Jim. ‘Imagining Heterosexuality in the Epyllia’. In *Ovid and the Renaissance Body*, edited by Goran Stanivuković, 38-58. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

Empson, William. *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, 3e. London: Chatto & Windus, 1956.

Ettlinger, Leopold. ‘Hercules Florentinus’. *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 16, No. 2 (1972): 119-142.

Fagnart, Laure and Isabelle Lecocq. ‘François Ier et les arts du Nord: Des relations à explorer et à approfondir encore’. In *Arts et Artistses du Nord à la Cour de Francis Ier*, edited by Laure Fagnart and Isabelle Lecocq, 7-14. Paris: Picard, 2017.

Falciani, Carlo. ‘Rosso at Fontainebleau and Pontormo at San Lorenzo: Michelangelo, Rhetoric and Court Painting’. In *Pontormo and Rosso Fiorentino: Diverging Paths of Mannerism*, edited by Carlo Falciani and Antonio Natali, 299-313. Florence: Mandragora, 2014.

Fantham, Elaine. ‘Sexual Comedy in Ovid's *Fasti*: Sources and Motivation’. *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 87 (1983): 185-216.

Faraday, Christina. ‘‘it seemeth to be the thing itsefe’: Directness and Intimacy in Nicholas Hilliard’s Portrait Miniatures’. *Études Épistémè*, No. 36 (2019): https://journals.openedition.org/episteme/5292.

Ferguson, Gary. *Queer (Re)Readings in the French Renaissance: Homosexuality, Gender, Culture*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.

Fermor, Sharon. 'Movement and Gender in Sixteenth-century Italian Painting'. In *The Body Images: The Human Form and Visual Culture since the* Renaissance, edited by Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon, 129-46. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Field, Jemma. 'Anna of Denmark: A Late Portrait by Paul van Somer (c.1577-1621)'. *The British Art Journal* XVIII, No. 2 (2017): 50-55.

Filipczak, Zirka. 'Portraits of women who 'do not keep strictly to the Masculine and Feminine Genders, as they call them'. In *Pokerfaced Flemish and Dutch Baroque Faces Unveiled*, edited by Katlijne Van der Stighelen and Hannelore Magnus and Bert Watteeuw, 229-248. Belgium, Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.

Fiorenza, Giancarlo. 'Paludanus, Alabaster, and the Erotic Appeal of Art in Antwerp'. *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 67, No. 1 (2017): 286-309.

Fiorenza, Giancarlo. 'Penelope's Web: Francesco Primaticcio's Epic Revision at Fontainebleau'. *Renaissance Quarterly* 59, No. 3 (2006): 795-827.

Fisher, Will. *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Fletcher, Anthony. 'The Male Body, Courtship and the Household in Early Modern England'. *History* 84, No. 275 (1999): 419-436.

Foister, Susan, Roy Ashok and Martin Wyld. *Making & Meaning Holbein's* Ambassadors. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997.

Foister, Susan. 'Sixteenth-Century English Portraiture and the Idea of the Classical'. In *Albion's Classicism: The Visual Arts in Britain, 1550-1660*, edited by Lucy Gent, 163-180. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995.

Fontaine, Marie Madeleine. 'Stories Beyond Words'. In *The French Renaissance in Prints from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France,* Exh. Cat., edited by Karen Jacobson, 57-77. Los Angeles, CA: Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, University of California, 1994.

Ford, Philip. 'Hercule et le thème solaire à Fontainebleau: la Porte dorée et Le Satyre de Ronsard'. In *Cité des hommes, cité de Dieu, Travaux sur la littérature de la Renaissance en l'honneur de Daniel Ménager*, edited by Jean Céard, Marie-Christine Gomez- Geraud, Michel Magnien, and François Rouget, 245-258. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2003.

Ford, Philip. 'The Symbiotic Muse: The Case of Neo-Latin and Vernacular Poetry in Renaissance France'. *Renæssanceforum* 6 (2010): 79-96.

Forster, Leonard. *The Icy Fire: Five Studies in European Petrarchism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Foster, Hal. 'The 'Primitive' Unconscious of Modern Art'. *October* 34 (1985): 45-70.

Fox, Cora. *Ovid and the Politics of Emotion in Elizabethan England*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Franklin, Alexandra. 'Making Sense of Broadside Ballad Illustrations in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries'. In *Studies in Ephemera: Text and Image in Eighteenth-Century Print*, edited by Kevin Murphy and Sally O'Driscoll, 169-194. Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2013.

Freedberg, David. *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Freud, Sigmund. *Leonardo Da Vinci: A Memory of His Childhood*. London: Taylor & Francis, 1999.

Frick, Carole Collier. 'Fashion and Adornment'. In *A Cultural History of Hair in the Renaissance*, edited by Edith Snook, 53-70. London: Bloomsbury, 2019.

Friedman, Alice. 'Inside/Out: Women, Domesticity, and the Pleasures of the City'. In *Material London, ca. 1600*, edited by Lena Cowen Orlin, 232-250. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.

Fumerton, Patricia. *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Frye, Susan. *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Frye, Susan. 'The Myth of Elizabeth at Tilbury'. *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 23, No. 1 (1992): 95-114.

Gajda, Alexandra. 'Debating War and Peace in Late Elizabethan England'. *The Historical Journal* 52, No. 4 (2009): 851-878.

Gamboni, Dario. *Potential Images; Ambiguity and Indeterminacy in Modern Art*. London: Reaktion Books, 2002.

Garas, Klara. 'Le tableau du Tintoret du Musée de Budapest et le cycle peint pour l'Empereur Rodolphe II'. *Bulletin du Musée hongrois des Beaux-Arts* 30 (1967): 29-48.

Garber, Marjorie. *Vested Interests: Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Garnett, David. 'The Sparrows of Hilton'. *Records of Huntingdonshire* 9 (1979): 3-5.

Gent, Lucy. *Picture and Poetry, 1560-1620: Relations between Literature and Visual Arts in the English Renaissance*. Leamington Spa: G.K. Hall and Company, 1981.

Gent, Lucy. 'Venus and Adonis: The Triumph of Rhetoric'. *Modern Language Review* 69 (1974): 721-29.

George, Mary and Frederic Stephens. *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, I. London: British Museum Press, 1870.

Gilbert, Ruth. *Early Modern Hermaphrodites: Sex and Other Stories*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Gilmont, Jean-François ed. *The Reformation and the Book*. Translated by Karin Maag. Aldershot: Routledge, 1998.

Godfrey, Richard. *Wenceslaus Hollar: A Bohemian Artist in England*, Exh. Cat. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994.

Goldberg, Jonathan. *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992.

Goldring, Elizabeth. *Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the World of Elizabethan Art: Painting and Patronage at the Court of Elizabeth I*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014.

Goldring, Elizabeth. 'Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I and the Earl of Leicester for Kenilworth'. *The Burlington Magazine* 147, No. 1231 (2005): 654-660.

Goldring, Elizabeth. ''So lively a portraiture of his miseries': Melancholy, Mourning and the Elizabethan Malady'. *The British Art Journal* 6, No. 2 (2005): 12-22.

Goldstein, Rosalie. *Milwaukee Art Museum Guide to the Permanent Collection*. Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Art Museum, 1986.

Gombrich, Ernst. *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. London: Phaidon Press, 1956.

Gombrich, Ernst. *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, 6e. London: Phaidon Press, 2002.

Gombrich, Ernst. *Symbolic Images: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*. London: Phaidon, 1975.

Gombrich, Ernst. *The Story of Art*. London: Phaidon Press, 1971.

Goodman-Soellner, Elise. 'Poetic Interpretations of the 'Lady at Her Toilette' Theme in Sixteenth-Century Painting'. *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 14, No. 4 (1983): 426-442.

Goulding, Richard. 'Wriothesley Portraits: Authentic and Reputed'. *Walpole Society*, 8 (1919-20): 17-94.

Gowland, Angus. 'The Problem of Early Modern Melancholy'. *Past & Present*, No. 191 (2006): 77-120.

Green, Janet. ''I My Self': Queen Elizabeth I's Oration at Tilbury Camp'. *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28, No. 2 (1997): 421-445.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Will in the World*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2004.

Griffith, Elizabeth and Jane Whittle. *Consumption and Gender in the Early Seventeenth-Century Household: The World of Alice Le Strange*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Griffiths, Anthony. *The Print in Stuart Britain: 1603-1689*. London: British Museum Press, 1998.

Hall, James. *The Sinister Side: How left-hand Symbolism Shaped Western Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Halleux, Elisa de. 'Androgynie, Erotisme et Ambiguïté de l'image picturale à la renaissance: un example paradigmatique'. *Seizième Siècle* 7 (2011): 37-47.

Halleux, Elisa de. 'L'androgynie d'Hercule, entre dérision et glorification du prince'. In *Le Miroir et L'Espace du Prince dans l'art Italien de la Renaissance*, edited by Philip Morel, 145-164. Tours: Presse Universitaires de Rennes, 2012.

Halleux, Elisa de. 'Poiesis et androgynie: ambiguïté, activité imageante et sens de l'oeuvre dans Angélique et Medor de Bartholomeus Spranger'. In *Poiesis: Uber das Tun in der Kunst*, edited by Andreas Beyer and Dario Gamboni, 109-122. Berlin and Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2014.

Hallowell, Robert. 'Ronsard and the Gallic Hercules Myth'. *Studies in the Renaissance* 9 (1962): 242-255.

Halperin, David. *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Hamilton, Tom. *Pierre de L'Estoile and his World in the Wars of Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Hanisch, Gertrude. *Love Elegies of the Renaissance: Marot, Louise Labe and Ronsard*. Saratoga: Anma Libri, 1979.

Harding, Giulia and Chris Stamatakis. 'Shakespeare, Florio, and Love's Labour's Lost'. In *Shakespeare, Italy, and Transnational Exchange: Early Modern to Present,* edited by Enza De Francisci and Chris Stamatakis, 27-39. Abingdon: Routledge, 2017.

Hatfield, Rab. 'Five Early Renaissance Portraits'. *Art Bulletin* 47, No. 3 (1965): 315-334.

Hearn, Karen. *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England 1530-1630*, Exh. Cat. London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1995.

Hecht, Peter. 'The *paragone* Debate: Ten Illustrations and a Comment'. *Simiolus* 14, No. 2 (1984): 125-136.

Heinemann, Margot. 'Rebel Lords, Popular Playwrights, and Political Culture: Notes on the Jacobean Patronage of the Earl of Southampton'. *The Yearbook of English Studies* 21 (1991): 63-86.

Herdman, Emma. 'Folie and Salmacis, 'Labe's Rewriting of Ovid'. *The Modern Language Review* 108, No. 3 (2013): 782-801.

Herford, C.H., Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson ed. *Ben Jonson*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950.

Heywood, Maria. *Stuart Style: Monarchy, Dress and the Scottish Male Elite*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020.

Hila, Marina. 'Dishonourable Peace: Fletcher and Massinger's The False One and Jacobean Foreign Policy'/ *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 72, No. 1 (2007): 21-30.

Homes, Megan. 'Ex-votos: Materiality, Memory, and Cult'. In *The Idol in the Age of Art: Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World*, edited by Michael Cole and Rebecca Zorach, 159-181. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.

Honan, Park. *Shakespeare: A Life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

Hooglviet, Margriet. 'Princely Culture and Catherine de Medicis'. In *Princes and Princely Culture 1450-1650*, I, edited by Martin Gosman, Alasdair Macdonald and Arjo Vanderjagt, 103-130. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Howard, Jean. 'Crossdressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39 (1988), 418–40.

Howard, Jean. 'The Cultural Construction of the Self in the Renaissance'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 34, No. 3 (1983): 378–81.

Howe, Sarah. ''Pregnant image of life': Visual Art and Representation in 'Arcadia' and 'The Faerie Queene''. *The Cambridge Quarterly* 34, No. 1 (2005): 33-53.

Howlett, Sophia. *Marsilio Ficino and His World*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

Huggett, Jane. 'Rural Costume in Elizabethan Essex: A Study Based on the Evidence from Wills'. *Costume* 33, No. 1 (1999): 74-88.

Hughes, Ann. *Gender and the English Revolution*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2012.

Hughes, Heather. ''Masqued' Identity at the Stuart Court: Isaac Oliver's Masquing Portraits of Anne of Denmark'. In *Fashioning Opera and Musical Theatre: Stage Costumes from the Late Renaissance to 1900*, edited by Valeria De Lucca, 69-83. Venice: Fondazione Giorgio Cini, 2014.

Hull, Suzanne. *Chaste, Silent & Obedient: English Books for Women, 1475-1640*. San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1982.

Jacobs, Fredrika. 'Aretino and Michelangelo, Dolce and Titian: Femmina, Masculo, Grazia'. *The Art Bulletin* 82, No. 1 (2000): 51-67.

Jacobson, Karen ed., *The French Renaissance in Prints from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France,* Exh. Cat. Los Angeles, CA: Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, University of California, 1994.

Jaffé, Michael. *The Devonshire Collection of Italian Drawings: Bolognese and Emilian Schools*, III. London: Umberto Allemandi & Co, 1994.

James, Heather. 'Ovid and the Question of Politics in Early Modern England'. *English Literary History* 70, No. 2 (2003): 343-373.

James, Susan. *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art, 1485-1603: Women as Consumers, Patrons and Painters*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016.

Jansson, Maija. 'The Hat is No Expression of Honor'. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133, No. 1 (1989): 26-34.

Jardine, Lisa. *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare*, 2e. London: Harvester, 1989.

Jenkins, Catherine. 'Les graveurs de Primatice au XVIe siècle à Fontainebleau', In *Primatice: Maître de Fontainebleau*, edited by Dominique Cordellier et al., 38-44. Paris: RMN, 2004.

Jenkins, Catherine. *Prints at the Court of Fontainebleau, c.1542-47*, I-II. Ouderkerk aan den Ijssel: Sound and Vision Publishers, 2017.

Jenkins, Catherine. *The Fontainebleau School of Printmakers*. PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2003.

Jenkyns, Richard. *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Joannides, Paul. 'À propos d'une Sanguine nouvellement attribuée a Michel-Ange. La Conaissance des Dessins de l'Artiste en France au XVIe siècle'. *Revue du Louvre: La Revue des Musées de France* 3 (1994): 15-29.

Joannides, Paul. *Michel-Ange, élèves et copistes*, Exh. Cat. Paris: RMN, 2003.

Joannides, Paul. 'Michelangelo and the Medici Garden'. In *La Toscana al tempo di Lorenzo il magnifico: Politicia, economia, cultura, arte*, I, edited by Riccardo Fubini, 23-36. Pisa: Pacini, 1996.

Joannides, Paul. 'Michelangelo's Lost Hercules'. *The Burlington Magazine* 119, No. 893 (1977):550-555.

Johnson, Geraldine. 'Touch, Tactility, and the Reception of Sculpture in Early Modern Italy'. In *A Companion to Art Theory*, edited by Paul Smith and Carolyn Wilde, 61-74. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

Johnson, William McAllister. 'On Some Neglected Usages of Renaissance Diplomatic Correspondance'. *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 79 (1972): 51-54.

Jones, Ann and Peter Stallybrass. 'Fetishizing Gender: Constructing the Hermaphrodite in Renaissance Europe'. In *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, edited by Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub, 80-111. New York, NY: Routledge, 1991.

Jones, Malcolm. 'Monsters of Misogyny: Bigorne and Chicheface—Suite et fin?'. In *Marvels, Monsters, and Miracles: Studies in the Medieval and Early Modern Imaginations*, edited by

Timothy Jones and David Sprunger, 203-222. Michigan, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002.

Jones, Malcolm. *The Print in Early Modern England: An Historical Oversight*. London and New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.

Jordan, Constance. *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Kaaber, Lars. *Hamlet's Age and the Earl of Southampton*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017.

Kampen, Natalie. 'Omphale and the Instability of Gender'. In *Sexuality in Ancient Art*, edited by Natalie Kampen, 233-246. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Keizer, Joost. *Leonardo's Paradox: Word and Image in the Making of Renaissance Culture*. London: Reaktion Books, 2019.

Kenaan, Hagi. ''Tracing Shadows': Reflections of the Origin of Painting'. In *Pictorial Languages and Their Meanings, Liber Amicorum in Honor of Nurith Kenaan-Kedar*, edited by Christine Verzár, Gil Fishhof, 17-28. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Publishing, 2006.

Kenny, Neil. *Curiosity in Early Modern Europe: World Histories*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998.

King, David. 'Who was Holbein's Lady with a Squirrel and a Starling?'. *Apollo Magazine* 159, No. 507 (1 May 2004). *Gale Academic OneFile*: https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A116733377/AONE?u=cambuni&sid=AONE&xid=a068d0cc.

King, John. 'Queen Elizabeth I: Representations of the Virgin Queen'. *Renaissance Quarterly* 43, No. 1 (1990): 30-74.

Kingsley-Smith, Jane. *Cupid in Early Modern Literature and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Klibansky, Raymond, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl. *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art*. London: Nelson, 1964.

Knecht, Robert. *Francis I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Knecht, Robert. *Hero or Tyrant? Henry III, King of France, 1574-89*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014.

Knecht, Robert. *The French Renaissance Court, 1438-1589*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008.

Koerner, Joseph. *Bosch and Bruegel: From Enemy Painting to Everyday Life*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016.

Koos, Marianne. 'Dosso's Ambiguity'. In *Renaissance Love: Eros, Passion, and Friendship in Italian Art around 1500*, edited by Jeanette Kohl, Marianne Koos, and Adrian Randolph, 45-66. Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2014.

Krieger, Verena. 'Modes of Aesthetic Ambiguity in Contemporary Art: Conceptualizing Ambiguity in Art History'. In *Ambiguity in Contemporary Art and Theory*, edited by Frauke Berndt and Lutz Koepnick, 59-106.Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2018.

Kritzman, Lawrence. *The Rhetoric of Sexuality and the Literature of the French Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Kuchta, David. *The Three-piece Suit and Modern Masculinity: England, 1550-1850*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002.

Kumaran, Arul. 'Robert Greene's Martinist Transformation in 1590'. *Studies in Philology* 103 (2006): 243–263.

Kunzle, David. 'World Upside Down: The Iconography of a European Broadsheet'. In *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and* Society, edited by Barbara Babcock, 39-94. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978.

Lafont, Agnes. 'Political Uses of Erotic Power in an Elizabethan Mythological Programme: Dangerous Interactions with Diana in Hardwick Hall'. In *Shakespeare's Erotic Mythology and Ovidian Renaissance Culture*, edited by Agnes Lafont, 41-57. London: Routledge, 2013.

Lafont, Agnes ed., *Shakespeare's Erotic Mythology and Ovidian Renaissance Culture*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2013.

Lake, Peter and Michael Quester. *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002.

Laqueur, Thomas. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Laroque, François. 'Erotic Fancy/Fantasy in Venus and Adonis, A Midsummer Night's Dream and Antony and Cleopatra'. In *Shakespeare's Erotic Mythology*, ed. Agnes Lafont, 61-75. Farnham: Ashgate, 2013.

Lecercle, François. *La Chimère de Zeuxis: Portrait poétique et portrait peint en France et en Italie à la Renaissance*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1987.

Lee, Sidney. *A Life of William Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Lee, Sidney. 'Shakespeare and the Earl of Southampton'. *The Cornhill Magazine* 4, No. 22 (1898): 482-495.

Leinwand, Theodore. *The City Staged: Jacobean Comedy, 1603-13*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1986.

Levine, Laura. 'Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization from 1579 to 1642'. *Criticism* 28 (1986): 121–43.

Liedtke, Walter. *The Milkmaid by Johannes Vermeer*. New York, NY: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2009.

Lindheim, Sara. 'Hercules Cross-Dressed, Hercules Undressed: Unmasking the Construction of the Propertian 'Amator' in Elegy 4.9'. *The American Journal of Philology* 119, No. 1 (1998): 43-66.

Lindley, David. *The Trials of Frances Howard: Fact and Fiction in the Court of King James*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Lohff, Johanna Beate. 'Antonio Tempesta's Paintings on Stone and the Development of a Genre in 17th Century Italy'. In *Almost Eternal*, 180-219.

Long, Kathleen. *Hermaphrodites in Renaissance Europe*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.

Loraux, Nicole. 'Herakles: The Super-Male and the Feminine'. In *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World,* edited by David Halperin, John Winkler, and Froma Zeitlin, 21-52. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Lublin, Robert. *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage: Visual Codes of Representation in Early Modern Theatre and Culture.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

Luborsky, Ruth. 'Woodcuts in Tudor Books: Clarifying their Documentation'. *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 86, No. 1 (1992): 67-81.

Lucas, Valerie. ''Hic Mulier': The Female Transvestite in Early Modern England'. *Renaissance and Reformation*, *New Series* 12, No. 1 (1988): 65-84.

Lucie-Smith, Edward. *Concise History of French Painting.* London: Thames and Hudson, 1971.

Lyne, Raphael. *Ovid's Changing Worlds: English Metamorphoses 1567-1632*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Lynn, Eleri. *Tudor Fashion*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017.

Maclean, Ian. *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

MacLeod, Catherine. 'A Thing Apart: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portrait Miniatures'. In *Elizabethan Treasures: Miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver*, edited by Catherine MacLeod, 6-19. London: National Portrait Gallery, 2019.

Mann, Jenny. 'How to Look at a Hermaphrodite in Early Modern England'. *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 46, No. 1, (2006): 67-91.

Mann, Judith. *Paintings on Stone: Science and the Sacred, 1530-1800.* Munich: Hirmer Publishers, 2020,

Mansfield, Lisa. *Representations of Renaissance Monarchy: Francis I and the Image-makers*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.

Mansfield, Lisa. 'The Royal Art of Conjugal Discord: A Satirical Double Portrait of Francis I and Eleanor of Austria'. In *Practices of Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, edited by Megan Cassidy-Welch and Peter Sherlock, 117-135. Turnhout: Brepols, 2008.

Marr, Alexander. 'An Early *Impresa* Miniature: *Man in an Armillary Sphere* (1569)'. *British Art Studies* 17 (2019): https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-17/amarr

Marr, Alexander. ‘Ingenuity and Discernment in The Cabinet of Cornelis van der Geest (1628). *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, 69, No. 1 (2020): 106-145.

Marr, Alexander. ‘Pregnant Wit: *Ingegno* in Renaissance England’. *British Art Studies* 1 (2015): https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-01/amarr

Marr, Alexander. ‘Visual Arts: Introduction’. In *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare*, edited by Bruce Smith, 375-387. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Marr, Alexander, Raphaële Garrod, Jose Ramon Marcaida and Richard Oosterhoff. *Logodaedalus: Word Histories of Ingenuity in Early Modern Europe.* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018.

Marsden, Jonathan and Jane Bassett. ‘Cellini's Other Satyr for the Porte Dorée at Fontainebleau’. *The Burlington Magazine* 145, No. 1205 (2003): 552-563.

Marsengill, Katherine. ‘Identity Politics in Renaissance France: Cellini’s Nymph of Fontainebleau’. *Athanor* 19 (2018): 35-41.

Marsh, Christopher. ‘A Woodcut and Its Wanderings in Seventeenth-Century England’. *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 79, No. 2 (2016): 245-262.

Martindale, Charles and Colin Burrow. ‘‘Clapham's ‘Narcissus’: A Pre-Text for Shakespeare's ‘Venus and Adonis’? Text, Translation, and Commentary’. *English Literary Renaissance* 22, No. 2 (1992): 147–176.

Martines, Lauro. *Strong Words: Writing and Social Strain in the Italian Renaissance*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

Matz, Robert. ‘The Scandals of Shakespeare’s Sonnets’. *English Literary History* 77, No. 2 (2010): 477-510.

McGowan, Margaret. *Dance in the Renaissance: European Fashion, French Obsession*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008.

McGowan, Margaret. *Ideal Forms in the Age of Ronsard*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985.

McGowan, Margaret. 'Ronsard and the Visual Arts: A Study of Poetic Creativity'. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 78 (2015): 173- 205.

McManus, Clare. 'When Is a Woman Not a Woman? Or, Jacobean Fantasies of Female Performance (1606–1611)'. *Modern Philology* 105, No. 3 (2008): 437-474.

Melion, Walter. 'Vivae dixisses virginis ora: The Discourse of Color in Hendrick Goltzius's Pygmalion and the Ivory Statue'. *Word & Image* 17, No. 1-2 (2001): 153-176.

Merback, Mitchell. *Perfection's Therapy: An Essay on Albrecht Durer's Melencolia I*. New York, NY: Zone Books, 2018.

Meyer, Barbara. 'Marguerite de Navarre and the Androgynous Portrait of François Ier'. *Renaissance Quarterly* 48, No. 2 (1995): 287-325.

Miller, Nancy. 'The Mistress in the Masterpiece'. In *The Poetics of Gender*, edited by Nancy Miller, 19-41. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1986.

Mirkin, Ronnie. 'The Portrait of Elizabeth Cary in the Ashmolean Museum: 'Cross Dressing' in the English Renaissance'. In *Renaissance Theatre: Texts, Performance, Design*: *English and Italian Theatre*, I, edited by Christopher Cairns, 77-106. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999.

Moffitt, John. 'A Hidden Sphinx by Agnolo Bronzino, 'ex tabula Cebetis Thebani''. *Renaissance Quarterly* 46 (1993): 277–30.

Montclos, Jean-Marie Pérouse and Georges Fessy. *Fontainebleau*. London: Scala Books, 1998.

Montrose, Louis. 'Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender, and the Picturing of Elizabeth I'. *Representations* 68 (1999): 108-161.

Montrose, Louis. *The Subject of Elizabeth: Authority, Gender, and Representation*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Monteyne, Joseph. 'Enveloping Objects: Allegory and Commodity Fetish in Wenceslaus Hollar's Personifications of the Seasons and Fashion Still Lifes'. *Art History* 29, No. 3 (2006): 414-443.

Moss, Daniel. ''The Second Master of Love': George Chapman and the Shadow of Ovid'. *Modern Philology* 111, No. 3 (2014): 457-484.

Mozo, Ana González. 'Painted Stone: Idea and Practice in Italian Renaissance'. In *Almost Eternal*, 74-102.

Murphy, Patrick. 'Wriothesley's Resistance: Wardship Practices and Ovidian Narratives in Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis'. In *Venus and Adonis: Critical Essays*, edited by Philip Kolin, 323-40. New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 1997.

Nagel, Alexander and Lorenzo Pericolo, ed. *Subject as Aporia in Early Modern Art*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010.

Nash, Susie. 'Erwin Panofsky's Early Netherlandish Painting. Its Origins and Character'. In *The Books that Shaped Art History*, edited by Richard Shone and John-Paul Stonard, 88-101. London: Thames and Hudson, 2013.

Newman, Karen. 'City Talk: Women and Commodification in Jonson's Epicoene'. *English Literary History* 56, No. 3 (1989): 503-518.

Nichols, John. *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities, of King James the First, His Royal Consort, Family and Court*, 3. London: J.B. Nichols, 1828.

Nichols, Tom. *Giorgione's Ambiguity*. London: Reaktion Books, 2020.

North, Mary. *Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2003.

North, Mary. 'Early Modern Anonymity'. *Oxford Handbooks Online* (November 2015): 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.013.12

Nuechterlein, Jeanne. *Translating Nature into Art: Holbein, the Reformation, and Renaissance Rhetoric*. Pennsylvania, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011.

Nygren, Christopher. 'Stylizing Eros: Narrative Ambiguity and the Discourse of the Desire in Titian's so-called Salome'. In *Renaissance Love: Eros, Passion, and Friendship in Italian Art around 1500*, edited by Jeanette Kohl, Marianne Koos, and Adrian Randolph, 22-44. Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2014.

Nygren, Christopher. 'The Matter of Similitude: Stone Paintings and the limits of Representation in Cavaliere d'Arpino's Perseus and Andromeda and Jacques Stella's Jacob's Dream'. In *Almost Eternal*, 131-160.

Oakley, Ann. *Sex, Gender and Society*. Farnham: Ashgate, 1972.

O'Brien, John. 'Betwixt and Between: Hermaphroditism and Masculinity'. In *Masculinities in Sixteenth-century France: Proceedings, of the Eighth Cambridge French Renaissance Colloquium, 5-7 July 2003*, edited by Philip Ford, 127-146. Cambridge: Cambridge French Colloquia, 2006.

Occhipinti, Carmelo. *L'arte in Italia e in Europa nel secondo Cinquecento*. Torino: Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi Mappe Arte, 2012.

Orgel, Stephen. *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Orgel, Stephen. 'The Subtexts of The Roaring Girl'. In *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, edited by Susan Zimmerman, 12-26. London: Routledge, 1992.

Ossa-Richardson, Anthony. *A History of Ambiguity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019.

Ossa-Richardson, Anthony. ''Ovid and the 'free play with signs' in Thomas Nashe's 'The Unfortunate Traveller''. *The Modern Language Review* 101, No. 4 (2006): 945-956.

Pächt, Otto. 'Panofsky's 'Early Netherlandish Painting'-I'. *The Burlington Magazine* 98, No. 637 (1956): 110-16.

Pächt, Otto. 'Panofsky's 'Early Netherlandish Painting'-II', *The Burlington Magazine* 98, No. 641 (1956): 267-79.

Panofsky, Erwin. *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*, 2 vols. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953.

Panofsky Erwin and Dora Panofsky. *Pandora's Box: The Changing Aspects of a Mythical Symbol*. London: Pantheon Books, 1956.

Panofsky, Erwin and Dora Panofsky. 'The iconography of the Galerie François Ier at Fontainebleau'. *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 1076 (1958): 113-190.

Pardo, Mary. ‘Artifice as Seduction in Titian’. In *Sexuality and Gender in Modern Europe: Institutions, Texts, Images*, edited by James Turner, 55-89. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Park, Katharine and Robert Nye. ‘Destiny is Anatomy, Essay Review of Thomas Laqueur’s Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud’, *The New Republic* (18 February, 1991): 53-57.

Parker, Patricia. ‘Gender Ideology, Gender Change: The Case of Marie Germain’. *Critical Inquiry* 19, No. 2 (1993): 337-364.

Parshall, Peter. ‘Some Visual Paradoxes in Northern Renaissance Art’. *Wascana Review* 9, No. 1, (1974): 97-104.

Partner, Jane. *Vision and Poetry in Early Modern England*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Pater, Walter. *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry, The 1895 Text*. Edited by Donald Hill. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980.

Peck, Linda. *Consuming Splendour: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Pedretti, Carlo. ‘The ‘Angel in the Flesh’. *Academia Leonardi Vinci: Journal of Leonardo Studies and Bibliography of Vinciana* 4 (1991): 24-48.

Pelling, Margaret. ‘‘The Very Head and Front of My Offending’: Beards, Portraiture and Self-Presentation in Early Modern England’. In *New Perspectives on the History of Facial Hair: Framing the Face*, edited by Jennifer Evans and Alan Withey, 33-68. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Pericolo, Lorenzo. ‘‘Donna bella e crudele’: Michelangelo’s ‘Divine Heads’ in Light of the Rime’. *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes Florenz,* 59, No. 2 (2017): 202-233.

Pfisterer, Ulrich. ‘Akt und Ambiguität: 1552, 1559, 1640’. In *Erosionen der Rhetorik? Strategien der Ambiguität in den Künsten der Frühen Neuzeit*, edited by Valeska von Rosen, 29-60. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2012.

Pierce, Helen. *Unseemly Pictures: Graphic Satire and Politics in Early Modern England*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008.

Plazzotta, Carol. ‘Bronzino’s Laura’. *Burlington Magazine*, 140, No. 1141, (1998): 251-63.

Poirier, Guy. *L’homosexualité dans l’imaginaire de la Renaissance*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1996.

Poitevin, Kim. ‘Inventing Whiteness: Cosmetics, Race, and Women in Early Modern England’. *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 11, No. 1 (2011): 59-89.

Pope-Hennessy, John. ‘A Bronze Satyr by Cellini’. *The Burlington Magazine*, 124, No. 952 (1982): 394-412.

Pope-Hennessy, John. *Cellini*. New York, NY: Abbeville Press, 1985.

Pope-Hennessy, John. ‘Donatello’s Bronze David’. In *Scritti di storia dell’arte in onore di Federico Zeri*, edited by Mauro Natalee, 122-127. Milan: Electa, 1984.

Pope-Hennessy, John. *The Portrait in the Renaissance*. London: Phaidon Press, 1966.

Pugliese, Olga Zorzi. ‘The French Factor in Castiglione’s The Book of the Courtier (Il libro del cortegiano): From the Manuscript Drafts to the Printed Edition’. *Renaissance and Reform*, *New Series* 27, No. 2 (2003): 23-40.

Purkiss, Dianne. *Literature, Gender and Politics During the English Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Quainton, Malcolm. *Ronsard's Ordered Chaos: Visions of Flux and Stability in the Poetry of Pierre de Ronsard*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980.

Quin, Sally. 'Describing the Female Sculptor in Early Modern Italy: An Analysis of the *vita* of Properzia de' Rossi in Giorgio Vasari's *Lives*'. *Gender & History* 24, No. 1: 134-149.

Rae, Caroline and Aviva Burnstock. 'A Technical Study of Portraits of King James VI and I attributed to John de Critz the Elder (d.1642): Artist, Workshop and Copies'. In *European Paintings 15th-18th Century: Copying, Replicating and Emulating*, edited by Erma Hermens, 58-66. Copenhagen: Archetype Publications in association with CATS, 2014, 58-66.

Ramakers, Bart. 'Art and Artistry in Lucas de Heere'. *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 59 (2009): 164–192.

Randolph, Adrian. *Engaging Symbols: Gender, Politics and Public Art in Fifteenth-Century Florence*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002.

Ravelhofer, Barbara. *The Early Stuart Masque: Dance, Costume, and Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Raymond, Joad. *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Regan, Mariann. 'The Evolution of the Poet in Ronsard's Sonnet Sequences'. *Mosaic* 11, No. 1 (1977): 127-149.

Rèpaci-Courtois, Gabriella. 'Michel-Ange et les écrivains français la Renaissance: grâce et disgrâce d'un itinéraire critique'. *Nouvelle Revue du XVIe Siècle* 8 (1990): 63-81.

Reynolds, Anna. *In Fine Style: The Art of Tudor and Stuart Fashion*, Exh. Cat. London: Royal Collection Trust, 2013.

Ribeiro, Aileen. *Dress and Morality*. London: Holmes and Meier, 1986.

Richards, Jennifer. ''A wanton trade of living'? Rhetoric, Effeminacy, and the Early Modern Courtier'. *Criticism* 42, No. 2 (2000): 185-206.

Richards, Judith. ''To Promote a Woman to Beare Rule': Talking of Queens in Mid-Tudor England'. *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28, No. 1 (1997): 101-121.

Ridgeway, Cecilia and Shelley Correll. 'Unpacking the Gender System: A Theoretical Perspective on Gender Beliefs and Social Relations'. *Gender and Society* 18, No. 4 (2004): 510-531.

Riding, Alan. 'Not Just Another Pretty Face'. *New York Times* (6 May 2002): https://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/06/arts/not-just-another-pretty-face-is-deceptive-portrait-tied-to-shakespeare.html

Rimell, Victoria. *Ovid's Lovers: Desire, Difference, and the Poetic Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Robert-Nicoud, Vincent. *The World Upside Down in 16th-Century French Literature and Visual Culture*. Leiden: Brill, 2018.

Rocke, Michael. *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Rogers, Mary. 'The Decorum of Women's Beauty: Trissino, Firenzuola, Luigini, and the Representation of Women in Sixteenth-Century Painting'. *Renaissance Studies* 2, No. 1, (1988): 47-88.

Rosand, David. 'The Portrait, the Courtier, and Death'. In *Castiglione: The Ideal and the Real in Renaissance Culture*, edited by David Rosand and Robert Hanning, 97-102. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983.

Rosen, Valeska von. *Caravaggio und die Grenzen des Darstellbaren: Ambiguität, Ironie und Performativität in der Malerei um* 1600. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009.

Rosen, Valeska von. 'Erosionen der Rhetorik? Strategien der Ambiguität in den bildenden Künsten, Dichtung und Musik. Einleitende Überlegunden'. In *Erosionen der Rhetorik? Strategien der Ambiguität in den Künsten der Frühen Neuzeit*, edited by Valeska von Rosen,1-28. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2012.

Rosenblum, Robert. 'The Origin of Painting: A Problem in the Iconography of romantic Classicism'. *The Art Bulletin* 39, No. 4 (1957): 279-290.

Rosenthal, Lisa. *Gender, Politics, and Allegory in the Art of Rubens*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005.

Rothstein, Bret. 'Making Trouble: Strange Wooden Objects and the Pursuit of Difficulty ca. 1596'. *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 13, No. 1 (2013): 96-129.

Rothstein, Bret. 'The Problem with Looking at Pieter Bruegel's Elck'. *Art History* 26, No. 2 (2003): 143-173.

Rothstein, Bret. 'Visual Difficulty as a Cultural System'. *RES* 65/66 (2014/2015): 332-347.

Rothstein, Marian. 'Gargantua: Agape, Androgyny, and the Abbaye de Thélème'. *French Forum* 26, No. 1 (2001): 1-19

Rothstein, Marian. *The Androgyne in Early Modern France: Contextualising the Power of Gender*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Rothstein, Marian. ‘Mutations of the Androgyne: Its Functions in Early Modern French Literature’. *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34, No. 2 (2003): 409-437.

Rowe, Nicholas. *Some Account of the Life of Mr. William Shakespear*. London: Jacob Tonson, 1709.

Rowland, Alison. ‘To Wear a Virgin's Wreath: Gender and Problems of Conformity in Early Modern Germany’. *European Review of History* 1, No. 2 (1994): 227-232.

Rowland, Richard. *Killing Hercules: Deianira and the Politics of Domestic Violence, from Sophocles to the War on Terror*. London: Routledge, 2017.

Rowse, A.L. *Shakespeare’s Southampton: Patron of Virginia*. London: Macmillan, 1965.

Rublack, Ulinka. *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Ruggiero, Guido. *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Rustici, Craig. ‘The Smoking Girl: Tobacco and the Representations of Mary Frith’. *Studies in Philology* 96, No. 2 (1999): 159-179.

Schechter, Laua. ‘‘As liuing now, equald theyr vertues then’: Early Modern Allusions, Boudicca, and the Failure of Monologic Historiographies’. *ESC: English Studies in Canada* 39, No. 2-3 (2013): 181–215.

Schiesari, Juliana. *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992.

Schleiner, Winifried. ‘Early Modern Controversies about the One-Sex Model’. *Renaissance Quarterly* 53, No. 1 (2000): 180-191.

Schober, Sarah-Maria. 'Hermaphrodites in Basel: Figures of Ambiguity and the Early Modern Physician'. In *Site of Mediation: Connected Histories of Places, Processes and Objects in Europe and Beyond, 1450-1650*, edited by Susanna Burghartz, Lucas Burkart, Christine Gottler, 299-327. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

Scholar, Richard. *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe: Encounters with a Certain Something*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Schwarz, Jerome. 'Scatology and Eschatology in Gargantua's Androgyne Device'. *Etudes Rabelaisiennes* 14 (1977): 265-275.

Schwarz, Kathryn. *Tough Love: Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

Schwoerer, Louis. *Gun Culture in Early Modern England*. London: University of Virginia Press, 2016.

Scott, Joan. 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis'. *The American Historical Review* 91, No. 5 (1986): 1053- 1075.

Scribner, Robert. *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

Scriber, Robert. *Religion and Culture in Germany (1400-1800*), edited by Lyndal Roper. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

Sedgwick, Eve. *Epistemology of the Closet*, 2e. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008.

Shapiro, Michael. *Gender in Play on the Shakespearean Stage: Boy Heroines and Female Pages*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994.

Shapiro, Susan. 'Sex, Gender, and Fashion in Medieval and Early Modern Britain'. *Journal of Popular Culture* 20, No. 4 (1987): 113-128.

Sharpe, Kevin. *Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth-Century England*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009.

Shearman, John. *Mannerism: Style and Civilization*. London: Penguin Books, 1967.

Siena, Kevin. 'Pollution, Promiscuity, and the Pox: English Venereology and the Early Modern Medical Discourse on Social and Sexual Danger'. *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 8, No.4 (1998): 553-574.

Silver, Isidore. 'Ronsard's Reflections on Cosmogony and Nature'. *Publications of the Modern Landguage Association* 79, No. 3 (1964): 219-233.

Simons, Patricia. 'Hercules in Italian Renaissance Art: Masculine Labour and Homoerotic Libido'. *Art History* 31 No. 5 (2008): 632–664.

Simons, Patricia. 'Homosociality and Erotics in Italian Renaissance Portraiture'. In *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, edited by Joanna Woodall, 29-51. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997.

Simons, Patricia. 'Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture'. *History Workshop: A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Historians* 25, No. 1 (1988): 4-30.

Sohm, Philip. 'Gendered Style in Italian Art Criticism from Michelangelo to Malvasia'. *Renaissance Quarterly* 48, No. 4 (1995): 759-808.

Sohm, Philip. 'Dürer's 'Melencolia I': The Limits of Knowledge'. *Studies in the History of Art*, 9 (1980): 13-32.

Sohm, Philip. *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Smith, Bruce. *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's* England. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1991.

Spicer, Joaneath. 'The Renaissance Elbow'. In *A Cultural History of Gesture: From Antiquity to the Present Day*, edited by Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg, 84-128. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Stallybrass, Peter. 'Editing as Cultural Formation: The Sexing of Shakespeare's Sonnets'. *Modern Language Quarterly* 54, No. 1 (1993): 91-103.

Stanivuković, Goran. 'Introduction'. In *Ovid and the Renaissance Body*, edited by Goran Stanivuković, 3-18. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

Stanivuković, Goran. 'Portrait Miniature Painting, the Young Man of Shakespeare's Sonnets and Late Elizabethan Aesthetics'. *English Studies* 95, No. 4 (2014): 367-391.

Starks-Estes, Lisa. *Violence, Trauma, and Virtus in Shakespeare's Roman Poems and Plays: Transforming Ovid*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Steinberg, Sylvie. *La confusion des sexes: la travestissement de la Renaissance à la Revolution*. Paris: Librairie Antheme Fayard, 2001.

Stoichita, Victor. *The Self-Aware Image: An Insight into Early Modern Metapainting*, edited by Lorenzo Pericolo. Turnhout: Brepols, 2015.

Stoitchita, Victor. *A Short History of the Shadow*. London: Reaktion Books 1997.

Stone, Lawrence. *The Crisis of Aristocracy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.

Stone, Lawrence and Jeanne Stone, *An Open Elite?: England, 1540-1580*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

String, Tatania. *Art and Communication on the Reign of Henry* VIII. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.

Strong, Roy. *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1987.

Strong, Roy. *The Elizabethan Image: An Introduction to English Portraiture, 1558-1603*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019.

Strong, Roy. *The English Icon: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.

Swan, Claudia. *Art, Science, and Witchcraft in Early Modern Holland: Jacques de Gheyn II (1565-1629)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Talvacchia, Bette. *Taking Positions: On the Erotic in Renaissance Culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Tauber, Christine. 'A Paragone of Styles: The Mannerist Challenge to Raphael and Michelangelo at the Court of Francis I'. In *The Translation of Raphael's Roman Style*, edited by Henk van Veen, 49-68. Leuven: Peeters, 2007.

Tauber, Christine. 'Translatio Imperii?—Primaticcios Abguss des Laokoon in Fontainebleau'. In *Laokoon in Literatur und Kunst: Schriften des Symposions "Laokoon in Literatur und Kunst" vom 30.11.2006*, edited by Dorothee Gall and Anja WolkenHauer, 201-227. Berlin, Universität Bonn, 2009.

Taylor, Gary. *Buying Whiteness: Race, Culture, and Identity from Columbus to Hip-Hop*. New York, NY: Palgrave, 2005.

Tebben, Maryan. ‘Writing the Ineffable: Du Bellay’s Olive’. *The French Review* 78, No. 3 (2005): 522-535.

Tempesti, Anna Forlani. ‘Quaesti per Primaticcio’. In *Scritti di storia dell’arte in onore di Sylvie Béguin*, edited by Mario Di Giampaolo and Elisabetta Saccomani, 227-238. Rome: Paparo Edizioni, 2001.

Tittler, Robert. 'Three portraits by John de Critz for the Merchant Taylors' Company'. *The Burlington Magazine* 147 (2005): 491-493.

Town, Edward. ‘‘Whilst he had his perfect sight’ — new information on John de Critz the Elder’. *The Burlington Magazine*, 154, No. 1312 (2012): 482-486.

Traub, Valerie. ‘The New Unhistoricism in Queer Studies’. *Publications of the Modern Landguage Association* 128, No. 1 (2013): 21-39.

Trebosc, Delphine. ‘Le décor de Primatice pour la chambre de la duchesse d'Etampes: une oeuvre réflexive?’. *Seizième Siècle* 3 (2007): 37-60.

Trevor, Douglas. *The Poetics of Melancholy in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Trim, David. ‘Calvinist Internationalism and the Shaping of Jacobean Foreign Policy’. In *Prince Henry Revived: Image and Exemplarity in Early Modern England*, edited by Timothy Wilks, 239-258. Southampton: Southampton Solent University Press, 2007.

Trubowitz, Rachael. ‘Cross-Dressed Women and Natural Mothers: ‘Boundary Panic in Hic Mulier’. In *Debating Gender in Early Modern England, 1500-1700*, edited by Cristina Malcolmson and Mihoko Suzuki, 185-208. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Trubowitz, Rachael. *Nation and Nurture in Seventeenth-Century English Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Turner, Frank. *The Greek Heritage in Victorian* Britain. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981.

Turner, James. *Eros Visible: Art, Sexuality and Antiquity in Renaissance Italy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017.

Underdown, David. 'The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England'. In *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, edited by Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson, 92-115. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Usher, Philip. *Epic Arts in Renaissance France*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Vaccaro, Mary. 'Beauty and identity in Parmigianino's portraits'. In *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art*, edited by Mary Rogers, 107-118. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.

Vicinus, Martha. 'The Adolescent Boy: Fin de Siecle Femme Fatale?'. *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, No. 1 (1994): 90-114.

Villeponteaux, Mary. ''Not as women wonted be': Spenser's Amazon Queen'. In *Dissing Elizabeth: Negative Representations of Gloriana*, edited by Julia Walker, 209-228. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998.

Vout, Caroline. 'Antinous, Archaeology and History'. *The Journal of Roman Studies* 95 (2005): 80-96.

Vout, Caroline. *Classical Art: A Life History from Antiquity to the Present*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018.

Vout, Caroline. ‘Face to Face with Fiction: Portraiture and the Biographical Tradition’. In *Fictions of Art History*, edited by Mark Ledbury, 71-86. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013.

Waddington, Raymond. ‘The Bisexual Portrait of François I: Fontainebleau, Castiglione, and the Tone of Courtly Mythology’. In *Playing with Gender: A Renaissance Pursuit*, edited by Jean Brink, 99-132. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

Walker, Julia. ‘Bones of Contention: Posthumous Images of Elizabeth and Stuart Politics’. In *Dissing Elizabeth: Negative Representations of Gloriana*, edited by Julia Walker, 252-276. Durham: Duke University Press, 1988.

Watt, Tessa. *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Watts, Cedric. *Shakespeare Puzzles*. London: Publish Nation, 2014.

Welch, Evelyn. ‘Art on the Edge: hair and hands in Renaissance Italy’. *Renaissance Studies* 23, No. 3 (2009): 241-268.

Wells, Stanley. *Shakespeare, Sex, and Love*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

West, Candace and Don Zimmerman. ‘Doing Gender’. *Gender and* Society 1, No. 2 (1987): 125-151.

Westeijn, Thijs. ‘The Sublime and the ‘Beholder’s Share’’: Junius, Rubens, Rembrandt’. *Journal of the Historians of Netherlandish Art* 8, No. 2 (2016): 1-32.

Williams, David. ‘‘Victus Perfictur’: On the Meaning of Donatello’s Bronze ‘David’’. *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 53 (2009): 217-228.

Williams, Tamsyn.‘‘Magnetic Figures’: Polemical Prints of the English Revolution’. In *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660*, ed. Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn, 86-110. London: Reaktion Books, 1990.

Wilson-Chevalier, Kathleen. ‘Feminising the Warrior at Francis I’s Fontainebleau’. In *Masculinities in Sixteenth Century France: Proceedings of the Eight Cambridge French Renaissance Colloquium*, edited by Philip Ford and Paul White, 23-60. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Wilson-Chevalier, Katheleen. ‘Women on Top at Fontainebleau’. *Oxford Art Journal* 16, No. 1 (1993): 34-48.

Wind, Edgar. *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*. New York, NY: Norton, 1968.

Winkel, Marieke de. *Fashion and Fancy: Dress and Meaning in Rembrandt’s Paintings*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006.

Winnick, Roy. ‘‘Loe, here in one line is his name twice writ’: Anagrams, Shakespeare’s Sonnets, and the Identity of the Fair Friend’. *Literary Imagination* 11, No. 3 (2009): 254–277.

Wiseman, Susan. ‘Rethinking Renaissance Loves’. *Textual Practice* 33, No. 8 (2019): 1263-1275.

Wiseman, Susan. ‘‘Romes Wanton Ovid’: Reading and Writing Ovid's ‘Heroides’, 1590–1712’. *Renaissance Studies* 22, No. 3 (2008): 295–306.

Wolf, Gerhard. ‘The Origins of Painting’. *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 36 (1999): 60-78.

Wolfe, Michael. ‘The strange afterlife of Henri III: dynastic distortions in early Bourbon France’. *Renaissance Studies* 4, No. 10 (1996): 474-489.

Wolftal, Diane. *In and Out of the Marital Bed: Seeing Sex in Renaissance Art*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.

Wollheim, Richard. *Art and its Objects,* 2e. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Wood, Christopher. 'E.H. Gombrich's 'Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation', 1960'. *The Burlington Magazine* 151, No. 1281 (2009): 836-839.

Woodall, Joanna. 'Introduction: Facing the Subject'. In *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, edited by Joanna Woodall, 1-28. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997.

Woodall, Joanna. 'In Pursuit of Virtue'. *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 54, No. 1 (2003): 7-25.

Woodall, Joanna ed. *The Reflexive Imagery of Love in Artistic Theory and Practice, 1500-1700*. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

Woodbridge, Linda. *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540–1620*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1984.

Woods-Marsden, Joanna. *Renaissance Self-Portraiture: The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998.

Yates, Frances. *The Valois Tapestries*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959.

Zalamea, Patricia. 'Inscribing the *paragone* in French Renaissance art: René Boyvin and Pierre Milan's engraving of the *Nymph of Fontainebleau'*. *Word & Image* 32, No. 3 (2016): 311-325.

Zalamea, Patricia. *Subject to Diana: Picturing Desire in French Renaissance Courtly Aesthetics*. PhD Thesis, Rutgers University, NJ, 2007.

Zanetti, Valerio. 'Holding the Reins: Female Horseback Riding and Aristocratic Authority in 17th Century France'. *Ludica: Annals of the History and Culture of Games* 25 (2020): 125-143

Zanetti, Valerio. 'From the King's Hunt to the Ladies' Cavalcade: Female equestrian culture at the court of Louis XIV'. *The Court Historian* 24, No. 3 (2019): 250-268.

Zerner, Henri. *Renaissance Art in France: The Invention of Classicism*. Paris: Flammarion, 2003.

Zerner, Henri. *The School of Fontainebleau: Etchings and Engravings*. New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, 1969.

Zorach, Rebecca. *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold: Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2006.

Zorach, Rebecca. ''The Flower that Falls before the Fruit': The Galerie François Ier at Fontainebleau and Atys Excastratus'. *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 62, No. 1 (2000), 63-87.

Zwierlein, Anne-Julia. 'Monsters of the Mind: Early Modern Melancholia and (Cross-) Gendered Constructions of Creativity'. In *The Literature of Melancholia: Early Modern to Postmodern*, edited by Martin Middeke and Christina Wald, 35-49. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Illustrations

Fig. 1

Attributed to French School, *François I with Eleanor, Queen of France*, c.1520-40, oil on panel, 70.8 × 56.4 cm, Royal Collection, London

REDACTED

Fig. 2

Rosso Fiorentino, *View of the Castle of Fontainebleau and the Porte Dorée*, c.1540, Galerie François I, Fontainebleau

REDACTED

Fig. 3

Francesco Primaticcio and workshop, *Hercules and Omphale*, c.1535, restored in 1835, fresco, 100 × 125 cm, Porte Dorée, Château of Fontainebleau, Fontainebleau

REDACTED

Fig. 4

Francesco Primaticcio and workshop, *Hercules, Omphale and Faunus*, c.1535, restored in 1835, fresco, 100 × 125 cm, Porte Dorée, Château of Fontainebleau, Fontainebleau

REDACTED

Fig. 5

Francesco Primaticcio, *Hercules and Omphale*, c.1535, pen with brown ink and wash and white heightening, 33.7 × 43.3 cm, Albertina Museum, Vienna

REDACTED

Fig. 6

Francesco Primaticcio, *Hercules, Omphale and Faunus*, c.1535, pen with brown ink and wash and white heightening, 22.5 × 39.6 cm, Chatsworth House, Chatsworth

REDACTED

Fig. 7

Léon Davent, after Francesco Primaticcio, *Hercules and Omphale*, c.1540, engraving, 28.4 × 43.8 cm, British Museum, London

REDACTED

Fig. 8

Léon Davent, after Francesco Primaticcio, *Hercules, Omphale and Faunus*, c.1540, engraving, 22.8 × 42.1 cm, British Museum, London

REDACTED

Fig. 9

Rosso Fiorentino, *Mars disarmed by Cupid and Venus disrobed by the Three Graces*, 1530, pen and ink and wash drawing, 42.8 × 33.8 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris

REDACTED

Fig. 10

Antonio Fantuzzi, after Francesco Primaticcio, *Hercules and Omphale*, 1542-1543, engraving, 25.3 × 41.7 cm, British Museum, London

REDACTED

Fig. 11

Francesco Primaticcio, *Study for Hercules*, c.1535, red chalk with white highlights, 11.5 × 19 cm, École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris

REDACTED

Fig. 12

Detail, Francesco Primaticcio, *Hercules and Omphale*, c.1535, pen with brown ink and wash and white heightening, 33.7 × 43.3 cm, Albertina Museum, Vienna

REDACTED

Fig. 13

Detail, Léon Davent, after Francesco Primaticcio, *Hercules and Omphale*, c.1540, engraving, 28.4 × 43.8 cm, British Museum, London

REDACTED

Fig. 14

Attributed to Mercure Jollat, *Submovendam ignorantiam*, woodcut, in Andrea Alciato's *Emblematum libellous* (Paris: Wechel, 1534), 50, Libraire Droz, Geneva

REDACTED

Fig. 15

Francesco Primaticcio and workshop, *Alexander and Campasne painted by Apelles*, restored 1835, fresco and stucco, dimensions unknown, King's Staircase, Château of Fontainebleau, Fontainebleau

REDACTED

Fig. 16

After Michelangelo (?), *Hercules Pomarius*, c.1490-1510, bronze, height 48 cm with base, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

REDACTED

Fig. 17

Attributed to Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, possibly after Primaticcio, *Fountain*, c.1555-1560, drawing from album, Petit Palais, Paris

REDACTED

Fig. 18

After Michelangelo (?), *Hercules*, bronze, 16th century, height 33 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

REDACTED

Fig. 19

Jean Frédéric Maximilien de Waldeck after Marcantonio Raimondi's *I Modi*, based on Giulio Romano, 19th century, drawing, 16.5 × 21.8 cm, British Museum, London

REDACTED

Fig. 20

Anonymous, ‘Terminus’, woodcut, in Andrea Alciato’s *Emblematum Libellus* (Venice: Aldus, 1546), Glasgow University Library, Glasgow, 33

REDACTED

Fig. 21

Michelangelo, Detail of one of the *ignudi*, 1508-1512, fresco, Sistine Chapel Ceiling, Vatican City

REDACTED

Fig. 22

Benvenuto Cellini, *The Nymph of Fontainebleau*, 1543, bronze, 205 × 409 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris

REDACTED

Fig. 23

Benvenuto Cellini, *Satyr,* c.1542, bronze, 56.5 cm high, Royal Collection, London

REDACTED

Fig. 24

Benvenuto Cellini, *Satyr*, c.1542, bronze, 57.6 cm high, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

REDACTED

Fig. 25

Jusepe de Ribera, *The Sense of Touch*, c. 1615-16, oil on canvas, 115.9 × 88.3 cm, Norton Simon Foundation, Pasadena

REDACTED

Fig. 26

Rosso Fiorentino, *L'ignorance chassée*, 1528-41, fresco, 100 × 125 cm, Galerie François I, Château of Fontainebleau, Fontainebleau

REDACTED

Fig. 27

Attributed to Lucas de Heere, *Triple Profile Portrait*, c.1570, oil on slate, 57.15 × 57.15 cm, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee

REDACTED

Fig. 28

Anonymous French artist, *Portrait of Paul de Stuer de Caussade, Marquis of Saint-Mégrin*, c.1570-80, Watercolour, gouache and gold shell on vellum, mounted on card, then wood, 16.8 × 11.6 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris

REDACTED

Fig. 29

Lucas de Heere, *English Gentlemen*, in *Théâtre de tous les peuples et nations de la terre avec leurs habits et ornemens divers*, c.1584, watercolour and ink on paper, fol. 69^{r}, Ghent University Library, Ghent

REDACTED

Fig. 30

Attributed to Lucas de Heere, *Allegory of Tudor Succession*, c.1572, oil on panel, 131.2 × 184 cm, National Museum Wales, Cardiff

REDACTED

Fig. 31

Attributed to Lucas de Heere, *Portrait of a Woman, thought to be Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald,* 1573, oil on panel, 46.8 × 34.7 cm, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry

REDACTED

Fig. 32

Anonymous, *Unknown Woman, Once thought to be Anne Boleyn*, c.1560, oil on panel, 25 × 18.5 cm, Musée Condé, Chantilly

REDACTED

Fig. 33

Franco-Flemish School, *Ball at the Court of Henri III*, c.1581, oil on panel, 184 × 120 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris

REDACTED

Fig. 34

Anonymous French artist, *Portrait Medal of Henri II*, 1552, bronze, 5.4 × 0.3 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

REDACTED

Fig. 35

Michelangelo, *Ideal Head*, c.1516, red chalk on paper, 20.5 × 16.5 cm, Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford

REDACTED

Fig. 36

Studio of François Clouet, *Catherine de Medici and her children: Charles IX, Henry III, the Duke d'Alençon, and Margaret Queen of Navarre*, 1561, oil on canvas, 198.1 × 137.2 cm, Private Collection

REDACTED

Fig. 37

Master of the Dinteville Allegory, *Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh: An Allegory of the Dinteville Family*, 1537, oil on wood, 176.5 × 192.7 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

REDACTED

Fig. 38

François Clouet, *Elisabeth of Austria*, c.1571, oil on panel, 37 × 25 cm, Musée Condé, Chantilly

REDACTED

Fig. 39

François Clouet, *Henri II, King of France*, 1559, oil on panel, 30 × 22 cm, Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles

REDACTED

Fig. 40

Fontainebleau School, *Presumed Portrait of Gabrielle d'Estrées and Her Sister, the Duchess of Villars*, c. 1594, oil on panel, 96 × 125 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris

REDACTED

Fig. 41

François Quesnel the Elder, *Henri III*, c.1575-85, oil on panel, 45 × 33.5 cm, Musée Carnavalet, Paris

REDACTED

Fig. 42

Unknown continental artist, *Queen Elizabeth I*, c.1575, oil on panel, 113 × 78.7 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London

REDACTED

Fig. 43

Francesco Primaticcio, *One of the Fates Riding on a Tortoise*, c.1542, pencil, grey ink, and watercolour on paper, 32.3 × 23.3 cm, Nationalmuseum, Sweden

REDACTED

Fig. 44

Anonymous French artist, *Composite Portrait of François I*, c.1545, goache on parchment, mounted on wood, 23.4 × 13.4 cm, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

REDACTED

Fig. 45

Anonymous French artist, *Portrait Medallion of the Duchess of Savoy*, second half of 16th century, wax and leather, dimensions unknown, Musée de la Renaissance, Château d'Écouen, Écouen

REDACTED

Fig. 46

Anonymous French artist, *Portrait Medallion of the Queen of Navarre*, second half of 16th century, leather, slate, and wax, dimensions unknown, Musée de la Renaissance, Château d'Écouen, Écouen

REDACTED

Fig. 47

Léonard Limosin, *Vénus et l'Amour*, 1550, enamel, 19.6 × 26.7 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris

REDACTED

Fig. 48

Detail, Giorgio Vasari, *The Origin of Pittura and Scultura*, after 1561, fresco, Sala delle Arti, Casa Vasari, Florence

REDACTED

Fig. 49

Attributed to John de Critz, *Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton*, 1590-1593, oil on panel, 61 × 44 cm, National Trust, Hatchlands, Guildford

REDACTED

Fig. 50

Unknown English artist, *Diana and her Nymphs* (detail), c.1600, paint on plaster, 320 × 950 cm, frieze, Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire

REDACTED

Fig. 51

Nicholas Hilliard, *Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton*, 1594, watercolour on vellum on card, 3.25 × 4.1cm, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

REDACTED

Fig. 52

Hans Eworth, *Mary Wriothesley, Countess of Southampton*, 1565, oil on panel, 43.2 × 33 cm, Welbeck Abbey, Private Collection

REDACTED

Fig. 53

Attributed to John de Critz, *Anne of Denmark*, c.1605, oil on panel, 113.5 × 86.5 cm, Royal Museums Greenwich, London

REDACTED

Fig. 54

Nicholas Hilliard, *An Unknown Young Man*, 1590-1593, watercolour on vellum on card, 5 × 4.2 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

REDACTED

Fig. 55

Nicholas Hilliard, *An Unknown Man*, 1597, watercolour on vellum on card, 5 × 4 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

REDACTED

Fig. 56

Anonymous, *Sir Walter Raleigh*, 1588, oil on panel, 91.4 × 74.6 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London

REDACTED

Fig. 57

Master of the Countess of Warwick, *A Young Lady Aged 21, Possibly Helena Snakenborg, Later Marchioness of Northampton*, 1569, oil on panel, 62.9 × 48.3 cm, Tate Britain, London

REDACTED

Fig. 58

Peter Oliver, *Unknown lady, possibly Venetia Stanley*, watercolour on vellum, on card, dimensions unknown, Private Collection

REDACTED

Fig. 59

Isaac Oliver, *A Lady, wearing black doublet, black hat with hat jewel and orange sash tied at her shoulde*r, c.1605-10, 5.4 cm high, watercolour on vellum on card, Private Collection

REDACTED

Fig. 60

Nicholas Hilliard, *Portrait of Henry Percy, Ninth Earl of Northumberland*, 1590-1595, brush on parchment, 25.7 × 17.3 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

REDACTED

Fig. 61

Nicholas Hilliard, *Sir Henry Slingsby*, 1595, watercolour on vellum on card, 6.3 × 8.4 cm, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

REDACTED

Fig. 62

Anonymous, *Sir Henry Slingsby*, c.1595, oil on panel, 62.2 × 76.8 cm, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

REDACTED

Fig. 63

Attributed to John de Critz, *Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton*, 1603, oil on canvas, 104.4 × 87.6 cm, Buccleuch Collection, Boughton House

REDACTED

Fig. 64

Unknown English artist, *Elizabeth Wriothesley, Countess of Southampton*, c. 1600, oil on panel, 164 × 110 cm, Buccleuch Collection, Boughton House, Northamptonshire

REDACTED

Fig. 65

Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, *Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton*, c.1603, oil on canvas, 108 × 97 cm, National Trust, Dyrham Park

REDACTED

Fig. 66

After Daniel Mytens, *Henry Wriothesley, Third Earl of Southampton*, c.1618, oil on canvas, 88.9 × 68.6 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London

REDACTED

Fig. 67

Paul van Somer, *Anne of Denmark*, 1617, oil on canvas, 265.5 × 209 cm, Queen's House, London

REDACTED

Fig. 68

Anonymous, *Titlepage* for *Hic Mulier: Or, The Mannish Woman*, (London: John Trundle, 1620), Huntington Library, San Marino

REDACTED

Fig. 69

Anonymous English artist, *Portrait of a Lady, Aged 26*, 1619, oil on panel, 104 × 89 cm, Private Collection

REDACTED

Fig. 70

Attributed to Robert Peake*, Unknown lady, aged 34,* 1623, oil on panel, 91.4 × 73.6 cm, Trustees of Leeds Castle Foundation, Maidstone, Kent

REDACTED

Fig. 71

Attributed to John Souch, *Lady Lawley*, c.1630, oil on canvas, 211 × 146.2 cm, Private Collection

REDACTED

Fig. 72

Anonymous, *Titlepage* for *Haec-vir: Or, The Womanish-Man* (London: John Trundle, 1620), Huntington Library, San Marino

REDACTED

Fig. 73

George Gower, *Elizabeth Littleton, Lady Willoughby*, 1573, oil on panel, dimensions unknown, Wollaton Hall, Nottingham

REDACTED

Fig. 74

Attributed to George Gower, *Elizabeth Knollys, Lady Leighton*, 1577, oil on panel, 61 × 45.1 cm, Montacute House, Somerset

REDACTED

Fig. 75

George Gower, *Elizabeth Cornwallis, Lady Kytson*, 1573, oil on wood, 68.5 × 52.2 cm, Tate Britain, London

REDACTED

Fig. 76

George Gower, *Richard Drake*, c.1577, oil on panel, 91.1 × 71.1 cm, Queen's House, London

REDACTED

Fig. 77

Isaac Oliver, *Allegorical Scene*, 1590-1595, gouache and watercolour on vellum, pasted on card, 11.3 × 17.4 cm, Statens Museum for Kunst, Denmark

REDACTED

Fig. 78

Isaac Oliver, *Nymphs and Satyrs*, c.1605-10, black chalk, pen and ink, white heightening, on brown paper, 20.6 × 35.5 cm, Royal Collection, London

REDACTED

Fig. 79

Robert Vaughan, *Titlepage*, engraving, for Richard Brathwaite, *The English Gentleman*, 2e (London, 1633), Huntington Library, San Marino

REDACTED

Fig. 80

Martin Droeshout, *To this grave doctor millions do resort..., or Dr. Panurgus curing the follies of his patients*, c.1620, engraving, 34.8 × 40.8 cm, British Museum, London

REDACTED

Fig. 81

Isaac Oliver, *Portrait of a Lady Masqued as Flora*, 1575-1617, miniature on vellum, 5.3 × 4.1cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, on loan to the Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, The Hague

REDACTED

Fig. 82

Anonymous, ‘Embleme’, in John Taylor, *The World Runs on Wheels, Or Oddes, betwixt Carts and Coaches* (London: E.A. for Henry Gosson, 1623), British Library, London

REDACTED

Fig. 83

Anonymous, *Titlepage*, engraving, for Richard Brathwaite, *The English Gentlewoman* (London, 1631), Huntington library, San Marino

REDACTED

Fig. 84

Detail, Anonymous, *Titlepage*, woodcut, for Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's *The Roaring Girle*, 1611, 13.8 × 8.2 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London

REDACTED

Fig. 85

Anonymous, Detail, *Titlepage*, woodcut, for *Swetnam the Woman-hater, Arraigned by Women* (London: Richard Meighen, 1620), Huntington Library, San Marino

REDACTED

Fig. 86

Unknown artist, *Elizabeth I as Europa*, 1598, etching, 21.2 × 26 cm, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

REDACTED

Fig. 87

Thomas Cecil, *Truth Presents the Queene with a Lance*, c.1622-25, engraving, 27.2 × 29.6 cm, British Museum, London

REDACTED

Fig. 88

Isaac Oliver, *Portrait of an Unknown Woman*, c.1600, watercolour on canvas on panel, 7.8 x 5.9 cm, Royal Collection, London

REDACTED

Fig. 89

Simon de Passe, *Frances Howard, Countess of Somerset*, c. 1615, engraving, 16.8 × 11.8 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London

REDACTED

Fig. 90

Simon de Passe, *Frances Howard, Countess of Somerset*, c.1619, engraving, 22.2 × 15 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London

REDACTED

Fig. 91

John White, *A Pictish Woman*, 1585-1593, drawing on paper, 23 × 17.9cm, British Museum, London

REDACTED

Fig. 92

Simon van de Passe, *Pocahontas*, 1616, engraving, 17.2 × 11.8 cm, Royal Collection, London

REDACTED

Fig. 93

Anonymous*, Fill Gut and Pinch belly*, 1620, woodcut, printed by Edward Allde and sold by Henry Gosson, dimensions unknown, Society of Antiquaries, London

REDACTED

Fig. 94

Reynold Elstracke, *Bulchin and Thingut*, later impression by Robert Pricke, first issued 1620, engraving, dimensions unknown, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York

REDACTED

Fig. 95

Jan Barra, *Sight*, c.1623, engraving, 18.2 × 13.2 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London

REDACTED

Fig. 96

Jan Barra, *Taste*, c.1623, engraving, dimensions unknown, Library of Mellerstain House, Berwickshire, Private Collection

REDACTED

Fig. 97

Unknown artist, *Fragment of a Wall Painting, originally for Park Farm*, 1632, painted plaster, 88 × 128.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

REDACTED

Fig. 98

After Jacques de Gheyn II, *The Archer and the Milkmaid*, c.1610, engraving, 41.4 × 32.8 cm, The Metropolitan Museum, New York

REDACTED

Fig. 99

Anonymous, Detail from *The complaint of the Shepheard Harpalus*, 1611-1640?, woodcut, University of Glasgow Library, Euing Collection

REDACTED

Fig. 100

Renold Elstrack, *While maskinge in their folleis all doe passe, though all say nay yet all doe ride the asse,* 1607, engraving, printed by John Garrett, 29 × 42.3 cm, British Museum, London

REDACTED

Fig. 101

Anonymous, *The Lamentation of a new married man, briefely declaring the / sorrow and griefe that comes by marrying a young wanton wife* (London, 1630), woodcut, Magdalene College, Pepys Collection

REDACTED

Fig. 102

Anonymous, *Mans Felicity and Misery: / Which is, a good Wife and a bad: or the best and the / worst, discoursed in a Dialogue betweene / Edmund and Dauid* (London, 1632), woodcut, British Library, Roxburghe Collection

REDACTED

Fig. 103

Anonymous, Detail from *A Pleasant new Ballad you here may behold, / How the Devill, though subtle, was guld by a Scold* (London, 1601-1640), woodcut, British Library, Roxburghe Collection

REDACTED

Fig. 104

Anonymous, *A Pleasant new Ballad you here may behold, / How the Devill, though subtle, was guld by a Scold* (London, 1601-1640), woodcut, British Library, Roxburghe Collection

REDACTED

Fig. 105

Anonymous, Detail from *The Batchelors Delight, / Being a pleasant new Song, shewing the happiness of a single life, and / the miseries that do commonly attend Matrimony* (London, 1623-1661), woodcut, Houghton Library, Huth

REDACTED

Fig. 106

Anonymous, *A pleasant new Song, betwixt / The Saylor and his Loue* (London, 1624), woodcut, Magdalene College, Pepys Collection

REDACTED

Fig. 107

Anthony van Dyck, *Queen Henrietta Maria with Sir Jeffrey Hudson*, 1633, oil on canvas, 219.1 × 134.8 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington

REDACTED

Fig. 108

Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, *Anne Fanshawe*, 1628, oil on oak panel, 111.5 × 98 cm, Valence House Museum, London

REDACTED

Fig. 109

Anonymous, *English Civil War print*, c.1642, woodcut, dimensions unknown, Private Collection

REDACTED

Fig. 110

Anonymous, woodcut, c.1620, reused in *The Resolution of the women of London to the Parliament wherein they declare their hot zeale in sending their husbands to the warres in defence of King and Parliament…*, 1642, British Library, London

REDACTED