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Portraits in Early Modern English Drama:
Visual Culture, Play-Texts, and Performances

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Introduction

In the 2014 production of Sophocles' *Electra* at the Old Vic, London, starring Kristin Scott Thomas, the princess of Mycenae first appears furtively pinning a picture of her murdered father on a tree centre-stage. She wails over the image and quickly hides it as other characters arrive. This is clearly an innovation since it is not present in the original tragedy, but many spectators did not pay attention to this feature, caught as they were by Electra's moving lament. After all, it seems natural that a child should gaze upon a picture of her deceased parent. Interestingly, however, this seemingly minor innovation changes a key element of Greek tragedy:

> Greek retrospection: Elizabethan remembrance. Aeschylus's revengers, like the Orestes and Electra of Sophocles and Euripides, have no private memory of their father; they know about his life and death only because it is public knowledge. They take revenge for equally public reasons […] Elizabethan revenge tragedy replaces the vital exteriority of the links between living and dead in the Greek plays by something more private: almost invariably, its revengers cherish vivid, personal memories of their lost friends and kinsmen. These memories are usually, as in *The Spanish Tragedy*, shared with the audience[1].

By the protagonist's looking at the picture of Agamemnon, the *Electra* at the Old Vic was recast into early modern drama. The review in *The Guardian* reads: "It is hard to watch *Electra* without thinking of *Hamlet*"[2]. This was certainly due to Scott Thomas' performance and to the conversion of the Old Vic into a theatre in the round. Yet, what I would like to highlight is that this simple viewing of a portrait on stage radically modifies the play's appraisal.

The portraits in *Hamlet*'s "closet scene" are not the only pictures staged in early modern English drama. There are seventy-five plays, from the Elizabethan to the Caroline period, that feature the staging of a portrait. The aim of this dissertation is to investigate how the presentation of portraits changed the interactive dynamics between actors and spectators; how staged pictures could address socially charged topics of the rich, though embattled, visual culture of the time; how these special

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[1] John Kerrigan, "Hieronimo, Hamlet and Remembrance", *Essays in Criticism*, Vol. 31, no. 2, 1981: 106.
[2] Susannah Clapp, "*Electra* Review", *The Guardian*, 5 October 2014 (http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/oct/05/electra-review-kristin-scott-thomas-old-vic), last accessed: 3 November 2016.

props were employed by the playwrights and the playing companies to interrogate subjectivity, and, in particular, issues related to gender and class.

The theatre is etymologically the site for watching. Spectators look at actors, and actors look at each other; furthermore, in England, both in the private and in the public playhouses, members of the audience could exchange glances at each other, and the players could often frontally interact with them, in almost direct facial communication. I wish to argue that staged portraits foreground the processes of theatrical representation and can problematise them, creating a particular form of metatheatre.

The portrait as such is "no pure icon; it is a sign contaminated by the referent […] a sign stained with reality"[3]. Though the Renaissance did not invent portraiture, it recovered the portrait as an object and, more importantly, endowed it with the modalities which we still use to appreciate and understand the genre. It is important to historicise the uses of the portrait in early modern everyday life to understand how its performative and transactional roles were changed or amplified when shown on stage. In the theatre of a society that regularly represented itself as a stage full of actors, and where the Horatian dictum "*ut pictura poësis*" ("as is painting, so is poetry") was deeply ingrained, staged portraits could interrogate dynamics of sense-making and aesthetics. Portraits were called "shadows", a term fraught with implications, impinging on Platonic and Protestant conceptualisations. Actors too were called "shadows": the playhouses were seen (and, by some, denounced) as worlds full of threateningly dynamised pictures that could affect and transform their audiences. Portraits on stage concentrated these effects and shaped the visual vectors of the spectatorships.

In some plays, the role of the portrait is very limited. Its presence is signalled by very few lines and its function is of small import. In other plays, however, the significance of a portrait is of extraordinary centrality. It may be invested with erotic desire by the *dramatis personae* and with proto-consumerist ambition by the spectators. It becomes a device to politically control people or an instrument of knowledge. It symbolises the person depicted and its displaying can be strategically orchestrated. Gazing upon it can whet revenge or assuage grief, stir memories and

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[3] Maurizio Bettini, *Il ritratto dell'amante* (Turin: Einaudi, 1992): 57, translation mine.

activate the imagination. Its possession fulfils the wish to own its subject, and its circulation shows one's religious, political, or familial allegiances.

Recently, the topic of staged portraits in early modern English drama has witnessed a substantial increase in critical attention. When I first embarked on this dissertation, there were only two studies in this area: Marguerite A. Tassi's *The Scandal of Images: Iconoclasm, Eroticism and Painting in Early Modern English Drama* (2005), and Keir Elam's essay, "'Most truly limned and living in your face': Looking at Pictures in Shakespeare" (2010)[4]. Tassi's book, despite its title, focuses on Elizabethan drama and does not pay enough attention to the Jacobean and Caroline plays (which feature many more staged portraits). The insights it provides are valuable, but it relies too heavily on Huston Diehl's approach[5] that posits a problematic clearly-cut iconophilia-iconophobia dualism in the English visual culture. Elam's short essay provides a richer theoretical framework and explores the format and functions of portraits in Shakespeare's plays. Elam is working on a forthcoming book[6] which will expand his findings, but still retain a focus on Shakespeare's work. The latest study on this area is Yolana Wassersug's doctoral dissertation, *'My Picture I Enjoin Thee to Keep': The Function of Portraits in English Drama, 1558-1642* (2015). Thanks to Martin Wiggins' *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue*, she was able to identify the plays featuring the use of portraits as props in the designated period (with few inaccuracies, such as the important omission of John Ford's *Love's Sacrifice* and the fact that the pictures in Massinger's *City Madam*, despite ambiguous phrasing, are clearly supposed to be sculptures, as they are called "statues"). Her dissertation provides a valuable summary of each dramatic episode in which the staging of a portrait takes place, and proceeds in a thematic account of their theatrical and dramatic functions. Owing to the nature of her work, she could neither proceed in detailed analyses of selected plays nor consider the history of their performances. Moreover, while interested in the material and visual culture of the period (though notice that the term "visual culture" occurs only twice in the whole study, while "material culture" never

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[4] To these we can add the more circumscribed studies by Laura Tosi, "Painting, Deception and Illusion in Elizabethan-Jacobean Theatre", *Textus*, Vol. XII, 1999: 37-56, and Joanne Rochester, *Staging Spectatorship in the Plays of Philip Massinger* (Burlington and Farnham: Ashgate, 2010): esp. 95-124.
[5] See Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).
[6] Keir Elam, *Shakespeare's Pictures: Visual Culture in Drama* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, forthcoming).

does), her dissertation does not investigate important issues such as the epistemic disruption of visuality from extramission to intromission, the markedly interpersonal ways of expressing subjectivity in the Renaissance, or a comparison of the staging of portraits in other theatrical traditions in Europe.

This dissertation confronts the elusive and seemingly secondary question of reconstructing the size and format of the staged portraits. Why should we care whether the spectators could actually see them? I argue that it is highly important, because, firstly, a particular type of picture calls for changes in the actors' movements in terms of proxemics and kinesics and, secondly, and more importantly, because particular sizes signify differently within visual culture. The thesis that emerges from the aforementioned studies on these props is that sizable portraits were seldom used: for ease of handling, actors resorted to miniatures or very small pictures. This position is often bound with the obsolete myth of the "bare stage". On the contrary, it has been proved that the Elizabethan-to-Caroline theatres were garish, colourfully painted structures, which made great use of stage properties[7]. Furthermore:

> However visually spare the Elizabethan stage may seem to contemporary audiences accustomed to immersive visual environments, early modern theatre companies invested in cutting-edge visual technologies and materials to create visually sumptuous effects[8].

From textual and paratextual hints, I show that sizable portraits were no anomaly and that paintings could appeal to the consumerist desire of the spectators belonging to both the élite and the middling sort. Painters and actors worked together: they lived in the same streets in London and made use of each other's professional skills. Some actors were also painters and, especially in the Jacobean and Caroline period, even owned collections of pictures.

The three terms of the subtitle of this dissertation (visual culture, play-texts, and performances) indicate the guiding principles of my research. The first requires little disambiguation. Portraits as well as theatre are key components of a society's visual culture, which needs careful investigation. The study of early modern English visual

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[7] In particular, see Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, *Stage Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[8] Evelyn Tribble, "Sight and Spectacle", in Farah Karim Cooper and Tiffany Stern (eds), *Shakespeare's Theatres and the Effects of Performance* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013): 242.

culture has produced exciting insights into the knowledge of the world in which these spectatorships took place. The English were certainly no iconophobes, nor did the possession of any picture immediately instil the doubt that its owner was a Catholic, provoking rabid iconoclasm; the culture of reformed England was definitely not aniconic, as so many essays have posited even recently. Still, the contested status of religious images had changed so often and produced such upheavals in the Tudor time that secular pictures and portraits were tangentially touched by cultural anxieties and fears. To apply a simple iconophilia-iconophobia dualism to staged pictures is faulty. Instead, in-depth analysis of single scenes and single plays yields important information on how playwrights and playing companies could harness the effects of pictures and exploit, influence, or subvert them with philosophical profundity or with gusto for sensationalism.

The second term could be more problematic. The mere word, "play-texts", may invite various accusations; first and foremost, the charge that plays were written to be performed, not read. It is clear that a play needs the bodies and voices of the actors as well as the particular configurations of a theatrical structure; besides, it is known that, at that time, playwrights did not even own their works (indeed, Ben Jonson was derided for even calling his plays "works"). An analysis of play-texts then begs the question of the very validity of close reading as a hermeneutic approach. Defending close reading seems to reliably evoke the groans of students who are required to pore over appropriately anthologised Shakespearean soliloquies for hours. "But the misapplication of a critical method does not invalidate the practice altogether or outlaw the insights it produces"[9]. If plays were primarily thought to be staged, this does not mean that they were not read. The market for play-books increased with momentum after the 1590s[10]. Many early modern plays feature a metaphorical density as well as a dramaturgical complexity that can be best appreciated by reading them. Textual variants, stage directions, and editorial processes often disclose original ways to think about a play-scene, and show playwrights (along with actors, impresarios, and censors) at work. This does not mean that it is an easy task. Still, the close reading of early modern play-texts can be defended not as an end in itself, but "as an instrument

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[9] Russ McDonald, *Shakespeare and the Arts of Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 75.
[10] See the studies by Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), and *Shakespeare and the Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

to make visible the multiple negotiations between language and the world"[11]. For instance, my analysis in chapter II.1 of the 'Look here upon this picture' speech in *Hamlet* and its markedly divergent version in the First Quarto attempts this, and shows how these changes can explain some structural particularities of this uncannily mysterious play-text.

The third term, performances, can also be challenging. On the one hand, it can be very difficult to retrieve the original staging conditions of a particular scene: where the actors would be on stage and in which playhouse, which type of pictures they would be using, who the original spectators were. On the other hand, it is occasionally complicated to keep track of recent productions and (inter- and transmedial) adaptations of early modern plays and understand their value for this research. It is, however, of vital importance to do so: whereas each performance is different, its value is really to give life to the plays. Early modern drama was not simply composed of "words, words, words", but was made up of a multisensorial experience of moving bodies, music, lighting effects, eye-catching props, and smells. Whenever possible, I have tried to see the plays performed and to contact directors and designers to obtain information on their staging choices. Of course, this was viable in the case of canonical texts such as Shakespeare's plays and Webster's *The White Devil*, and plays that have had recent productions, such as *Arden of Faversham*, Ford's *Love's Sacrifice*, and Massinger's *The Picture*. In the case of more obscure plays (such as Sampson's *The Vow Breaker* and Cartwright's *The Siege*), it is imperative to reconstruct how they could work on stage to get a grasp of their use of portraits, which often has intertextual links.

The dissertation is articulated in two parts: "The Meanings of Staged Portraits: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives", and "Case Studies: Portraits in Action". The first part is devoted to investigating the complex web of interconnections that grows out of the presentation of portraits in early modern English drama. In order to do this, it is necessary to draw from a wide range of approaches. Only through interdisciplinarity can one hope to open up the signifying processes of staged portraits, since this involves questions usually dealt with in separate fields including

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[11] Russ McDonald, Nicholas D. Nace, and Travis D. Williams, *Shakespeare Up Close: Reading Early Modern Texts* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2012): xxxii.

art history, the history of drama and literature, philosophy, sociology, and gender studies. However, this multidisciplinary range can be encompassed by two overarching critical approaches: the semiotics of theatre and drama, and visual culture studies. The first can offer valuable insights into the ways spectators make sense of this particular type of props, and how actors can exploit their transactional potential. Questions of indexicality, referentiality, and ostension can be illuminated by the approaches gained from, in particular, Peircian semiotics and the writings of the Prague School. However, this information must be contextualised. Portraits establish a particular form of communication with their spectators, in an exchange that is regulated by subjective as well as socio-cultural pragmatics and modes of sense-making. The early modern theatres negotiated, but also contested social mores, fashions and ideology, and, specifically, were a significant part of the visual world of the period. Experiencing theatre at the time was characterised by a dynamic constellation of visual, aural, oral, tactile, and kinetic elements. The showing of portraits could be a device to metatheatrically draw attention to the complex variety of configurations underlying theatrical performances. Visual culture studies provide the ideal critical framework to explore these issues. These methodological perspectives will be profitably aided by material culture studies. The functions and effects of staged portraits can be properly understood by learning about the uses and values portraits had in everyday life, their circulation as commodities, and which social practices they instantiated.

After a methodological introduction (I.1), I examine the salient aspects of the early modern visual culture (I.2). I show (I.2.1) that recent studies have seriously discredited the long-held notion that Reformed England was an aniconic or iconophobic culture. Not all images were accused of being idols, and portraits were considered to be idols only by religious extremists. Still, the status of images was ambiguous and followed directions that were peculiar to the English nation. The visual dimension was not only in the state of being re-formed, but was also actively reforming itself by finding new stylistic strategies to negotiate these issues. This happened at a time when the platonic theory of vision as extramission was being attacked and debunked by the new scientific inventions in the field of optics (I.2.2). This led to an epistemic disruption concerning the reliability of the senses (first and

foremost, eyesight), and to the articulation of new paradigms of visuality. This was a very gradual and complex process, and many early modern authors tried to articulate new ways to illustrate the powers of the imagination (considered as a visual faculty) and direct it in their readers' and spectators' minds. The relationship between the "idols of the mind" and material pictures was influenced by these changes. Portraits were understood as a "safe" mode of expression (I.2.3) and could address emergent social changes: displaying one's public *persona* and status, showing one's piety, political aspirations, and social connections. Portraits were generally spared by iconoclasts, although their supposedly inherent erotic appeal could activate fears of superstition and idolatry.

In "Early Modern English Portraiture: Objects and Poetics" (I.3), I take into account the material dimension of portraits. Firstly, I provide a general outline (I.3.1) on the significance of portraiture in the Renaissance. We need to defamiliarise ourselves with it to see that it was in the late fifteenth century that the "modern" portrait is born. This art form was shaped by, but also contributed to the development of humanism and the new ways of conceptualising the self and privacy. Humanism and the Reformation hugely modified the value of portraiture and it is only by considering these extremely multi-faceted phenomena that it is possible to understand the uses of portraits in early modern England. Far from being the sole possession of royalty and the aristocracy, portraits attracted the interest of a much larger section of the English society than previously thought (I.3.2). Art historians have cast light on the budding market of portraiture among the middle-class under Elizabeth I, a market that developed consistently decade after decade. Painters were active members of London's social life, organised as they were in a livery company of medieval descent. Vernacular portraiture had specific stylemes: its problematic rendition of perspective and realism was sometimes not the fruit of a painter's inaptness, but of a particular aesthetic sensibility. The ownership, the commissioning, and the circulation of portraits were dictated by class relationships, while gender issues were also relevant. Miniatures (I.3.3) were a very different commodity: highly expensive jewels, they were associated with the aristocracy. Often used as love tokens or as devices to show one's political allegiance, they invoked secrecy and intimacy. Miniatures were acquired also by the "middling sort", although these artefacts could not attain the quality of

Hilliard's and Oliver's creations. The watercolour-based technique used to paint them was called "limning", from Latin *illuminare* (via French *enluminer*). Limning did not simply provide a repertory of figurative motifs to the poets: its language also helped to express profound epistemological anxieties. I call this practice the "poetics of liming" (I.3.4). With its enantiosemic cognate, to "shadow (forth)", limning provided a rhetorical framework to make sense of a reality that was understood to be simultaneously opaque (needing revelatory illumination) and vacuous (needing demiurgic re-fashioning).

After having considered early modern English visual culture in general and portraits in particular, it is time to move forward in the analysis of staged portraits in the playhouses (I.4). Firstly, it is useful to give some preliminary remarks (I.4.1) on the sensorial nature of the theatrical experience of this type of drama. Plays were shows, and people did not usually go to "hear" an Elizabethan play (as advocated by some scholars), but to "see" it. Theatres were spectacular, painted worlds that thrived on multisensorial, synaesthetic fruition. In the next section (I.4.2), I argue that, following humouralism, the most widespread phenomenological discourse, all playgoing could be construed as a "passioning[12] over pictures". Pictures were routinely described as being capable of altering one's temperament (by stirring the humours, and by activating the imagination and memory), the more so in the case of the dynamised pictures on the stage, the actors. The discourses of drama and painting often coalesced in complex ways. Finally, in I.4.3, I investigate the types and uses of the staged portraits within the corpus. I give an outline of their functions in the dramatic action and explain the criteria we can apply to understand when a portrait is clearly meant not to be a miniature. This also has bearings on the effect of the picture on the audience in terms of genre expectation. I compare the use of staged portraits in early modern Spanish drama and *commedia dell'arte* and explain if and why such a consideration is useful in the study of the English tradition. Lastly, I examine two important questions that have not been covered by scholarship so far: the price and value of these portraits, and the strategies deployed by the playing companies to show women's portraits in a theatre without actresses.

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[12] The *OED* defines this use of the verb "to passion" as follows: "To show, express, or be affected by passion or deep feeling. Formerly *esp.*: to grieve. Also with infinitive. Now *rare*".

The second part of the thesis is called "Case Studies: Portraits in Action". I explore how the theoretical and historical perspectives drawn in the first part can open up the dramatic transaction presented in five plays which make the most of the staging of a portrait. These plays are closely analysed in chronological order: William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (and, in particular, the First Quarto, first published in 1603); John Webster's *The White Devil* (performed and published in 1612); Philip Massinger's *The Picture* (performed in 1629, published in 1630); William Sampson's *The Vow Breaker* (performed multiple times in the Midlands, published in 1636), and William Cartwright's *The Siege* (perhaps performed in 1637, published only in 1651). The genre of these plays is varied. *Hamlet* and *The White Devil* are tragedies; *The Picture* and *The Siege* are tragicomedies; *The Vow Breaker* is a strange mixture of history play and domestic tragedy with a happy ending. Their fortune on stage and page has been widely disparate, as well: while *Hamlet* and Webster's play belong to "the canon" and Massinger's *The Picture* has been recently revived and is receiving more and more critical attention, *The Vow Breaker* and *The Siege* remain obscure even to specialists. Far from being problematic, these differences can contribute to an understanding of the complex uses and effects of staged portraits. Each play negotiates in a peculiar way questions related to the early modern visual culture. These include: the detailed knowledge on the part of specific playwrights of the material aspects of painting and how the relationship between painting and drama can be shaped for aesthetic and moral purposes; the uses of multiperspectivism to confront ethical conflicts; the ideological construction of gender identity and social representation through art; the negotiation of communal fears and desires related to early modern conceptions of vision and anxieties over idolatry; and the discourse of Neoplatonic contemplation in the theatrical coteries of the Caroline court.

However, many of these plays are interlinked. Sometimes, it happens through direct intertextuality: in the chapter devoted to *The Vow Breaker*, I attempt the interpretation of staged portraits in tragedy as a "theatregram" that has *Hamlet* as a source text and is developed in its more or less skilled transformations and adaptations. Some other times, it occurs because of competitive/collaborative relationships between playing companies, or because the theatre of this period could not help interpellating the same, great questions that lay at the core of their material and visual culture.

We could all say, along with Gertrude in Margaret Atwood's retelling of *Hamlet*: "Yes, I've seen those pictures, thank you very much"[13]. Yet, the presentation of portraits on stage in early modern English playhouses could interrogate the processes of re-presentation: the ways we make sense of the world aesthetically and ethically, and the construction of subjectivity.

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[13] Margaret Atwood, "Gertrude Talks Back", in id., *Good Bones* (London: Virago, 1992):16.

I.   The Meanings of Staged Portraits: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives

I.1.1 A Short Premise: Drama as Action and as a Visual Art

The potential of portraits as props has long been recognised. They figure significantly in plays of all epochs, from classical to early modern drama, from *commedia dell'arte* to avant-garde, absurdist performances. Their staging covers a range of complexity and adaptability, depending on the level of awareness of their transactional and performative potential. Sometimes they are simply part of the décor, but playwrights and actors can exploit them and confer on them different values and functions.

Aristotle's *Poetics* refers to *The Cyprians* by Dicaiogenes, a lost play in which the final recognition is brought about by the protagonist bursting into tears at the sight of a picture. In *La Fortuna di Foresta* (a *canovaccio* published by Flaminio Scala in 1611), Giorgio, the prince of Poland, falls in love with the princess of Muscovy by looking at her portrait. The same happens in *Fair Em* (one of the so-called Shakespeare apocrypha), and, probably most famously, in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (1791), when Tamino sings the air "*Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön*" ("This image is enchantingly lovely"). The powerful connotations of a miniature are also at the heart of much of the intrigue in Act 2 of Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *La Vida es Sueño*. The theatrical adaptations of *Lady Audley's Secret* by Mary Elizabeth Braddon usually show the revelation of the heroine's bigamy by means of her Pre-Raphaelite portrait. Pirandello deploys the interaction between portraits, theatrical illusion, and reality in his masterpiece, *Enrico IV* (1922), while Eugène Ionesco, in *Le Tableau* (1955), stages the *guignolade* of a man murdering his wife who, in turn, metamorphoses into a beautiful work of art. In Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* (1944), Mr Wingfield's blown-up photograph indicates him as the "fifth character in the play"[1], although he is never physically present onstage.

Portraits primarily provide narrative nuclei[2] (or what structuralists used to call "mythemes") that dramatists can exploit as a device to develop functional relationships and storylines. Moreover, the presentation of portraits on stage invites

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[1] Tennessee Williams, *The Glass Menagerie*, ed. by Robert Bray (New York: New Directions, 1999): 5.
[2] The narratology of drama is still in its swaddling clothes. See, for instance, Manfred Jahn, "Narrative Voice and Agency in Drama: Aspects of a Narratology of Drama", New Literary History, Vol. 32, no. 3, 2001: 659-79, and Ansgar Nünning and Roy Sommer, "Diegetic and Mimetic Narrativity: Some Further Steps towards a Narratology of Drama", in John Pier and José Ángel García Landa (eds). *Theorizing Narrativity* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008): 329–52.

the exploration of notions of representation and subjectivity. However, every conception of representation and subjectivity is tied up with one's own historical and epistemological framework. To tackle the very concept of "mimesis" means to touch something that bristles with centuries of philosophical enquiries and contradictory ideas. To say something like "drama is an imitative art" is very hazardous: every word of this simple phrase can have very different meanings. For example, the concept of "imitation" is problematic: does imitation represent, reflect, mimic, enact, or perform? The semiotics of theatre and drama can provide helpful insights into an analysis of a specific play, but, as a discipline, it has a number of limits. It has to be historicised and also has to leave, whenever possible, the leaves of didactic books and come to terms with the level of performance.

As already hinted, pictures on stage negotiate cultural notions of representation. The Renaissance inherited and adapted the classical theories on drama as mimesis. For Aristotle, tragedy is "a representation of an action [*mimēsis praxeōs*] of a superior kind"[3] (23) while the term 'drama' is cognate with the verb "*dran*", to do. Action "involves agents [*prattontes*]" (23-4) and must have pre-eminence over all other aspects: "[i]t is the story of the action that is the representation" (24). The primacy of the plot, the *muthos*, involves the accessorial status of *opsis*, visual staging. "Staging can be emotionally attractive, but is not a matter of art [*atechnotaton*] and is not integral to poetry. […] Staging belongs more to the scene-painter's art than to that of the poets" (25-6). What Kenny translates as "emotionally attractive" is the Greek adjective "*psychagogikon*", which has a stronger meaning, literally "soul-moving". This seemingly destabilising and threatening quality of *opsis* is considerably downplayed in favour of action in the *Poetics*[4]. Remarkably enough, in Aristotle's treatise, the actual place of representation, the theatre, is mentioned only once, in passing. This is interesting because its very name is highly indicative. "Theatre"

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[3] Aristotle, *Poetics*, ed. by Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 23. All subsequent references to this text will appear in parentheses in the text.
[4] This issue has been studied by many scholars, who usually compare and contrast it with Plato's different conception of mimesis, that is, artistic representation as the copy of a copy. For an overview, see Federico Condello, "*Opsis* e Testo. Contributi della Messinscena Odierna all'Esegesi della Tragedia Greca: Alcuni Esempi", in Sandra Pietrini (ed.), *Picturing Drama: Illustrazioni e Riscritture dei Grandi Classici, dall'Antichità ai Nostri Giorni* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2013): 17-30. See also Paul Ricoeur's elucidations in the first volume of *Temps et Récit* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1983).

(*théatron*) is a "place for viewing" or "of seeing" (*theáomai*), which reveals its constituent nature "as a visual art", as Kernodle argues[5].

If drama is understood as imitating action through action, a picture onstage problematises the act of viewing. "Portraits are not just likenesses but works of art that engage with ideas of identity as they are perceived, represented, and understood in different times and places"[6]. Kernodle affirms that many forms of early modern European theatre originated from *tableaux vivants*, which raises the issue of whether a *tableau vivant* is a form of theatre. Aristotle would deny this claim, as would Sir Philip Sidney, for whom the mode of representation of theatre *is* iconic imitation, but as a speaking picture (in reference to Simonides of Ceos' legendary dictum "painting is silent poetry, poetry is speaking painting").

Emmanuelle Hénin has shown that the Horatian motto *ut pictura poësis* (as is painting so is poetry) actually stemmed from an earlier *ut pictura theatrum*[7]. It is indeed quite daunting to enter the meanders of critical exegesis on the problematic concept of mimesis, but Hénin explains that the concept takes its origin in the performances of the *mimos*, the mime.[8] Aristotle himself repeatedly compares the mimetic representation of drama and painting. This comparison would develop and flourish across the centuries, up to Leonardo Da Vinci's *paragone* of the sister arts and, most importantly, to Sidney's *An Apology for Poetry*: "Poesy, therefore, is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word *mimesis*, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth; to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture"[9].

If *opsis* is minimised, it is no wonder that props do not figure eminently in Aristotle's treatise. "Ever since Aristotle, the analysis of plays has focused on subjects

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[5] George R. Kernodle, *From Art to Theatre*: *Form and Convention in the Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1944).

[6] Shearer West, *Portraiture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004): 11.

[7] Emmanuelle Hénin, *Ut Pictura Theatrum: Théâtre et Peinture de la Renaissance Italienne au Classicisme Français* (Geneva: Droz, 2003) : especially 9-39.

[8] A "*mimêma*" designated an "illusionistic portrait". To our knowledge, the first play featuring portraits onstage may have been Aeschylus' satyr play *Theoroi* (*The Spectators*), where satyrs offer images of themselves to Poseidon. However, the precise type of images used is still debated. For an overview, see Berte Kiilerich, "The Satyr Portraits in Aeschylus' *Theoroi*: Spitting Images or Art History in a Different Key?", *Polis*, no. 2, 2006: 61-72.

[9] Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry*, ed. by R. W. Maslen (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002): 86.

rather than objects, mimesis rather than the material stuff of the stage”[10]. For the Stagirite, *opsis* can be rightly used in order to reinforce the plot, for instance, when *anagnorisis* (recognition/discovery) is achieved through the use of "inanimate and chance objects" (30) and similar tokens (Aristotle hastens to add that "this is the least artistic form"). However, the study of theatrical props has gained more and more impetus in recent decades. The semiotics of theatre and drama can provide valuable insights into the ways spectators make sense of props, and how actors can shape their transactional values.

On the other hand, the use of portraits onstage is intrinsically tied to the extensive range of effects they can produce in the transaction between playacting and audience-reception. These effects, in turn, are bound to the visual culture of a given period which drama may mediate, reflect upon, or even subvert. Such interrelations are indissolubly inscribed in historical and ideological factors. In order to understand them, it is important to consider the material culture in which these portraits are situated: the uses and values they had, which social practices they instantiated, and their circulation as commodities. However, before considering these questions, the semiotics of theatre and drama can provide valuable ideas in order to begin to understand what happens when we look at someone look at a portrait on stage.

I.1.2 Interpreting Portraits: Semiotic Approaches

Among the aims of this dissertation is to show that portraits are a special type of props. The semiotics of theatre and drama has always been deeply interested in the processes of sense-making that circulate between actors and spectators, and can underpin this claim[11]. In particular, useful resources can be extracted from the early

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[10] Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003): v.

[11] The state of this discipline as a heuristic field of enquiry cannot be described as thriving. Since the 1980s, post-structuralism and the boom of cultural studies have debunked old, logocentric methodologies, and the last twenty years have recorded no major advancement. See Keir Elam, "'In what chapter of his bosom?': Reading Shakespeare's Bodies", in Terence Hawkes (ed.), *Alternative Shakespeares, Vol. 2* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996): 140-63, and id., "'Post'-Script: Post-Semiotics, Posthumous Semiotics, Closet Semiotics", in *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, second edition (London: Routledge: 2002): 191-219. By 1995, Fernando de Toro had already reported this debunking: "It seemed after a while that producing diagrams and arrows had been unnecessarily obtrusive and did not get us anywhere" (*Theatre Semiotics: Text and Staging in Modern Theatre*, Frankfurt: Vervuert Verlag, 1995:

findings of the Prague School, as well as from the application of Peircian semiotics. Throughout the dissertation, I will keep the distinction between theatre and drama as delineated by Keir Elam: by theatre is meant "the complex of phenomena associated with the performer-audience transaction", by "drama", the "mode of fiction designed for stage representation and constructed according to particular ('dramatic') conventions"[12].

The writings of the Prague formalist school in the 1930s remain compulsory reading for anyone researching the semiotics of theatre. Of particular interest are their studies in the field of semiotisation. "All that is on the stage is a sign"[13] was Jiři Veltruský's formula. According to Honzl[14], the actor represents a character, the scenery represents the locale of the play, and lighting, music, gestures, etc. render dramatic performance "a set of signs". With his 1968 schema, Tadeusz Kowzan[15] provided a preliminary typology of thirteen sign-systems which would pave the way for structuralists, who went further by classifying many more possible configurations of signs. These results, however, have encountered negative criticism. It has become clear that such an all-encompassing classification cannot take place for several reasons: theatre entails a continuous process of semiosis, that is, a continuous production of meaning. Codes and systems often overlap and intersect, and, moreover, the reception of the audience cannot be channelled mechanically. Thus, it is helpful to think of sense-making processes in the theatre from the perspective of what can be called an ever-changing

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2). The semiotics of theatre and drama has certainly suffered from the structuralist *furor* for an all-encompassing, all-systematising pigeonholing. However, de Toro points out that "'semiotic thinking' is very much alive, and all the post-structuralist thought operates from the field of signs" ("The End of Theatre Semiotics? A Symptom of an Epistemological Shift", *Semiotica,* Issue 168, no. 1, 2008: 123). Beyond *and* within semiotics, there extend the realms of pragmatics and culture. It is sufficient to read any one of Yuri M. Lotman's works to perceive how social and cultural relationships can be examined fruitfully beyond formalism and how all cultural practices of meaning-making have a power of shaping discourses ideologically. It should be borne in mind that semiotics came into being before structuralism and its logocentric strictures. Andrés Pérez-Simón goes as far as to argue that "Structuralism is still valid today but only if the idea of structure is presented as a methodological tool, not as synonymous with a grand narrative" (*The Theatrical Pendulum: Paths of Innovation in the Modernist Stage* (PhD dissertation: University of Toronto, 2010): 24)

[12] Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (Methuen: London and New York, 1980): 2.

[13] Jiři Veltruský, "Man and Object in the Theatre", in Paul L. Garvin (ed.), *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure, and Style* (Washington, D. C.: Georgetown, University Press, 1964): 84.

[14] Jindrich Honzl, "Dynamics of the Sign in the Theater", in Ladislav Matejka and Irwin R. Titunik (eds), *Semiotics of Art: Prague School Contributions* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1976): 74-93.

[15] Tadeusz Kowzan, "Le signe au théâtre: introduction à la sémiologie de l'art du spectacle" , *Diogène*, no. 61, 1968: 59-90.

"ecology of signs"[16]. Conversely, a portrait can communicate differently to different viewers, "speaking" to their personal experience, emotions, memories, and culture. We are all spectators in front of a portrait, just like in front of a theatrical performance, but this interaction is fluid and depends on many factors.

The role of the audience can be addressed through De Marinis' notion of a modal tripartition for what he calls a "dramaturgy of the spectator":

> In more exact terms, we must ask what are the determinant features of this selective attention which is, and always has been, subject to manipulation by the producers of theatre. At the same time, it should be clear that it is not only a question of attracting the spectator's attention towards one thing but also of distracting it from something else. […] From the receiver's point of view, these modes can be labeled in more technical terms: focalization, defocalization, and refocalization[17].

De Marinis is well aware that there is always an active dimension in this process: the spectator's reception should not be seen "as some mechanical operation which has been strictly predetermined by the performance and its producers, but rather as a task which the spectator carries out in conditions of relative independence, […] in conditions of 'controlled creative autonomy'"[18]. I suggest that the display of a portrait on stage requires exactly these dramaturgical shifts of observation and attention-directing.

Peircian semiotics provides further methodological tools for this research[19]. For Peirce, a sign is "something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity"[20] (*CP*, 2.228). According to their specific mode of representation, signs are either icons, indices or symbols – Peirce's best known tripartition:

> The Icon has no dynamical connection with the object it represents; it simply happens that its qualities resemble those of that object, and excite analogous sensations in the mind for which it is a likeness. But it really stands unconnected to them. The index is

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[16] See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981): 16-17.

[17] Marco De Marinis, "Dramaturgy of the Spectator", *The Drama Review*, Vol. 31, no. 2, 1987: 107.

[18] Ibid.: 101.

[19] See Tony Jappy's *Introduction to Peircian Visual Semiotics* (London and New York, Bloomsbury: 2013).

[20] All Peircian quotations refer to the monumental edition of Peirce's collected papers. These references will appear in the body of the text in parentheses preceded by the acronym *CP*, followed by the volume and the page numbers. To say that an icon resembles an object to be defined as such is not entirely correct, because it omits a key role in the process of semiosis: the interpretant. The interpretant is the effect which is created by a sign in the mind of the addressed person and can be an equivalent or a more developed sign.

physically connected with its object; they make an organic pair, but the interpreting mind has nothing to do with this connection, except remarking it, after it is established. The symbol is connected with its object by virtue of the idea of the symbol-using mind, without which no such connection would exist (*CP*, 2.299).

This description of the three orders of signs is fraught with implications. Peirce's semiotics is pre-eminently pragmatic: since "no two persons can have exactly the same experience of the world, it follows that different interpreters will interpret signs differently"[21]. However, I posit that culture places in us a good number of entrenched connotations that transcend individual experience. Thus, theoretically, it may well be true that "there can be no strictly predetermined effect of a sign upon an interpreter, in spite of the wishes of the sign's utterer or creator"[22]. In practice, however, conventions play a major role in real life and drama has always "held the mirror up" to such connotations.

Shearer West applies Peirce's tripartition to portraits, suggesting that they share features of all three types of signs: a portrait "resembles the object of representation (icon), it refers to the act of sitting (index), and it contains gestures, expressions, and props that can be read with knowledge of social and cultural conventions (symbol)"[23]. For Peirce, genuine indices always have an iconic dimension: an index "involve[s] a sort of Icon, although an Icon of a peculiar kind" (*CP* 2.248). A portrait is characterised by its iconic appearance: it recalls an image but it also concretely refers to its absent dynamic object, the portrayed person. "The portrait is an index in that it represents the act of portrayal that produced it. Indeed, it is an indexical icon in that it purports to denote by resemblance the act of portrayal that produced it"[24]. This was Peirce's own view:

> We say that the portrait of a person we have not seen is convincing. So far as, on the ground merely of what I see in it, I am led to form an idea of the person it represents, it is an Icon. But, in fact, it is not a pure Icon, because I am greatly influenced by knowing that it is an *effect*, through the artist, caused by the original's appearance […] Besides, I know that portraits have but the slightest resemblance to their originals, except in certain conventional respects, and after a conventional scale of values, etc. (CP 2.92)

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[21] Tony Jappy, *op. cit.* (2013): 7.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Shearer West, *op. cit.* (2004): 41.
[24] Harry Berger, Jr., "Fictions of the Pose: Facing the Gaze of Early Modern Portraiture", *Representations*, no. 46, 1994: 99.

Once the iconic resemblance is recognised and the physical link with the model assessed, the spectators rely on forms of "collateral knowledge", that is, on aesthetic and ethical values and connotations they have both passively absorbed and actively elaborated from their cultural episteme.

In theatre and drama, indexicality plays an extremely important role because it can be expressed both physically and verbally. In the first case, it operates through the presentation of props and the actors' gestures, while in the second case, it operates through deixis and anaphora. The very quality of portraits as indices, then, can bring to the fore these theatrical processes.

Portraits onstage are first of all "presented" objects, which are offered in display. This "presentation" is part of the notion of "ostension". Umberto Eco recognised ostension to be at the core of drama: it "is the most basic instance of performance"[25]. Similarly, according to Elam, ostension is "the most 'primitive' form of signification":

> In order to refer to, indicate or define a given object, one simply picks it up and shows it to the receiver of the message in question. Semiotization involves the *showing* of objects and events [...] to the audience, rather than describing, explaining or defining them. This ostensive aspect of the stage 'show' distinguishes it, for example, from narrative, where persons, objects and events are necessarily described and recounted[26].

Veltruský even went as far as to advocate the mysterious agency of what he dubbed an "action force" connecting actors and objects in the living continuum of the performance. He claimed that this force "attracts a certain action" to the prop and "provokes in us the expectation of [that] action"[27]. He cites the example of a dagger: when it is simply part of an actor's costume, its role is complementary as a "static force of characterisation", but when it is used to stab, then it exhibits its action force and will later become "a sign of murder".

More recently, however, a few studies have questioned the dynamics of the theatrical sign. Freddie Rokem promotes a different dynamics of the object:

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[25] Umberto Eco, "Semiotics of Theatrical Performance", *The Drama Review*, Vol. 21, no. 1, 1997: 110.
[26] Keir Elam, *op. cit.* (1980): 29-30.
[27] Quoted in Teemu Paavoilanen, "From Props to Affordances: An Ecological Approach to Theatrical Objects", in J. K. Curry (ed.), *Theatre Symposium, Vol. 18 - The Prop's The Thing: Stage Properties Reconsidered* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2010): 116-7.

It would […] be appropriate to rename what Honzl called the dynamics of the sign in the theatre the dynamics of the *object* because when the object x is turned into a sign of the object y – 'I call the chair something else' – the materiality of the chair *qua* chair still remains[28].

Similarly, according to Andrew Sofer, objects become props only when "an actor-object interaction exists"[29]: he denies any intrinsic "underlying logic". Teemu Paavolainen concurs, arguing that "there cannot really be any objectively necessary and sufficient *properties* to stage properties"[30].

However, and at least in the case of portraits, I would disagree. Andrew Sofer himself refers to the portrait of the father in Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* (1891). Let us assume that one reads the play without having first seen a theatrical production. Except for the initial stage direction in Act 1, which informs us that "*a large framed portrait of a cavalry general in full dress uniform dominates this smaller room*"[31], there is no further reference to the painting either in the dialogue or in any other stage direction. The reader may have utterly forgotten the presence of the portrait but, in the theatre, the visual effect of the epilogue is quite striking: "When the pregnant Hedda commits suicide under the portrait of General Gabler we are instantly aware of Ibsen's emphasis on three generations united in death"[32].

Portraits, at least in the corpus of plays I analyse, do not "transform" themselves once they are taken in hand: they cannot become signs of something different from the person depicted. The very nature of a portrait makes it, through metonymy, a direct substitute for, or, indirectly, a deictical indication of a person. A portrait "presents" an absence, but can become, as Elam remarks, "a transactional object, used to create a relationship not only between two characters but between the character-actor and the audience"[33]. A picture, then, retains its inherent meaning when staged but, just like other props,

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[28] Freddie Rokem, "A chair is a Chair is a CHAIR: The Object as Sign in the Theatrical Performance", in Yishai Tobin (ed.), *The Prague School and Its Legacy* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1988): 278.

[29] Andrew Sofer, *op. cit.* (2003): 12.

[30] Teemu Paavoilanen, *op. cit.* (2010): 117.

[31] Henrik Ibsen, *Hedda Gabler*, ed. and transl. by Doug Hughes (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 2001): 5.

[32] John Doebler, *Shakespeare's Speaking Pictures: Studies in Iconic Imagery* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974): xi. For another discussion of the portrait in this play, see Elaine Aston and George Savona, *Theatre as Sign-System: A Semiotics of Text and Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991): 30.

[33] Keir Elam, "'Most truly limned and living in your face': Looking at Pictures in Shakespeare", in Jacquelyn Bessell, Fernando Cioni, and Virginia Mason Vaughan (eds), *Speaking Pictures – The*

[its] impact is mediated both by the gestures of the individual actor who handles the object, and by the horizon of interpretation available to historically situated spectators at a given time. […] Invisible on the page except as textual signifiers, props seduce our attention in the playhouse as they become drawn into the stage action and absorb complex and sometimes conflicted meanings[34].

It is important to point out that, in scholarly analyses such as this, the level of performance cannot remain "in its time-honored place in footnotes, where it is brought forward to illustrate a textual point"[35]. I will try, whenever possible, to refer to recent productions of the plays I discuss and, in the case of lesser known play-texts, I will try to consider the historical and physical staging conditions of those specific scenes.

Studies of intermediality and multimodality[36] can also offer important stimuli to this research and enrich semiotic interpretations. The theatre I am dealing with was characterised by a dynamic constellation of visual, aural, oral, tactile, and kinetic elements. The ostension of portraits could be a device to metatheatrically draw attention to the complex variety of configurations underlying theatrical performances. It is rather surprising that multimodal analysis has not devoted specific studies to drama this far, despite acknowledging that "the multimodality of drama is one of its prototypical qualities"[37]. One reason behind this is the performative dimension of drama, which renders it unstable and liable to subjective evaluation. On the other hand, these fields can offer useful critical tools in the specific case of portraits.

Van Leeuwen and Kress, for instance, trace an interesting division between "'demand' pictures" and "'offer' pictures". The first category is represented by pictures in which the represented participants look at the viewer, their lines of sight functioning as vectors that establish a reciprocal contact. When this happens, the

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Visual/Verbal Nexus of Dramatic Performance (Madison and Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010): 68.

[34] Andrew Sofer, *op. cit.* (2003): 2. See also the introduction to Arthur F. Kinney, *Shakespeare's Webs*: *Networks of Meaning in Renaissance Drama* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

[35] Barbara Hodgdon and W. B. Worthen, "Drama and/or Theater and/or Performance: A Dialogue", in Jeffrey Masten and William N. West (eds), *Renaissance Drama 40: What is Renaissance Drama?* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2012): 22-1.

[36] For a concise note on the differences between these two approaches, see Christine Schwanecke, *Intermedial Storytelling. Thematisation, Imitation and Incorporation of Photography in English and American Fiction at the Turn of the 21st Century* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2012): 13 and ff.

[37] Dan McIntyre, "Integrating Multimodal Analysis and the Stylistics of Drama: A Multimodal Perspective on Ian McKellen's *Richard III*", *Language and Literature*, Issue 17, no. 4, 2008: 310. It is rather ironic that, after stating this, McIntyre goes on to analyse a movie transposition.

picture "acknowledges the viewers explicitly, addressing them with a visual 'you'"[38]. This configuration entails what the two scholars term a "visual act" of demand: the participant's gaze demands that the spectator "enter into some kind of imaginary relation with him or her"[39]. Portraits are, of course, a case in point. As W. J. T. Mitchell argues, average portraits "are the most forlorn figures of longing for recognition"[40]. "'Offer' pictures", instead, address viewers indirectly: "Here the viewer is not object, but subject of the look, and the represented participant is the object of the viewer's dispassionate scrutiny"[41]. Thus, the pictures are offered as items of information and contemplation. I suggest that portraits on stage potentially profit from the dynamics between 'demand' and 'offer' pictures. When displayed on stage, a portrait can be made the goal of the visual vectors of the audience. It is offered there as a prop, but it can gain salience depending on the significance it has in the scene and in the whole dramatic action. Interestingly, Van Leeuwen and Kress hint that the 'demand' function also applies to gestures, so a hand pointing at the viewers can, for example, invite or warn them.

Finally, intermediality studies have also explored the ways in which ekphrasis joins the visual and the aural in rhetorically moving ways. Ekphrasis can be included, according to Irina O. Rajewsky, in one of the three branches of intermediality[42]: intermedial references, when a medial product (in our case, the actor's speech) refers to a different medium (painting). The friction and union between these two elements can shed light on each other's properties.

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[38] Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (London: Routledge, 1996): 122.
[39] Ibid.
[40] W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004): 73.
[41] Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *op. cit* (1996): 122.
[42] Irina O. Rajewsky, *Intermedialität* (Tübingen: Francke, 2002). The other two are media combination and media transfer. On ekphrasis, see Murray Krieger, *Ekphrasis*: *The Illusion of the Natural Sign* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Mario Klarer, *Ekphrasis: Bildbeschreibung als Repräsentationstheorie bei Spenser, Sidney, Lyly und Shakespeare* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2001); Richard Meek, *Narrating the Visual in Shakespeare* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009). For a useful survey on the relationships between image and text, see Angela Locatelli (ed.), *La Conoscenza della Letteratura / The Knowledge of Literature* (Bergamo: Bergamo University Press, 2011): Vol. X.

I.1.3 Situating Portraits in Visual and Material Culture Studies

In his book of voyages *Hakluytus Posthumus* (1625), Samuel Purchas includes the account of the first English trading voyage to Japan in 1613. It was led by John Saris, a captain of the East India Company. In his letter, Saris relates an interesting anecdote that took place when his ship, the *Clove*, landed in Hirado, near Nagasaki:

> I gave leave to divers women of the better sort to come into my Cabbin, where the Picture of *Venus*, with her sonne *Cupid*, did hang somewhat wantonly set out in a large frame, they thinking it to be our Ladie and her Sonne, fell downe and worshipped it, with shewes of great deuotion, telling me in a whispering manner (that some of their own companions which were not so, might not heare) that they were *Christianos*, whereby we perceiued them to be Christians, conuerted by the *Portugall* Iesuits[43].

We have here a wide spectrum of emotional and social reactions to images. The Japanese women respond with adoration to what they think is a holy icon. The captain is first bashful at his possessing a lewd picture. Then, he is surprised to discover that the women are Christians, but, at the same time, is made aware of what he must have perceived as Catholic idolatry among them. Beyond religious differences, the Japanese show also a different approach towards the picture in terms of gender, ethics, and social hierarchy: "[T]he wantonness of Venus and Cupid (both presumably nude) does not signify for them as it does for the English captain [...], the proximity of mother and child [...] represents a spiritual authority that transcends the obligations of patriarchal and feudal obedience"[44]. Quite interestingly, Saris later noted the market for "painted pictures, the Japanese delighting in lascivious representations, and stories of wars by sea or land, the larger the better worth, [sold] for one, two, or three hundred"[45]. When he returned to England, his overseers discovered that he was the owner of some of these lascivious pictures which were publicly burned on 10 January 1615.

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[43] Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus* (London: 1625): II, 367.
[44] Robert Markley, "Riches, Power, Trade and Religion: The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600-1720", in Daniel Carey (ed.), *Asian Travel in the Renaissance* (Carlton, Malden, and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 188.
[45] Quoted in Robert Kerr (ed.), *A General History of Voyages and Travels to the End of the 18th Century* (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne and Co., 1811): IX, 71.

This episode is comparable to Sir Walter Ralegh's[46] feelings towards the Guyanan people's behaviour in 1595. Firstly, he tried to figure out the differences between trading and a (partial) gift economy. Then, he gave the natives twenty-shilling coins "with her Majesties picture to weare, with promise that they would become her servants thencefoorth"[47]. Ralegh was delighted to see that the natives accepted the coins. He claimed that the aim of the English would be the liberation of Guyana from "invasion and conquest" (sic) and "showed them her majesty's picture which they so admired and honored, as it had been easy to have brought them idolatrous thereof"[48]. Ralegh was fully aware of the instrumental power of royal portraiture: he had been among those who had nurtured the cult of Elizabeth I in England, which was known to tend to idolatry and to replace the lost Marian worship. Moreover, he copied English social conventions in Guyana: after 1585, the nobles had begun to wear the queen's miniature to show political allegiance (a custom quickly imitated by the lower classes, though with cheaper pictures), and Ralegh tried to introduce the same practice among the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

I quote these two examples to emphasise how much culture can shape one's interaction with portraits. As John Berger famously wrote: "The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled"[49]. Biological and cognitive processes are imbricated with cultural heritage: vision is not a straightforward instrument of knowledge, and observation comes laden with theory (from Greek *theoria*, contemplation, viewing, show). The now traditional division[50] between "vision" (to indicate the physical, biological sensory channel of sight) and "visuality" (sight as a socio-cultural fact), has been problematic from the start. Just as visuality has to deal with the body and the psyche of the observer and of the observed, the process of neurological image-making is social, as well. Think, for instance, of the feeling of frustration when you hold in your hand an old model of e-reader: you touch it and

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[46] "Ralegh" seems to be the spelling that the poet-courtier-soldier preferred to call himself: see Carlo M. Bajetta, *Sir Walter Ralegh: Poeta di Corte Elisabettiano* (Milan: Mursia, 1998): 18.
[47] Quoted in Louis Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth: Authority, Gender, and Representation* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006): 95.
[48] Ibid.: 99.
[49] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (New York: Penguin Books, 1972): 7.
[50] See Hal Foster (ed.), *Vision and Visuality* (Seattle: Bay View Press, 1988).

discover that its surface is not a touch-screen. Thus, "human visual perception is culturally plastic, defying any straightforward nature/nurture dichotomy"[51].

A definition of visual culture can be thorny, but, since one has to be given here, it will be this: "the visual practices in which users seek information, meaning, and pleasure in an interface with visual technology"[52] – where by "visual technology" is meant "any form of apparatus designed either to be looked at or to enhance natural vision, from oil painting to television and the Internet"[53]. Visual culture studies are "concerned with all aspects of culture that communicate through visual means"[54]. Throughout the dissertation, I also draw on the notion of "scopic regime", first introduced by Christian Metz (though in a different context). By this term, I mean "the use of vision and visual technologies on a given historical and cultural context to maintain power relations"[55].

Visual culture, then, addresses the social ways of meaning-making through images. It is not necessary to use the plural, visual cultures, because the term itself "denotes an heterogeneous and temporally stratified miscellany of changing visualities"[56]. However, it is always important to take into account *whose* visual culture is the object of analysis. Hegemonic ideologies shape the way we perceive and experience reality, and it is necessary to take into account marginal voices to expose Barthesian mythologies.

The study of visual culture is intrinsically interdisciplinary: it crosses not only sociology, anthropology, art history, psychoanalysis[57], philosophy (especially aesthetics and phenomenology), but also neuroscience and the cognitive sciences, as well as media studies, religious studies, gender studies, and queer studies. However wildly utopian it is to embrace and fully know all these different approaches, the

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[51] Michael Squire (ed.), *Sight and the Ancient Senses* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2016): 5.
[52] Nicholas Mirzoeff (ed.), *The Visual Culture Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002): 5.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Nicole R. Fleetwood (ed.), *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2011): 17.
[56] Marcus Nordlund, *The Dark Lantern. A Historical Study of Sight in Shakespeare, Webster, and Middleton* (Göteburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1999): xxiii.
[57] See especially the two following indispensable studies: Barbara Freedman, *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), and Laura Mulvey, "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema", *Screen*, Issue 16, no. 3, 1975: 6-18. For an articulation and a general survey of the studies of the "gaze", see Francesca Di Blasio, *Teoria e pratiche dello sguardo* (Bergamo: Bergamo University Press, 2001).

opposite, that is, applying only one single hermeneutical framework, has proved equally faulty: "[I]t has become clear that a too rigid application of systematic methodologies for visual analysis [...] is self-defeating"[58].

What is fundamental is to historicise visual culture. This does not mean that scholars' aim is to ascertain the existence of a "period eye"[59], that is, a theoretical configuration by which all inhabitants of a given society see reality in a certain single way. A "period eye" in these terms (crossing gender, sexuality, class, race) may well never have existed, or if it did, it would probably be mostly irretrievable. A plurality of elements can instead be investigated: What types of pictures were available to these people? Who owned and who made them? What was the status of images in a society? How did people explain cognitive and affective processes? How did that affect one's religious or philosophical beliefs? Although, to use Husserl's terms, we may never be at the centre of the early modern intersubjective "field of perception"[60], we can try to reconstruct some of these ideological premises. As Gillian Rose argues, the effects of an image "through the ways of seeing mobilized by the image, are crucial in the production and reproduction of visions of social difference; but these effects always intersect with the social context of its viewing and the visualities its spectators bring to their viewing"[61].

As far as portraits are concerned, it has been studied that, just like all paintings, they "have a range of viewers: addressed, implied and represented. Each focalizes in their own way"[62]. Yet, portraits establish a particular form of communication with their spectators, in an exchange that is regulated by subjective as well as socio-cultural pragmatics and modes of sense-making. They are situated in power relations within a society and can have many different uses and functions[63].

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[58] Martin Lister and Liz Wells, "Seeing Beyond Belief: Cultural Studies as an Approach to Analysing the Visual", in Carey Jewitt and Theo van Leeuwan (eds), *The Handbook of Visual Analysis* (Delhi, London, and Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2001): 73.

[59] See Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[60] See the discussion in Bruce R. Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2010): 28.

[61] Gillian Rose, *Visual Technologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (Delhi, London, and Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2001): 15. For the sake of legibility, I have normalised her italics.

[62] *Ibid*: 45.

[63] See the studies by Edouard Pommier, *Théories du portrait. De la Renaissance aux Lumières* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998) and by Jean-Luc Nancy, *Le Regard du portrait* (Paris: Galilée, 2000).

When I write that portraits have "spectators", it is clear that this theatrical imagery indicates that theatre, too, is part of a society's visual world and culture. In early modern England, the activity of playgoing was surely recreational, in the sense that one could spend three hours at the playhouse and in the bear-baiting arenas, or following civic pageants or watching public executions. The uniqueness of theatre, however, lay in the fact that this society represented itself "insistently as a stage full of actors"[64]. Theatre was at the heart of epistemic models of identity and of human interaction. If, ordinarily, portraits not only establish, but also interpellate subject-object relations, these effects can be multiplied when the portraits are displayed where "*totus mundus agit histrionem*". This is also where material culture studies can fruitfully intersect with visual culture.

"[M]aterial culture can be considered to be the totality of artifacts in a culture, the vast universe of objects used by humankind to cope with the physical world, to facilitate social intercourse, to delight our fancy, and to create symbols of meaning"[65]. Studying staged portraits requires knowing which types of portraits were present in early modern England and which uses they had in everyday life in different social backgrounds.

When, in 1996, de Grazia, Quilligan, and Stallybrass asked the question, "in the period that has from its inception been identified with the emergence of the subject, *where is the object*?"[66], they paved the way for a crucial change of perspective in Renaissance literature studies. Apart from the complex "emergence of the subject" issue, their joined work opened up material cultural studies for early modern literary and dramatic texts. Indeed, "the meanings attributed to material objects in and by early modern culture are to a large degree to be found in verbal texts"[67], where they are not musealised. This critical shift did not come about without questioning:

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[64] Dieter Mehl, Angela Stock, and Anne-Julia Zwierlein (eds), *Plotting Early Modern London: New Essays on Jacobean City Comedy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004): 9.

[65] Thomas J. Schlereth, *Material Culture Studies in America* (Lanham, New York, Oxford, and Toronto: Altamira Press, 1982): 2.

[66] Margareta De Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (eds), *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 2.

[67] Joachim Frenk, *Textualised Objects: Material Culture in Early Modern English Literature* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2012): 243.

If the new historicism of the 1980s was preoccupied primarily with the fashioning of early modern *subjects*, the growing tendency at the millennium, evidenced in the recent turn to 'material culture', is to engage with *objects*. […] But the 'where's Waldo?' approach to the object that the above passage advocates assumes that scholars of material culture already know with some certainty what Waldo looks like[68].

Indeed, when we talk of objects, we normally use terms such as consumerism, fetishes, and use value that have acquired markedly complex meanings from Marxist studies onwards. In dealing with early modern objects, it is necessary to reconstruct their status, uses, and circulation in their original society[69]. Here, Arjun Appadurai's research on the "social life" of objects can be of great use:

Commodities represent very complex social forms and distributions of knowledge. In the first place, and crudely, such knowledge can be of two sorts: the knowledge (technical, social, aesthetic, and so forth) that goes into the production of the commodity; and the knowledge that goes into appropriately consuming the commodity[70].

Portraits are artefacts that express and configure social ways of looking. Remembering that "just as we humans give meaning to objects, so too do the objects we create, gaze on, and use for communication or simply for pleasure have the power to give meaning to us as well in the dynamic interaction of social networks"[71], it follows that the presentation of a portrait on stage can definitely acquire salience at the centre of spectatorship. In this respect, material culture studies can offer exciting, original ways to cast light on, for example, stage props:

If we want to understand Shakespeare's audience's response to the material culture of the stage it is that experiential, visceral appreciation of early modern possessions which we need to investigate, to see how knowledge of objects might have been brought into play by the electrifying connections between words and things in performance[72].

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[68] Jonathan Gil Harris, "Shakespeare's Hair: Staging the Object of Material Culture", *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Issue 52, no. 4, 2001: 479.
[69] See Arthur F. Kinney, *op. cit.* (2004), and David Hawkes, *Idols of the Marketplace: Idolatry and Commodity Fetishism in English Literature, 1580–1680* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).
[70] Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 41.
[71] Lisa Cartwright and Marita Sturken, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 3.
[72] Catherine Richardson, *Shakespeare and Material Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 14.

It cannot be denied that "[s]tage properties encode networks of material relations that are the stuff of drama and society alike"[73]. As shall be seen later, the theatre of early modern England, in particular, was a theatre of props, not just of words: "So common was this practice, in fact, that our memories of many early modern plays involve images of characters holding things"[74].

Importantly, according to Douglas Bruster, props on the early modern English stage did not only "serve as floating signifiers between individuals […] but bec[a]me a focus of interest in themselves":

> [I]n the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean drama commodities would come to be a source of interest in their own right, as the center of a purity discourse which worked to equate subject and object on the material plane. Shifting its attention from semiosis to subjectivity, the drama began to explore the reified basis of personal relations even as it tended, with more and more frequency, to personify commodities, according them a life of their own. Identity thus came to be inscribed in, instead of by, these objects[75].

Only by considering the material dimension of portraits and their role in the early modern visual and material culture can the aim of the present dissertation be achieved. These approaches, together with the semiotics of theatre and drama, provide the conceptual toolbox required for the present investigation.

I.2 Early Modern Visualities

This subchapter is devoted to an investigation of those aspects of the visual culture of early modern England that are relevant for this research. "Visual culture" does not simply consist of images and pictures. It includes the displays of public spectacle, civic pageantry, differences of clothing in terms of rank, the scopic relationships between classes and genders, and such "shows" as public executions. Only some of these topics will be analysed: those that can cast light on the social lives of portraits from the Elizabethan to the Caroline period. However, it is also necessary to go back

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[73] Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (eds), *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 1.
[74] Douglas Bruster, "The Dramatic Life of Objects in the Early Modern Theatre", in Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (eds), *op. cit.* (2002): 67.
[75] Ibid.: 89.

to the beginning of the Tudor age: that was the time when the circulation and status of images underwent crucial innovations and upheavals that marked the ways English people owned, desired, and thought of portraits for decades.

I discuss how the long-taught notion of Reformed England as an aniconic or iconophobic culture has proved erroneous. The visual culture of early modern England was rich, though embattled and contested. Not all images were accused of being idols, and portraits were considered to be idols only by extremists. Still, religious as well as secular images could trigger social anxieties. At the same time, this was a cultural context in which the phenomenology of "sight" itself was being interrogated in new ways, and painters as well as authors articulated the interaction between spectators and pictures along new paradigms. Furthermore, the powers of the imagination came to the fore as a particularly charged topic.

I.2.1 Salient Aspects of the Visual Culture of Early Modern England

"Severe visual anorexia"[76]: until few years ago, this was the view on the visual culture of early modern England. This diagnosis proceeded from what seemed to be obvious symptoms. The Reformation, with its iconoclasm, had destroyed holy icons and religious simulacra, and had whitewashed walls wherever it was thought necessary. As far as painting is concerned, portraiture became the only acceptable subject. If, under Edward VI, Protestant propaganda had "made brilliant use of the graphic image"[77], around 1580, iconoclasm had given way to an overarching distrust and denigration of all images: iconophobia. "The English became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible"[78]; thus, it is "imperative" when looking at a miniature of the period to set it "in the context of the rabidly iconophobic culture of early modern English Protestantism, within which it nonetheless managed to thrive"[79]. In a more nuanced statement, we can read of Renaissance Italy as "seem[ing] in many ways the

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[76] Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988): 119.
[77] Patrick Collinson, *From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: The Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation* (Reading: University of Reading, 1986): 8.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Dympna Callaghan, "The Elizabethan Miniature", in Dana Arnold and David Peters Corbett (eds), *A Companion to British Art: 1600 to the Present* (Hoboken, N. J.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013): 453.

mirror image of the aniconic verbal culture of England"[80]: the Word had to triumph over the deceiving, idolatrous, and Popish Image. According to Patrick Collinson, this had enormous implications: "What do we know about the capacity to form mental pictures of someone who has almost never seen an actual picture?"[81] The perspective is quite surreal: far from being inhabitants of an "early modern" environment, these English people would seem to be aliens come from another dimension, even unable to mentally "visualise" things. In the context of this supposedly impoverished visual culture, theatre became the supplementary venue to cope with the absence of pictures. This was Leonard Barkan's adamant resolution: "theatre *is* England's lively pictorial culture: the answer, the compensation, the *supplément* in the face of all the painting, sculpture, and art theory that was so famously alive in the European civilizations that Elizabethans dreamed about"[82]. Similarly, Svetlana Alpers, in her seminal study on Dutch art, maintained that the theatre was "the arena in which Elizabethan England represented itself"[83], while images played that role in the Netherlands. Besides, "[t]he comparative paucity of references to the visual arts in Shakespeare's works […] accurately reflects the poverty and inaccessibility of the visual arts in Shakespeare's England"[84].

These interpretations have been demonstrated to be incorrect in many ways. Recent studies[85] have clarified that there was no such thing as a total repudiation of images,

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[80] Michael O'Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theatre in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 32.

[81] Patrick Collinson, *op. cit.* (1986): 23.

[82] Leonard Barkan, "Making Pictures Speak: Renaissance Art, Elizabethan Literature, Modern Scholarship", *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 48, no. 2, 1995: 338.

[83] Svetlana Alpers, *op. cit.* (1983): 14.

[84] Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare, Second Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): 16.

[85] I will duly refer to these studies (first and foremost Tara Hamling's recent essay "Visual Culture", in Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, Burlington and Farnham: Ashgate, 2014: 75-102), but here I want to highlight the fact that very little work has been published on the relationship between early modern English drama and visual culture. The pioneering study which has most helped me is Chloe Porter's "Shakespeare and Early Modern Visual Culture", *Literature Compass*, no. 8, 2011: 543-553, the main arguments of which can also be found in her *Making and Unmaking in Early Modern English Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014). To a lesser degree, see Marguerite A. Tassi, *The Scandal of Images: Iconoclasm, Eroticism and Painting in Early Modern English Drama* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2005); Joanne Rochester, *Staging Spectatorship in the Plays of Philip Massinger* (Burlington and Farnham: Ashgate, 2010): 95-124; Stuart Sillars, *Shakespeare and the Visual Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). Armelle Sabatier's forthcoming Arden Shakespeare dictionary *Shakespeare and Visual Culture* and Keir Elam's *Shakespeare's Pictures: Visual Culture in Drama* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2017) will most probably fill this gap.

and, (as I show in the next subchapter) not only courtly circles but also the ascending middle class and the common people were exposed to a rich, though complex and embattled, visual culture.

It is obviously difficult to answer such questions as, for example, "How do you measure a visual culture?"; "Is Freedberg's 'power of images'[86] a universal characteristic of pictures?"; "Whose visual culture? Is there a national scopic regime encompassing all, regardless of class, gender, religion, education?" These are indeed very challenging queries. Experts of several fields, from art history to anthropology, from social semiotics to cognitive sciences must still formulate extensive hypotheses on these topics. What a researcher can do is to rely on their work and point out key directions to assess what mechanisms are at work in the case of looking at portraits onstage, that is, when verbally or not, a player told the audience: "I do first entreat, that the eyes of all / Here present, may be fixed upon this"[87].

Tarnya Cooper's statement can serve as an introduction to this topic: "Interpreting the visual culture of the English Reformation requires an acceptance of paradoxes, compromises, and contested meanings"[88]. The visual dimension was not only in the state of being re-formed (art as idolatry, spectacle as Catholic superstition, the dangers of unrestrained imagination), but it was actively reforming itself by finding new stylistic strategies to negotiate these issues. For instance, Tara Hamling has demonstrated that religious imagery did not disappear, but embellished the decorations[89] on furniture, textiles, plasterwork, and other fixtures of the houses of the middling sort. By offering religious imagery to everyday sight and touch, its strategic application "served to raise the status of the object while simultaneously diminishing the spiritual power of the image, thus reducing the risk of idolatry"[90]. Thus, I will show that to interpret images only along a dualistic pattern of iconophobia vs.

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[86] David Freedberg, *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

[87] John Webster, *The Devil's Law-Case* (IV.ii 474-5).

[88] Tarnya Cooper, "Predestined Lives? Portraiture and Religious Belief in England and Wales, 1560-1620", in Tara Hamling and Richard L. Williams (eds), *Art Re-Formed: Re-Assessing the Impact of the Reformation on the Visual Arts* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007): 49.

[89] See also the wonderfully informative study by Anthony Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Influence of Continental Prints, 1558-1625* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

[90] Tara Hamling, "Reconciling Image and Object: Religious Imagery in Protestant Interior Decoration", in Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (eds.), *op. cit.* (2010): 334.

iconophilia[91] cannot answer the many questions posed by the visual component of drama. It is true that some forms of iconoclasm took place and had devastating effects[92] (which will be discussed in the next section), but art forms changed accordingly. For instance, since the fifteenth century, emblems had been cherished by the upper classes to display hierarchical differences. In Elizabethan times, they were regarded as a safe mode of aesthetic expression and spoke to the wished-for social mobility of the time. The middle class, too, wanted to appropriate the codes of heraldry. This is what the merchant Cosmopolites in Henry Peacham's dialogue says:

> [T]he principal use I would make of this skill [the study of heraldry] is, that when I come into an old decayed Church or Monastery (as wee have plentie in *England*) or Gentlemans house, I might rather busie my self in viewing Armes, and matches of Houses [i.e. a device representing a matrimonial alliance] in the windowes or walles, then lie bootes and spurres upon my bed in my Inne, or over-look mine Hostes shoulder at Irish [a game similar to backgammon][93].

Images survived and were often re-functionalised: they were present as wall paintings in most alehouses and inns; they were displayed on broadside ballads, pamphlets and woodcuts; in domestic spaces they decorated furniture, embroidery, and painted cloths. Civic corporations[94] frequently had the portraits of their members exhibited in their halls, and, at an increasing pace, the market of portraiture widened to extend down the social scale[95]. When we read Puritans affirming that "a thing fained in the mind by imagination is an idol"[96], we should be aware that these pronouncements were typical only of a minor section of British society.

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[91] This is the approach that marks the nonetheless indispensable studies by Huston Diehl (1997) and Marguerite A. Tassi (2005).

[92] See Phillips' and Aston's studies in the bibliography and Eamon Duffy's classic *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

[93] Henry Peacham, *The Gentleman's Exercise* (London: Francis Constable, 1634): 131. On Peacham's emblems, see Angela Locatelli, "Semantic Integration and Diversion in Henry Peacham Jr.'s Emblems", *Slavica Tergestina*, Issue 8, 2000: 77-92.

[94] See Robert Tittler, *The Face of the City: Civic Portraiture and Civic Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007).

[95] See Tarnya Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elite of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

[96] William Perkins, *A Warning Against the Idolatry of the Last Times* (1601), quoted in Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theater in Early Modern England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997): 69. William Perkins' personal stance, however, was much more varied.

I.2.2 Framing Vision: The "Figuring Forth Good Things" and the "Infecting of the Fancy"

The early modern period is characterised by a disruption in the paradigms of visuality, that is, first of all, by the passage from the extramission to the intromission theory of vision. These two models had co-existed for centuries, from antiquity to the early Renaissance, and had found various illustrious proponents[97]. Plato circulated the extremely influential idea that sight was produced by the emission of rays of light (or fire, according to Empedocles), which coalesced with the light coming from the sun. Aristotle, by contrast, argued that the eye did not emanate rays, but merely received them from external objects. Galen used a bidirectional approach: the eyes emit rays that transform the medium, air, between them and the external object; the medium then returns visual impressions to the eye, where the crystalline (i.e. "ice-like") humour transfers it to the brain by a form of visual *pneuma*, or spirit. The two theories (extramission and intromission) were innovated and rearticulated by Arab scientists and circulated side by side throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. After the invention of such instruments as the telescope and the microscope, and especially after Kepler and, later, René Descartes' experiments (the former individuated the process of inversion of the retinal image and published his findings in 1604, the latter studied the laws of refraction and the rectilinear transmission of light), the extramission model could not survive. What must be taken into account, however, is that this disruption did not simply change the science of optics. It substantially changed cultural notions and phenomenological ways of making sense of human passions and knowledge.

Marcus Nordlund's study remains the authority in this field of research: according to him, early modernity experienced

> a common transition from *speculative* to *enclosed* visuality, which can be summarised as the rejection of an active, participational, specular, and homogeneous conception of

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[97] See the indispensable David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision: From Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), and Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye. Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). See also Franco Giudice, "The Visible World: Aspects of Optics in the Seventeenth Century", in Elena Agazzi, Enrico Giannetto, and Franco Giudice (eds), *Representing Light across Arts and Sciences: Theories and Practices* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2010): 41-56.

the relationship between perceiver and perceived, in favour of a discontinuous, passive, and interioristic optics[98].

Very succinctly, Nordlund pinpoints the main characteristics of the two models. "Speculative visuality", as he calls it, derived from extramission theory and had closely-knit connections with the discourse of humouralism. The humoural conception of the body entailed physiological permeability. Objects impressed their emanations onto the eyes, which functioned as gates for such beams. They, in turn, would stir up the humours (blood, black bile, yellow bile, and phlegm) and activate imagination, the mind's eye[99], which both hoarded past impressions and created new, phantasmatic images that could influence the other two faculties of the brain: memory and reason. Humours, once refined as "spirits", would course through the body from the brain, the liver, and the heart. People made sense of what they saw by participating in what Giorgio Agamben has called "pneumatic culture"[100]: "spirits" were thought to mediate between individuals and objects; observer and observed were united along the eyebeams that bound them together. Pre-Cartesian passions crossed physiology and psychology: they were not internal objects but were thought to "comprise […] an ecology or a transaction"[101]. On the contrary, within "enclosed visuality", the individual is passive: the sense of sight is constructed as a *camera obscura*. The sensory system becomes "a self-contained vessel for external species"[102] (the rays of light) which accents the discontinuity between the self and the world.

Nevertheless, Nordlund's notion of "a common transition" between the two visualities is problematic. Only the late seventeenth century saw the triumph of intromission theory. The author of the most eminent English work on human anatomy

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[98] Marcus Nordlund, *The Dark Lantern: A Historical Study of Sight in Shakespeare, Webster, and Middleton* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1999): ix.

[99] On humouralism, see, for instance, Gail Kern Paster's *The Body Embarassed* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993); David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (eds), *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 1997); Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson (eds), *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004); Bruce R. Smith, *The Key of Green: Passion and Perception in Renaissance Culture* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009) and his *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2010).

[100] Giorgio Agamben, *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, transl. by Ronald L. Martinez (London and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993): 99.

[101] Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson (eds), *op. cit.* (2004): 18.

[102] Marcus Nordlund, *op. cit.* (1999): 141.

(*Microcosmographia*, 1615), Helkiah Crooke, still felt obliged to refer to Plato's theories: "Sight must bee made either by an emission of spirites, or a reception of beames, or else by emission and reception both together"[103]. As late as 1646, Sir Thomas Browne wrote this of the optical venom of the basilisk:

> That this venenation shooteth from the eye, and that this way a Basilisk may empoison, although thus much be not agreed upon by Authors, some imputing it unto the breath, others unto the bite, it is not a thing impossible. For eyes receive offensive impressions from their objects, and may have influences destructive to each other. For the visible species of things strike not our senses immaterially, but streaming in corporal raies, do carry with them the qualities of the object from whence they flow, and the medium through which they pass. Thus through a green or red Glass all things we behold appear of the same colours; thus sore eyes affect those which are sound, and themselves also by reflection, as will happen to an inflamed eye that beholds it self long in a Glass; thus is fascination made out, and thus also it is not impossible, what is affirmed of this animal, the visible rayes of their eyes carrying forth the subtilest portion of their poison, which received by the eye of man or beast, infecteth first the braine, and is from thence communicated unto the heart[104].

Whereas Montaigne acknowledged that "imagination, when vehemently stirred, launches darts that can injure an external object"[105], Francis Bacon doubted the existence of fascination, but this is how he treats love and envy as visual affections:

> There be none of the affections, which have been noted to fascinate or bewitch, but love and envy. They both have vehement wishes; they frame themselves readily into imaginations and suggestions; and they come easily into the eye, especially upon the present of the objects; which are the points that conduce to fascination, if any such thing there be. See likewise, the Scripture calleth envy an evil eye […] so that still there seemeth to be acknowledged, in the act of envy, an ejaculation or irradiation of the eye. Nay, some have been so curious, as to note, that the times when the stroke or percussion of an envious eye doth most hurt, are when the party envied is beheld in glory or triumph; for that sets an edge upon envy: and besides, at such times the spirits of the person envied, do come forth most into the outward parts, and so meet the blow[106].

Of utmost importance was the Neoplatonic conception of love, whose phenomenology still indelibly marks contemporary discourse. One does not fall in love with an external object, but "an internal image, that is, the phantasm impressed on the phantastic spirits by the gaze, [is] the origin and the object of falling in

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[103] Helkiah Crooke, *Microcosmographia* (London: 1615): 561.

[104] Sir Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, ed. by Geoffrey Keynes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964): 176.

[105] Quoted in Eric Scott Mallin, *Inscribing the Time: Shakespeare and the End of Elizabethan England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995): 68.

[106] "Of Envy", in Brian Vickers (ed.), *Francis Bacon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996): 354.

love"[107]. Love was conceived as an infection that entered through the eyes[108], and bred concupiscence, which would in turn first assail the heart and then reason. From that moment, the humours alter and the imagination creates phantasmatic images in order to satisfy erotic desire:

> Love therefore having abused the eyes, as the proper spyes and porters of the mind, maketh a way for it selfe smoothly to glaunce along through the conducting guides, and passing without any perserverance in this sort through the veines unto the liver, doth suddenly imprint a burning desire to obtaine the thing, which is or seemeth worthie to bee beloved, setteth concupiscence on fire, and beginneth by this desire all the strife and contention: but fearing her selfe too weake to incounter with reason, the principal part of the minde, she posteth in haste to the heart, to surprise and winne the same: whereof when she is once sure, as of the strongest hold, she afterward assaileth and setteth upon reason, and all the other principall powers of the minde so fiercely, as that she subdueth them, and maketh them her vassals and slaves[109].

The sonnets of the *Dolce Stil Novo* and, more than anything else, Petrarch's *Rime Sparse* circulated throughout Europe the trope of the woman who petrifies the lover with her gaze and the ways in which falling in love operates through sight, the improper and proper ways in which to display one's affection, and the objectification of the loved one to be emblazoned, etc.

Moreover, in the Renaissance, light continued to be addressed both as "a metaphysical and a physical 'object'"[110]: this is something that is often completely neglected in studies more interested in the materialism inherent in humouralism. Light functioned as a central category to demonstrate the connection between the self and the world because it was believed to be "the medium through which the soul acts upon the body, allowing motion and perception, and connecting the spiritual substance (soul) to the material substance (body)"[111]. From these tenets, which were combined with the poetic tropes of Petrarchanism grew what Angela Locatelli has called "an aesthetics of light" that pervaded early modern literature and culture for decades. This

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[107] Giorgio Agamben, *op. cit.* (1993): 23.

[108] Much earlier than Marsilio Ficino, Andreas Capellanus had written that love is "*passio quaedam innata, procedens ex visione et immodata cogitatione formae alterius sexus*" (*Trattato d'amore*, ed. by Salvatore Battaglia, Rome: Perrella, 1947: 4).

[109] André Du Laurens, *A Discourse of the Preservation of Sight* […] (London: 1599): 118.

[110] Angela Locatelli, "Discursive Intersections on the Subject of 'Light' in English Renaissance Literature", in Elena Agazzi, Enrico Giannetto, and Franco Giudice (eds), *Representing Light across Arts and Sciences: Theories and Practices* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2010): 72.

[111] Ibid.: 77.

went well beyond a repertory of literary tropes, but spoke to ideologically charged issues of the period.

From antiquity onwards, sight had been located at the top of the sensorial hierarchy. Aristotle wrote that since it was the sense *par excellence*, even imagination (*phantasia*) had taken its name after light (*phaos*), "because without light it is impossible to see"[112]. The eye was called "the sunne of this little world"[113], and since sight was the superior sense, its powers could be the most devastating when influencing the imagination. Sidney warned against the misuse of its evocative and infective effects:

> For I will not deny but that man's wit may make poesy, which should be *eikastike*, which some learned have defined figuring forth good things, to be *fantastike*, which doth contrariwise infect the fancy with unworthy objects. As the painter that should give to the eye either some excellent perspective, or some fine picture, fit for building or fortification, or containing in it some notable example, as Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac, Judith killing Holofernes, David fighting with Goliath, may leave those, and please an ill pleased eye with wanton shows of better hidden matters. But what, shall the abuse of a thing make the right use odious?[114]

It is known that preceptors advised pregnant women to look at fair pictures in order to beget good-looking children, and wrote of the opposite case: the sight of misshapen or ugly pictures would engender monsters. The two classical examples are, respectively, the birth of a white baby girl after the mother had looked at a picture of fair Andromeda, which triggers the plot of Heliodorus' *Aethiopika*, and Marcus Damascene's tale of a furry girl whose aspect was caused by her mother's staring at an image of Saint John the Baptist wearing camel's hair[115]. Moreover, portraits of virtuous rulers could likewise incite virtue in the beholder: "For it is strange to consider, what effects of piety, reverence and religion are stirred up in mens mindes

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[112] Aristole, *De Anima* (3.429a 1-5), quoted in Rocco Coronato, *La Mano Invisibile. Shakespeare e la Conoscenza Nascosta* (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 2011): 8-9. Coronato's introduction is a very informative text on these topics.

[113] Richard Banister, *Breviary of the Eyes* (London: 1622): sig. B1 r.

[114] Quoted in Tanya Pollard, *Shakespeare's Theater: A Sourcebook* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 154.

[115] Related, for example, by Nicholas Rémy/Remigius, *Demonolatry* (Lyon: 1595): 25. For similar cases of "monstruous" births, see Luca Baratta, *Monstrum, Prodigium, Portentum: Nascite Mostruose nella* Street Literature *dell'Inghilterra della Prima Età Moderna* (PhD diss., University of Florence, 2014). The other classical tale on the powers of imagination was biblical (*Genesis* 30:37): Jacob caused Laban's goats and sheep to breed spotted young by making them look at peeled sticks of poplar, hazel, and chestnut.

by meanes of this suitable comelinesse of apter proportion"[116]. On the contrary, seductive images could lead to narcissistic starvation: "And such effects and pleasure doth sight bring unto vs, that diuers haue lyued by looking on faire and beautifull pictures, desiring no meate"[117]. Pictures could plant the seeds of melancholy and obsession. We can read in this way the distemper of Prince Palador in Ford's *The Lover's Melancholy* who may "Gaze upon revels, antic fopperies, / But is not moved; but what most he takes delight in / Are handsome pictures" (I.i 74-77). The physician Andrew Boorde advised physicians to avoid that melancholy and mad patients were surrounded by pictures on which they would fix their gaze[118].

Ortensio Lando wrote that sight offers "voluptuous delights and pleasures, which daily ende in bitternes, alienation of sense, provocation to envie, irritation and commotion against the heart"[119]. If a humanist like him could say this, there is no need to wonder at the ubiquitous abundance of orations on the dangers of sight by Puritan authors, which deserves no in-depth analysis here (it will be later discussed in relation to antitheatricalism). Puritans drew most frequently on the Church Fathers' writings (Tertullian's *De Spectaculis* was a particular favourite) and on St. Augustine's *caveat* concerning what he had called "ocular desire" ("*concupiscentia oculorum*"), or erotic projection through vision. All their arguments can be summed up in two assertions: "sight can literally transform you (you become what you see)" and "the eyes are gateways to hell". After this necessarily brief survey, it is time to investigate how portraits were touched by religious iconoclasm and fears of idolatry.

I.2.3 Offending Shadows: Idolatry and Iconoclasm

> "If we shadows have offended"
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> Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Epilogue, l. 1

In Protestant England, the danger of religious images was usually connected with idolatry. Certain conceptual patterns were deeply embedded in reformed mentalities.

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[116] Richard Haydocke, *op. cit.* (1598): 95.
[117] John Lyly, *Euphues and His England* (London: 1580): 29.
[118] Andrew Boorde, *A Compendyous Regyment Or A Dyetary of Healthe [...]* (London: 1547): Chap. xxxvii, unsigned page (available at *EEBO*).
[119] Quoted in Anthony Munday's 1593 translation in Rocco Coronato, *op. cit.* (2011): 32.

It was established, for instance, that idolatry leads to adultery and vice versa, hence the many parallels between the two in the Bible – the Book of Hosea being a case in point[120]. We need to bear this in mind when examining, for example, Dekker's *The Noble Spanish Soldier*, where the passage from idolatry to adultery (and vice versa) is perceived as naturally direct. The play is set in a corrupt Spanish court where a lover defaces the king's picture in front of a crucifix.

The extent to which portraits of lay individuals could blur the distinction between secular and religious art is a challenging question. In her seminal study on iconoclasm, Margaret Aston states that "[t]he prohibitive or negative approach that started with imagining God moved out of church to affect people's views of other art forms – portraits of laymen, as well as depictions of saints"[121]. Reformers could point out that, according to the deuterocanonical Book of Wisdom, idolatry originated from a father's desire to mourn his son's death:

> For a father afflicted with untimely mourning, when he hath made an image of his child soon taken away, now honoured him as a god, which was then a dead man, and delivered to those that were under him ceremonies and sacrifices. Thus in process of time an ungodly custom grown strong was kept as a law, and graven images were worshipped by the commandments of kings. (KJB, 14.15-16)

This father had created a picture to keep the shadow of his dead son alive. Interestingly, "shadow" [122] was a word commonly used to designate a picture or portrait commonly used in early modern England, which, as shall be duly investigated in the next subchapter, generated profound unease around the relationship between life, death, and art.

The boundary between cherishing a picture and idolatry, commemoration and adoration could be fuzzy and evidently subject to control. Here is, for example, a statement of Thomas Bilson's, the future bishop of Worcester and Winchester:

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[120] See e.g. Hos., 2:2-3; 5:3.
[121] Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts. Laws Against Images* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988): Vol. 1, 447.
[122] Perhaps one the most haunting uses of the word "shadow" meaning portrait is the Countess of Auvergne's statement to Talbot in *1Henry VI* (II.iii): "Long time thy shadow hath been thrall to me, / For in my gallery thy picture hangs" (35-6).

The images of Princes may not well be despited or abused, least it be taken as a sign of a malicious heart against the Prince, but bowing the knee or lifting up the hand to the image of a Prince is flat and inevitable idolatry[123].

Any such gesture could be scrutinised and punished. In 1598, Richard Haydocke translated (or better, adapted) the first part of Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo's *Trattato dell'Arte della Pittura, Scoltura e Architettura*, that is, the Bible of Mannerism. His changes to Lomazzo's work are symptomatic of the English approach. Where the Italian describes the most suitable way of portraying God the Father, Haydocke adds: "I think he should not be Painted at all"[124]; where Lomazzo writes of the highest function of art, that is, "*culto divino*" (divine worship), Haydocke translates it as "Civile discipline"[125].

Fifty-five years earlier, in 1530, Sir Thomas More had expostulated against the 'furor' of those he called heretics against all images:

> But I suppose neither scripture nor natural reason doth forbid that a man may do some reverence to an image, not fixing his final intent in the image, but referring it further to the honour of the person that the image representeth […] For they see well enough that there is no man but if he love another, but he delighteth in his image or anything of his[126].

Let us compare More's apology with the letters of Christopher Hales, a young Englishman who visited Zürich and made friends with the Calvinist reformers in the 1550s. Hales had commissioned the pictures of the reformers he had met (Zwingli, Gwalther, Bullinger, Melanchton, Oecolampadius, and Pellikan). Rudolf Gwalther, a future leader of the Swiss reformed churches, was immediately against this plan. On 4 May 1550, Hales wrote to Gwalther, trying to defend himself:

> I do not see why pictures may not be painted and possessed, especially when they are not kept in any place where there can be the least suspicion of idolatry. Who worships the monkey that is placed in your fish-market? Who worships a cock fixed on the church-steeple, as your father-in-law [Zwingli] actually has, who is so determined an enemy of idolatry? Who bows himself before your Charles placed on the top of the tower? Who is so senseless, as to worship a painting or picture deposited in the library? Supposing that there are those who honour them when hung up in churches and sacred places, which I by no means approve; yet where is the man so devoid of all religion,

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[123] Quoted in John Phillips, *The Reformation of Images: Destruction of Art in England 1535-1660* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973): 120.

[124] Richard Haydocke, *A Tracte Containing the Artes of Curious Paintinge Carvinge Buildinge* (London: 1598): 152.

[125] Ibid.: 95.

[126] Quoted in Margaret Aston, *op. cit.* (1988): 181.

godliness, fear of the most high and Almighty God, and so entirely forgetful of himself, as to regard with veneration a little portrait reposited in some ordinary place in a museum?[127]

Nine months later, Hales complained that Gwalther had had the pictures painted, but kept four of them back "because there is some danger lest a door shall hereafter be opened to idolatry"[128]. Hales protested:

> But the case is far otherwise, for I desired to have them on this account, both an ornament to my library, and that your effigies might be beheld in the picture, as in a mirror, by those who by reason of distance are prevented from beholding you in person. This is not done, excellent sir, with the view of making idols of you; they are desired for the reasons I have mentioned, and not for the sake of honour or veneration[129].

As is perhaps too well known, we need to be very careful when speaking in broad terms of "Protestants" or of the attitudes of the Church of England. Lutherans, Anglicans, Calvinists, and the other major Reformed confessions treated images with markedly different positions, often changing their attitude over time. Even Calvin himself, generally seen as a fierce opponent of images, had no consistent view on the subject. Images were often subsumed under Luther's category of the *adiaphora*, "things indifferent", but we have seen what a spate of interpretations the topic of pictures elicited. Beside these inconsistencies, it is possible to note other paradoxes, for example the fact that humanism, with its logocentrism, has been accused of having contained the germs of hostility towards the image[130].

In Reformed England, the first reactions against holy images had been to sanction their use. The so-called "second Henrician injunctions", drawn up by Thomas Cromwell in 1538, denounced practices such as "wandering to pilgrimages, offering of money, candles or tapers to images or relics, or kissing or licking the same, saying over a number of beads, not understood or minded on"[131]. In the ensuing years, there was a growing movement which demonised not only the sense of sight (the antiquarian Stow lamented that there were some who "judged every Image to be an

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[127] Hastings Robinson (ed.), *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation [...]* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1846): Vol. 3, 192.
[128] Ibid.: 190.
[129] Ibid.
[130] See Michael O'Connell, *op. cit.* (2000): *passim*.
[131] Eamon Duffy, *op. cit.* (1992): 407.

Idoll"[132]), but all the senses, which dramatically changed religious and secular practices, bringing about "a breaking of the bodily experience of belief"[133].

Whereas in Germany, Albrecht Dürer had to defend the function of art, reputedly saying that an image is "no more responsible for superstitious abuse than a weapon is responsible for a murder"[134], in England, the 1563 *Homily Against Peril of Idolatry* is of particular importance in this context. It was aimed against the use of images in churches: "The painting of the picture and carued Image with diuers colours, entiseth the ignorant so, that he honoureth and loueth the picture of a dead image that hath no soule"[135]. However, "those in civic or private spaces, divorced from the context of worship [...] were deemed to pose little or no danger"[136].

Neither Protestants nor even Puritans[137] (with a few exceptions) were pure iconophobes, though brutal episodes of iconoclasm took place. Yet, the situation described by Dominic Selwood in a recent article with the somewhat sensationalistic title "Thomas Cromwell was the Islamic State of His Day" is erroneous:

> No one can be sure of the exact figure, but it is estimated that the destruction started and legalised by Cromwell amounted to 97% of the English art then in existence. Statues were hacked down. Frescoes were smashed to bits. Mosaics were pulverized. Illuminated manuscripts were shredded. Wooden carvings were burned. Precious metalwork was melted down. Shrines were reduced to rubble. This vandalism went way beyond a religious reform. It was a frenzy, obliterating the artistic patrimony of centuries of indigenous craftsmanship with an intensity of hatred for imagery and depicting the divine that has strong and resonant parallels today[138].

The picture of rabid fanatics devastating artefacts may be realistic in some instances, but normally, as studies of British iconoclasm have demonstrated, iconoclastic actions

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[132] John Stow, *A Survey of London* (London: 1603): I, 38.

[133] Elizabeth Goldring, *Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the World of Elizabethan Art: Painting and Patronage at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014): 4.

[134] Quoted in Laura Cumming, "Art Under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm, Review", *The Guardian*, 6 October 2013.

[135] "On Peril of Idolatry", in *Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to Be Read in Churches* (London: 1563), available at *EEBO*, accessed 1 October 2016.

[136] Elizabeth Goldring, *op. cit.* (2014): 4.

[137] Of early seventeenth-century Puritans living in America, it has been said that they "did not lack an aesthetic; rather, their aesthetic, which focused on the beauty of God, has been ignored" (Kelly J. Baker, "A Visionary People: Religion and the Visual Arts in America", in Charles H. Lippy (ed.), *Faith in America: Changes, Challenges, New Directions*, Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2006: 29).

[138] Dominic Selwood, "Thomas Cromwell was the Islamic State of His Day", *Telegraph,* 22 January 2015.

took place "in an organised and systematic fashion directed by the authorities"[139]. The percentage given of destroyed art (97%) is heavily influenced by our conception of what constitutes "art". In fact, the curators of the exhibition *Art Under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm* (2013-2014) at Tate Britain, to which Selwood refers, estimate that 90% of "medieval sculpture" was lost[140], a number that includes the outcome of the Puritan attacks during the Interregnum. Moreover, the people involved in iconoclasm were, quite interestingly, pragmatic and keen on the financial aspect of their doings. For example, a panel depicting *Christ Before Pilate* (British school, 1400-25), now at the Fitzwilliam Museum, was scratched but Christ is not defaced. The reason is probably because "[w]ooden panels could be reused as table tops, cupboard doors and a host of other functions"[141]. A partial scratch could prevent a return to their former purpose, without destroying the object.

As shall be analysed in the next subchapter, portraits were part of the everyday life of many citizens. How did Elizabethan and Jacobean society react to such upheavals and discrepancies in the perception of images? The impact of the Reformation provided a solution: it fostered a partition both between domestic and public spaces, and between outward appearance and inward subjectivity. This is one of the most intriguing issues of the early modern English socio-historical context:

> Reformed Protestants differentiated images in churches from images in homes: what was insupportable in a place of worship […] might nevertheless be permissible in a private domestic and more neutral setting, and/or within the space of the printed page. In other words, iconophobia was conditioned by spatial considerations[142].

We find that the discrepancy between a public self and an inward disposition or conscience could become critical. Portraits as the expression of one's identity became a venue to convey the *persona* one wanted to show to others, and were used strategically: "Portraiture was one place where the ideas of inwardness and self-

[139] Tabitha Barber and Stacy Boldrick (eds), *Art Under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm* (London: Tate Publishing, 2013): 53. See also Ellen Spolsky, *Word vs Image: Cognitive Hunger in Shakespeare's England* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
[140] An., *Art Under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm*, Press Release (30 September 2013): http://www.tate.org.uk/about/press-office/press-releases/art-under-attack-histories-british-iconoclasm-0.
[141] Tabitha Barber and Stacy Boldrick (eds), op. cit. (2013): 62.
[142] Alexandra Walsham, "Idols in the Frontispiece? Illustrating Religious Books in the Age of Iconoclasm", in Feike Dietz, Adam Morton, Lien Roggen *et al.* (eds), *Illustrated Religious Texts in the North of Europe, 1500-1800* (Burlington and Farnham: Ashgate, 2014): 30.

performance met"[143]. Some used their pictures to demonstrate their piety and confirm their number among the saved, according to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. Others commissioned their portraits but had the painter include the inscription "TO PLEASE MY FRENDE AND NOT MY SELFE", probably as a disclaimer to the charge of vanity[144].

An interesting literary text which elaborates on charges of idolatry in the context of amorous discourse is a longish poem by John Harington, "To my Dearest: A Rule for Praying" (1603) which deserves to be quoted in full:

> Mine own when in your closet for deuotion
> you kneele to pray vpon some godly motion,
> I do not saie tis sinne, your eye to fixe
> on some Saints Picture, or the Crucifix.
> Such Images may serue thee, as a booke,
> on which thou maist with godly reuerence looke,
> And thereby thy remembrannce to acquainte,
> with life or death or vertues of the saynt,
> Thus, bee it wood, or stone, or glass, or mettle
> yt serueth in thy minde good thoughts to settle.
> But though I do allow thou kneele before yt,
> Yet would I in no wise, you should adore yt,
> For as such things well usd are cleane and holly,
> So superstition soone maie make it folly.
> I keepe thy picture in a golden shryne,
> And I esteeme it well bycause 'tis thyne,
> But let me use thy Picture nere so kyndly
> 'twear little worth if I us'd thee unkyndly.
> All images are skornd, and quite dishonored,
> Yf the Prototipos bee not more honoured./
> Sith then my Deare, our heavenly lord aboue
> Vouchsafeth vnto ours, to like his loue,
> So let vs vse his pictures that therein
> against himself, we do commit no sin
> But pray our harts by faiths eyes be made able,
> to see that mortall eyes see on a table.
> Leaue then old weomens tales, young womens dreams
> and keepe the mean between the two extreams.
> Do not deface such pictures, nor deride them
> like fooles, whose zeale mistaught, cannot abide them,
> nor do not thinke in them there is divinity
> for with great fondnes that hath much affinity
> Would you not thinke one did deserue a mocke
> Shoulde say o heavn'ly father to a stocke?
> Such a one were a stocke I straight should gather,

[143] Tarnya Cooper with Jane Eade, *Elizabeth I and Her People* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2013): 33.

[144] Tarnya Cooper, *op. cit*. (2006): 35.

That would confesse a stocke to be her Father[145].

Harington, who has been identified, perhaps too hastily, as a crypto-Catholic[146], allows the lady (probably his wife) to kneel before a holy image and contemplate it for didactic purposes ("yt serueth in thy minde good thoughts to settle"), but warns that she should not worship it. Those who believe in the power of pictures are said to pursue "old weomens tales, young womens dreams"; at the same time, only fools believe that they accomplish something by defacing such images. He compares looking at a sacred image to his cherishing of her picture: he keeps it "in a golden shryne", but is aware that it is a mimetic representation of her that does not have an ontological bond with her.

There is enough proof to argue that "realistic and life-like images might have seemed idolatrous to the protestant fundamentalist"[147]. A late example of such extremism was Elizabeth Poole, one of the settlers of Plymouth Colony, who in 1648 warned Christians: "This is therefore the great work which lieth upon you, to become dead to every pleasant picture, which might present itself for your delight"[148]. The Puritans' approach was varied. We have already seen that portraits could demonstrate the success in earthly life of the sitter, thus showing him or her as one of the Saved. The most famous instance of a Puritan commissioning his own portrait is Oliver Cromwell, whose exhortation to the painter Samuel Cooper reads: "I desire you would use all your skill to paint my picture truly like me, and not flatter me at all; but remark all these roughnesses, pimples, warts, and everything as you see in me, otherwise I will never pay a farthing for it!"[149] Cromwell sought to be portrayed only if the picture could represent his likeness without artifice and idealisation *à la* Van Dyck. He was most probably remembering John Calvin's words: as long as the arts represent

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[145] Gerard Kilroy (ed.), *The Epigrams of Sir John Harington* (Burlington and Farnham: Ashgate, 2009): 134-5.
[146] See Christopher Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 148 and ff.
[147] Robert Tittler, *op. cit*. (2012): 20.
[148] Elizabeth Poole, *A Vision: Wherein is Manifested the Disease and Cure of the Kingdome* (London: 1648): 2.
[149] Quoted in John Phillips, *op. cit.* (1973): 201.

something in the visible world and are realistic, "sculpture and painting are gifts of God"[150].

Ironically, iconoclasts destroyed the portraits of William Prynne, the Puritan who notoriously attacked the stage and denounced Henrietta Maria's theatrical performances with his farraginous *Histrio-Mastix* (1633), and who was consequently imprisoned and deprived of both his ears. Calvin Bruen, Prynne's associate, was the son of John Bruen, another Puritan famous for having smashed stained glass windows and defaced sculptures. In 1637, Calvin defended and entertained Prynne in his house, commissioning portraits of Prynne "to be drawn by a lim[n]er in Chester"[151]. By order of the York High Commission, the painter was persecuted ("they oft examined [him] upon oath, for drawing them[152]"), the pictures seized and defaced, and their frames burnt in a bonfire[153] surrounded by hundreds of citizens shouting: "Burn them, burn them"!

The responses to the use of portraits were extremely varied and cannot be corralled into the iconophobia-iconophilia dualism. Fears of idolatry could be activated in the minds of English individuals but, generally, portraits could escape iconoclasm. In order to better understand how portraits could affect their spectators in early modern English theatres, a discussion of their uses and effects in everyday life is now of vital importance.

I.3 Early Modern English Portraiture: Objects and Poetics

This subchapter is devoted to a discussion of the types of portraiture available in early modern England. It is obvious that, in order to understand the web of meanings and uses that grow out of the presentation of portraits onstage, it is necessary to know what functions portraits had in common life. I will therefore give a brief overview of

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[150] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. by John T. McNeill, transl. by Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960): 112.Quite interestingly, Calvin goes on stating: "I only say that even if the use of images contained nothing evil, it still has no value for teaching".

[151] Matthew Reynolds, *Godly Reformers and Their Opponents in Early Modern England: Religion in Norwich, c. 1560-1643* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005): 265.

[152] Benjamin Harbury, *Historical Memorial Relating to the Independents, Or Congregationalists* (London: Fisher, Jackson, and Walford, 1839): Vol. 1, 571.

[153] For similar (and more famous) attacks on Queen Elizabeth's portraits, see Chap. 3 on *The White Devil*.

the history and nature of English portraiture, with a particular focus on the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages. The Caroline period showed an extraordinary opening towards the continental art market and pictorial fashions. By 1629, Rubens, on his first journey to England, could write that he was struck by "the incredible quantity of excellent pictures, statues, and ancient inscriptions which are to be found in this court"[154]. Moreover, during the reign of Charles I,

> [a]rt works became luxury objects as they increasingly became the medium of exchange between ambassadors and favorites, kings and courtiers, and clients and patrons. The fevered search for sixteenth-century Italian pictures became a phenomenon. Although prices never reached dizzying heights, copying increased to meet demand. The display and reproduction of the pictures made them available to a wider audience[155].

Nonetheless, it was during the reign of the Tudor monarchs and their successor, James I that the practices of drawing, owning, and looking at portraits differentiated themselves from the conventions of Renaissance Europe. It is profitable to discuss these topics in terms of reigns as a chronological framework, but this should not lead to a discussion of aristocratic and dynastic portraiture only. Quite on the contrary, it is mostly through the study of vernacular, citizen portraits (an emerging field in Renaissance art history), that one can grasp the significance of the pictures shown on the stage. Despite the fact that many of these pictures are said to depict noble characters, it is hardly imaginable that they were courtly portraits *à la* Holbein. There is every reason to believe that they were commodities most often produced by the painters who came from London and lived in the same social background of the urban apprentices and merchants. This does not mean that they were the work of English painters only, however: a colony of Dutch painters was thriving in London and often resorted to collaboration with their English colleagues and rivals[156]. The world of courtly miniatures needs special attention: these objects had very different characteristics from the other types and styles of painting and had different "social

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[154] Quoted in Stephen Orgel, "Idols of the Gallery: Becoming a Connoisseur in Renaissance England", in Peter Erickson and Clark Hulse (eds), *Early Modern Visual Culture: Representation, Race and Empire in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000): 259.

[155] Linda Levy Peck, *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 162.

[156] See Mary Bryan H. Curd, *Flemish and Dutch Artists in Early Modern England: Collaboration and Competition, 1460-1680* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

lives", as Arjun Appadurai[157] would put it, as well as distinct transactional values. The language of limning was employed by authors to make sense of the world they lived in. I will argue that one can speak of a particular "poetics of limning" active in early modern England, illuminating / shadowing forth ways of thinking and writing.

I.3.1 Innovation in the Renaissance Portrait

The Renaissance has given us the portrait as an object. This is not to be read as meaning that portraits were invented in the Renaissance. Archaeologists teach us that portraiture had already been invented in the Palaeolithic or, at the latest, by the civilisations of the Fertile Crescent. From a historical point of view, this is true. However, the *modalities* Westerners commonly associate with portraiture were developed in the Renaissance. When we think of a portrait, we do not think of an effigy on a coin or of a fresco on a wall. The first mental image we get is that of a person looking out at the viewer, framed on a canvas or on a wooden table. We also usually conjure up the image of a secular subject, not a saint. We do not immediately think of a group portrait, nor is our first mental image normally that of a face in profile. Realism is important, and we normally believe that the person portrayed actually existed in some epoch, somewhere. We generally situate the picture hanging on a wall, in a museum or in a private house, and then the question of value comes into place. Alternatively, we may think of a different medium altogether. It is quite surprising to find that, searching for the single word "portrait" on Google Images, many of the first pictures one obtains are not painted faces at all, but photographs. Most of them depict the face only, or the bust; most have a neutral background.

These features seem natural enough: this is what a portrait is supposed to be like. Yet they are not natural at all. Centuries of Western painting have both constructed and validated this prototypical image. Portraiture and looking at portraits involve relationships of power. The techniques used to draw the picture shape our perception. What is a subject and why is it called a "subject"? What does realism mean at all? Are there rules in looking at a picture, and if so, what are they? Who can commission or own a portrait?

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[157] See Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *op. cit.* (1988).

This is not the place to investigate these questions in detail. Experts of art history, visual culture, and semiotics have been tackling these issues for decades. Nevertheless, it is important to defamiliarise our received ideas of portraiture to grasp the significance of portraits in the English Renaissance. Portraits reflect, construct, or challenge ideological tenets related to social hierarchy, gender, sexuality, and race. It is interesting to note that the art of portraiture is not as old as we may suppose: indeed, the very prototypes of what we now think of when we think of portraits were born in those decades. A period that to anthropologists seems less than the blink of an eye means quite a lot to cultural historians. Let me quote a famous passage from Erwin Panofsky's seminal book on early Dutch painting:

> In 1433 Jan van Eyck made one of the great discoveries in portraiture. In the portrait of a *Man in a Red Turban*, completed in October 21 of that year, the glance of the sitter is turned out of the picture and sharply focussed on the beholder with an air of skepticism intensified by the expression of the thin mouth with its slightly compressed corners. For the first time the sitter seeks to establish direct contact with the spectator, and since the artist showed him *en buste*, omitting the hands, nothing detracts from the magnetism of the face. We feel observed and scrutinized by a wakeful intelligence[158].

That *The Man in a Red Turban* could be a self-portrait does not change its revolutionary charge. For centuries, saints, Madonnas, and angels had been painted on the walls of churches and worldly buildings. Here we have instead an individual, a secular subject, and one not belonging to the aristocracy. There had been portraits depicting someone looking directly at the viewer before – the extraordinary over-life size picture of Richard II (around 1356) now in the nave of Westminster Abbey springs to mind – but this feeling of being scrutinised by a portrait and by such a subject was something completely new. The sense of a picture looking at the spectator was present in the Middle Ages, but it had a completely different meaning: for instance, monks in their cells "had before their eyes images of the Virgin and her crucified son, so that while reading, praying and sleeping [sic], they could look upon them and be looked upon with the eyes of compassion"[159].

While portraiture had reached amazing quality and refinement with the Greeks and Romans (see, for instance, the Fayum portraits), it was one of the visual arts that

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[158] Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971): Vol. 1, 198.
[159] Hans Belting, *The Image and Its Public in the Middle Ages* (New Rochelle, N. Y.: Aristide D. Caratzay, 1990): 57.

changed most, and arguably, languished, during the early Middle Ages, with important exceptions: the exquisite drawings in illuminated manuscripts, the spectacular stained glass windows, and the whole universe of the so-called minor arts such as woodwork, jewellery carving, and the textile arts (a category interestingly developed in the Renaissance, although consolidated much later, in the eighteenth century)[160]. Special reference should also be made to Byzantine icon painting: the holy icons produced by the Cretan school (from the thirteenth century, when Crete became a Venetian possession) circulated throughout Europe, but hardly ever had secular subjects.

From the Netherlands, the new techniques observable in van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, Robert Campin, and their disciples came to Italy, where portraiture flourished, giving rise to as well as interrogating the great ideas of humanist culture, such as the meaning and dignity of being human, and the importance of human knowledge in the arts and sciences. Here, ground-breaking theories on perspective were developed: by applying the rules of geometry, one could rationalise space and represent, alter, and dominate reality.

The birth of "perspective thinking" went hand in hand with the introduction and advancement of new techniques (such as the improvements in oil painting, the use of *chiaroscuro* and *sfumato*), optical devices and technologies (the camera obscura, perfected glass mirrors, etc.), and insights into the mechanisms of vision. This process was extremely complex and should be seen as neither linear nor teleologically necessary in retrospect: it is well known that the very concept of "Renaissance" is much debated and many of its Positivistic, Burkhardtian definitions are no longer tenable. Painting developed differently and along peculiar stylemes in certain areas: for instance, concerning Dutch painting, Svetlana Alpers speaks of a "descriptive" art quite dissimilar to the more "narrative" one marking the Italian Renaissance[161]. Furthermore, portraiture did not exist *in vacuo*. The different political and social environments profited by or opposed the fruition and connotative functions of portraits: the Church actively negotiated with mimetic representation; nobles wanted their effigies in *sacre conversazioni* quite clearly recognisable; prospective brides sent

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[160] Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
[161] See Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing*: *Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

their picture to their husbands-to-be; the ownership of a leader's portrait signalled political allegiance, etc. Finally, painters acquired a new status; indeed, the very idea of portraiture being one of the fine arts emerged in the Renaissance. When Albrecht Dürer travelled through Italy, he famously proclaimed: "*Hier bin ich ein Herr, daheim ein Schmarotzer*"[162], "Here I am a lord, at home a parasite" (letter to Willibald Pirckheimer, October 1506).

Portraiture developed and interpellated the idea of one's identity. It cannot be safely stated, as has sometimes been rashly done, that the Renaissance invented "the self". There is no doubt, however, that new conceptions of subjectivity and privacy were articulated in this time. If the limited value of broad generalisations is granted, it can be said that the two cultural movements that most spurred such interrogation were humanism and the Protestant Reformation. Both had enormous influence in England and require investigation.

1.3.2 Portraits in Early Modern England

The title of this section is deliberately not Elizabethan or early Stuart portraits. In fact, this choice serves to signal the shift in focus of recent studies on early modern portraiture. Until the end of the twentieth century, the only English portraits dating back to the second half of the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries that were studied or even considered were those depicting the aristocracy. First and foremost, there were books on the iconographic strategies employed by Elizabeth I to develop her protean persona of mythical Virgin Queen[163]. We had studies on Hans Holbein's reception at the court of Henry VIII and on the pictorial representation of Tudor and Stuart nobility[164]. Significantly, one of the most important exhibitions at the Tate

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[162] Quoted in Philipp Zitzlsperger, *Dürers Pelz und das Recht im Bild: Kleiderkunde als Methode der Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008): 54.

[163] See, for instance, Roy C. Strong's books: *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963); *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977); *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (London: Pimlico, 2003). See also Frances Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975). For a new approach, see, for instance, Helen Hackett, "A New Image of Elizabeth I: The Three Goddesses Theme in Art and Literature", *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Issue 77, no. 3, 2014: 225-56.

[164] See at least Erna Auerbach, *Tudor Artists: A Study of Painters in the Royal Service and of Portraiture on Illuminated Documents from the Accession of Henry VIII to the Death of Elizabeth I* (London: Athlone

Gallery in 1995 was entitled *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England 1530–1630*. In a parallel way, the art of limning was investigated in detail, and very important studies on Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver's miniatures were produced. These critical directions were apparently well founded. Royal paintings and courtly miniatures seemed to be the only artefacts that could meet the aesthetic standards of continental painting (itself an extremely problematic category): "[I]f Holbein and Mor be excepted, the history of painting in sixteenth-century England is chiefly a record of work by foreign mediocrities"[165]. Historians have endlessly repeated that England had no Velázquez, Clouet, Rembrandt, Titian, or Caravaggio. Even in recent studies, we can read such claims: "When people say that the Reformation killed English art, they forget that, by European standards, England had been artistically backward, even before the Reformation"[166].

Alternatively, under Henry VIII,

England's burgeoning relationship with Renaissance Italy, however, was to be first soured and then effectively terminated before sufficiently profound cultural connections could be established. The Reformation was especially damaging where the visual arts were concerned, postponing it a second time during the 1640s and 1650s[167].

Indeed, the "literal" state of the art of early-sixteenth century England was the following:

Until the age of Holbein, and save for [the] elite circles, most English portraiture remained religiously oriented, relatively unrefined, and largely devoid of classical influences. It was produced by mere craftsmen, almost entirely anonymous to us, with their 'vernacular' and often highly regionalized approaches to visual depiction. It was by no means yet a coveted element in the ambient material culture of the day. Its status as 'art', and of its creators as 'artists', remained far over the horizon[168].

Press, 1954), Roy C. Strong, *Tudor and Jacobean Portraits* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1969), and Karen Hearn, *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England, 1530-1630* (London: Tate Publishing, 1996).

[165] Charles Henry Collins Baker and William George Constable, *English Painting of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Paris: Pegasus Press, 1930): 6.

[166] Keith Thomas, "The Medlicott Lecture", quoted in Thomas Betteridge and Suzannah Lipscomb (eds), *Henry VIII and the Court: Art, Politics, and Performance* (Burlington and Farnham: Ashgate, 2013): 132, n. 2.

[167] Edward Chaney, "The Italianate Evolution of English Collecting", in id. (ed.), *The Evolution of English Collecting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003): 32.

[168] Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics in Provincial England, 1540-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 1.

However, Robert Tittler, whom I have just quoted, is quick to add: "By about 1640 all this had changed". From the Elizabethan age to the end of Charles I's reign, the market for portraits developed significantly, extending not only to the gentry but also to the middling sort: townspeople, professionals, yeomen and, a sector that still requires much-awaited research, citizens' wives and widows. Sitters included merchants, bankers, drapers, master carpenters, goldsmiths, clergymen, lawyers, physicians, writers, musicians, and actors, but also wealthy butchers, skinners, and haberdashers[169].

This new consumerist appeal can be explained in various ways: demographic growth, urbanisation, the expansion of trade, aspirations of social dynamism, a new interest in subjectivity and self-fashioning, and, most importantly, Protestantism. With the Reformation, religious subjects (saints' icons, Madonnas, crucifixes) became problematic, hence there was a growth in demand for secular portraiture. One can say that, in England, patrons were much more interested in portraits than in any other pictorial genre, whereas

> [i]n Germany and the Low Countries, artists readily found new audiences for the emerging genres of painting, including landscapes, townscapes, still-lifes, scenes of merry-making, historical and allegorical subjects, all of which flourished alongside portraiture[170].

Indeed, Ben Jonson still used the old Dutch word for landscape, "*Landtschap*" when describing the set for *The Masque of Blackness* (1605): "First, for the scene was drawn a Landtshap consisting of small woods, and here and there a void place filled with huntings […]"[171]. As late as 1627-8, Edward Norgate in his *Miniatura, or the Art of Limning*, underlined the absence of an English word for this genre and lamented the fact that the Dutch were still the masters: it was

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[169] All this information can be gained from Tarnya Cooper's wonderful studies: *Searching for Shakespeare* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elite of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); *Elizabeth I and Her People* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2013).
[170] Elizabeth Goldring, *op. cit.* (2014): 6.
[171] Ben Jonson, *Works* (London: 1616): 893-4.

an Art soe new in England, and soe lately come a-shore, as all the Language can not find it a Name but a borrowed one, and that from a people that are noe great Lenders but upon good Securitie, the Dutch […] For to say truth the Arte is theirs […][172]

Even more revealingly, he adds: "which [landscape painting] of all painting I hold *the most honest and Innocent*"[173] (emphasis mine). As for the still-life, the term does not seem to have entered the English language before the end of the seventeenth century.

On the question of price, the *locus classicus* among historians is a passage from Peacham's *The Gentleman's Exercise*, in which he keeps trying to convince gentlemen of the value of painting, at least in monetary terms:

> Now lest you should esteeme over basely of this Art, and disdaine to have your picture, because you may have it for a trifle (which I account a fault in many of our good workemen) I will tell you the prices of some peeces of note as well in ancient times, as of late dayes[174].

Portraits could cost anything from sixpence "up to several pounds depending on size, materials, the complexity of composition […] and the prominence or reputation of the artist"[175]. More typically, however, the price would vary between 1 and 5 shillings, "roughly the price of a cheap Bible in the period 1560-80 or an item of luxury foodstuffs, such as a jar of olives, around 1600"[176]. In comparison with many other decorative goods (such as clothing and tapestries), pictures were quite inexpensive, which belies Lucy Gent's argument that "[m]ost Englishmen were not interested in paying out for pictures"[177]. The materials used were mainly of two kinds: wooden panels (often oak), and canvas, which was cheaper and often used in large-scale pictures. Miniatures were quite a different commodity and their uses will be dealt with in a separate section.

While nobles mainly preferred to be drawn by foreign painters, the middling sort considered their portraits as an investment and usually resorted to local craftsmen:

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[172] Edward Norgate, *Miniatura or The Art of Limning*, ed. by Martin Hardie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919): 42.

[173] Ibid.: 35.

[174] Henry Peacham, *op. cit.* (1634): 8.

[175] Tarnya Cooper, *A Guide to Tudor and Jacobean Portraits* (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 2008): 10.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Lucy Gent, *Picture and Poetry 1560-1620* (Lemington Spa: James Hall, 1981): 2.

individual English patrons were frequently reluctant to pay the high prices for goods they regarded as simply brightly coloured wooden boards. Portraits were considered curious and endearing mementoes, but in a culture that was largely attuned to the value of materials, rather than the value of skill; painted pictures did not generally command high prices[178].

What is most striking, though, is

the huge disparity between the values of paintings and almost any other type of artisanal product within the households of middle elites [and, in general, of the so-called 'middling sort']. Items such as silverware, glassware, books, textiles, musical instruments and functional items of furniture were routinely valued more highly than painted pictures[179].

A few examples may be of use. In 1610, a joiner from Ipswich owned "fowre small pictures", valued at just three shillings. In 1631, Richard Rainsford, a clerk from the same town, had in his parlour five pictures valued together "with 2 baskets" at six shillings. In the first decades of the seventeenth century, a Bristol butcher owned a "picture of the Quene" which, together with two candlesticks, was valued at three shillings[180]. The vogue for pictures of Elizabeth I prompted unauthorised painters to make them. Sir Walter Ralegh records that these works of "unskilled and common painters" were "knockt in pieces and cast into the fire"[181]. Many of these were crude representations, used as signs for inns and alehouses. Far from being extremely rare objects in a household, "portraits were an immediately recognisable element which provided a mechanism to keep family memories, spiritual instruction or indeed a distinct English identity at the heart of the home"[182]. Another use of portraits at the time was to keep friendships strong and alive, as suggested by the authors of the popular play called *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607):

It is a custome amongst friends (and sure a friendly custome) if the obstacles of Fortune, the impediments of Nature, the barre of time, the distance of place do hinder, nay if death itselfe doth make that seperation amongst friends, the shadow or picture of a friend is kept as a deuoted ceremonie[183].

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[178] Tarnya Cooper, *op. cit.* (2006): 38.
[179] Ibid.
[180] All refer to Tarnya Cooper, *op. cit.* (2012): 60-1.
[181] Walter Ralegh, *The History of the World* (London: 1652 [1614]), A5 v.
[182] Tarnya Cooper, *op. cit.* (2010): 177.
[183] John Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins, *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (London: 1607): 2.

It is clear that most of the pictures commissioned by the incipiently interested bourgeoisie have been lost or destroyed. They could not be preserved in galleries, which made them fall victim to damage caused by the weather, moving house, fire, etc. Often, their commemorative function mattered only to the sitter's close relatives, in contrast with the interest of dynastic portraiture; their resale value was very limited. Finally, manuals of art history neglected portraits of citizens until very recently.

This is understandable because, for entire centuries, even royal portraiture of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras was ignored. It was believed to be grossly unsophisticated, flat, and parochial. This perception had already begun a few decades after the death of Elizabeth I: in 1662, John Evelyn recorded that some of her portraits at Essex House had "for severall years, furnish[ed] the Pastry-men with Peels for the use of their Ovens"[184]. The works by established English painters George Gower, William Segar, William Larkin, and Robert Peake were often dismissed in comparison with the very different portraits by foreigners active in England, such as Anthonis Mor, Federico Zuccaro, Hans Eworth, Marcus Gheeraerts, the Gentileschis, Rubens, and Van Dyck. Less influential native painters were completely overlooked. A careful study of aristocratic portraiture began only around the middle of the twentieth century, thanks to art historians – Sir Roy C. Strong *in primis* – who not only analysed them, but actually rediscovered them. As he wrote in 1960 in the catalogue of the exhibition he had organised at the Tate Gallery, Strong had been finally allowed to "resurrect[t] a lost century of English painting"[185]. Suffice it to mention one fact: the iconic portrait of John Donne as a melancholy lover "taken in Shaddowes", now at the National Portrait Gallery, was discovered and identified by John Bryson only in 1959. If even such key pictures required so much time to be found, one can only sigh at the loss of portraits of the lowlier members of society.

It is true that many aristocrats were especially interested in contemporary Italian art and condemned English painting as a backwater. Some of them collected as many foreign pictures as they could, circulated engravings and prints of continental art, and created private galleries. The most famous cases are Baron Lumley, Prince Henry

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[184] C. F. Bell (ed.), *Evelyn's Sculptura* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906): 25.
[185] Roy C. Strong, *The Elizabethan Image: Painting in England, 1540-1620* (London: The Tate Gallery, 1969): 11.

Stuart, and the Earl of Arundel and his wife Aletheia's Jacobean galleries. Of very great importance are also Inigo Jones' travels in Italy and Philip Sidney's interest in Italian art and his commissioning of a portrait by Paolo Veronese. Pioneering work has also been done on the artistic connoisseurship of Dudley, Earl of Leicester, whose patronage could be rivalled only by that of Elizabeth I[186]. Portraits could eternise their feats and help their social ambitions. As the painter-poet William Segar put it, portraits were first invented "to retaine in memory the excellent Actions of such men, as had liued honourably, and died vertuously"[187].

Indeed, if one wanders through the halls devoted to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English painting at the National Portrait Gallery or Tate Britain, one is struck by the variety of pictorial quality and style to be found in contemporary pictures, going from the eerily extraterrestrial *Cholmondeley Ladies* (c. 1610s) to the excellence of the portrait of Sir Robert Sidney (c. 1588), both by unknown British painters. This co-existence of different styles must be contextualised: only the highest social circles in the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras would have been familiar with the new continental models. It is true, of course, that the nobles' new acquisitions could migrate in print form, and that servants could see their employers' collections, just as players performing in private households might.

The very lexical terms employed are important. Whereas the word "portrait" was commonly used only by the learned (but could mean also a sculpture or a graven effigy), a "picture" could mean almost anything the eye could see. To remain only on the non-figurative level, it could refer to any decoration (painting, sculpture, tapestry, heraldry, emblems, embroidery)[188] and to such diverse artefacts as a painted cloth or even a witch's waxen model. We also need to take into account our "anachronistic" concept of 'picture'. "The Italianate notion of a framed, four-square, self-sufficient work of art was common currency in educated circles, but not universal"[189].

What is clear, however, is that people walking in the streets of Blackfriars and the City of London, where the painters' shops were, would not see Holbein's half-lengths or Hilliard's miniatures. What they saw were pictures the style of which can be

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[186] See Elizabeth Goldring, *op. cit*. (2014).
[187] William Segar, *Honor Military, and Ciuil [...]* (London: 1602): 256.
[188] Lucy Gent, *Picture and Poetry 1560-1620*, Lemington Spa, James Hall, 1981, p. 6
[189] Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 137.

characterised by the following triad of adjectives, as formulated by David Evett. Pictures would certainly be "epideictic", that is, designed primarily for the rhetorical display of social status (especially through clothing and props); they would be "planar", that is, theirs was an art of surfaces, where three-dimensional perspective would be faulty or missing; and "paratactic": "aggregative, disjunctive, even visually incoherent"[190]. Very often, emblems and *imprese* would hover in the background and demand to be read, sometimes diverting the spectator's attention from the sitter's face. The presence of *sententiae* and *imprese* "invited [the viewers] to regard a picture as an emblem shadowing out something to be learnt"[191]. Sometimes, they did indeed seem painted in order to be read as texts: these pictures tend to keep the onlooker at a distance.

New fashions would percolate down the social strata, but the movement would not be merely top-down: changes of style would encounter and be negotiated by the exponents of the English vernacular tradition of painting. For instance, it has been studied that from a certain point in time, Elizabeth I ordered the painters of her portraits to depict her face using the so-called "mask of youth": she should show no trace of the passing of time, but be represented as an eternally beautiful divine being; a sacred icon, demonstrating the veracity of her motto, "*semper eadem*" (always the same). In the same way, the use of illusionistic perspective was dictated to serve symbolical purposes. At least as far as some painters are concerned, their failure to project three-dimensional images on a flat surface was not caused by incompetence (though Inigo Jones as late as 1638 complained that Edward Pierce was "the only man that doeth understand perspective of all painters in London"[192]), but realism was wilfully avoided; there is a "tendency even of foreign artists like Holbein and Eworth to relinquish perspective as an important device in their English work"[193]. It has been proposed that this was also linked to the fear of idolatry of secular pictures.

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[190] David Evett, *Literature and the Visual Arts in Tudor England* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1990): 10.
[191] Ellen Chirelstein, "Lady Elizabeth Pope: The Heraldic Body", in Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (eds.), *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture 1540-1660* (London: Reaktion, 1995): 48.
[192] Stephen Orgel and Roy C Strong, *Inigo Jones. The Theatre of the Stuart Court* (London, and Berkeley and Los Angeles: Sotheby Parke Bernet and University of California Press, 1973): Vol. 1, 37.
[193] David Evett, *op. cit.* (1990): 27.

Remarkably, just as this was an archaistic choice on the part of Elizabethan courtiers, it would sit quite comfortably next to the vernacular painting of medieval descent.

London painters had to be members of the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers[194], which had formed through the union of the painters' guild and the stainers' in 1502. This unification was accomplished because the two companies felt justifiably threatened by Henry VII's invitation of foreign artists to the English court in a bid to rival the visual splendour of the other European courts. The painter-stainers signed a petition, granted by the Lord Mayor, requesting "that anyone doing painted work, of whatever craft, should come under the rule of Master and Wardens of the Painter Stainers"[195]. They never achieved complete control, partly because they had jurisdiction only within the radius of four miles of the city walls; if a painter lived outside, they could join any company they wanted to. Over time, there were many disputes with other companies, especially the Plasterers and, above all, with the Heralds. The line of demarcation between the two was not really clear, and often enough, the Painter-Stainers "were on a collision course with the College of Arms"[196].

However, by the Elizabethan time, their condition was one of relative prosperity: in 1578, the company could count 200 members[197], who each had to serve a seven-year apprenticeship. The distinction between English painters providing more decorative art and foreigners producing portraits and fine art (however anachronistic the classification may be) became vaguer and vaguer: for instance, both of the Gheeraerts (Flemish painters) joined the company. Yet, it is true that in 1634, Henry Peacham still complained: "I am sorry that our courtiers and great personages must seek far and near for some Dutchman or Italian to draw their pictures, our Englishmen being held for Vauniens [i.e. good for nothing]"[198]. This distinction was often remarked upon by authors. For instance, Abraham Fraunce in 1592 wrote: "When I talke of Painters, I

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[194] See Alan Borg, *The History of the Worshipful Company of Painters* otherwise *Painter-Stainers* (Lindley: Jeremy Mills Publishing Limited, 2005).
[195] Ibid.: 23-4.
[196] James Ayres, *Art, Artisans and Apprentices: Apprentice Painters and Sculptors in the Early Modern British Tradition* (Oxford and Havertown P. A.: Oxbow, 2014): 135.
[197] Alan Borg, *op. cit.* (2005): 32.
[198] Henry Peacham, *op. cit.* (1634): A2 v.

meane not the ridiculous fraternitie of silly Wall-washers: neither doe I euer once thinke of our loftie rimers, when I make mention of Poets"[199].

Outside London, painters would often remain associated with "mechanical" occupations: "[C]raftsmen, primarily trained in such traditional metiers as, for example, cloth painting or staining, glass painting, wood carving, heraldic painting, tomb masonry, metal working, and other such occupations"[200]. Indeed, as late as 1685, William Aglionby could write that "the World here [in Britain] has a Notion of Painters little nobler than of Joyners or Carpenters, or of any of the Mechanick"[201].

This goes to show that painters were an active part of everyday life in the city. They are thus addressed by the author William Painter: "You curious painters / and you limners all, from Temple Barre / along to Charing Cross that your gay pictures / hang out on the wall"[202].When Malcolm Smuts writes that in the Jacobean period there emerged a "subculture associated with a powerful elite [that] soon acquired imitators, so that viewing and watching artists at work became fashionable diversions"[203], he is perhaps overemphasising this "elitarian" quality. Anyone walking in the city of London could view the pictures of the painters who would struggle often in vain not to be considered "artificers"; at the beginning of his career, Inigo Jones was simply called a "picture maker"[204]. Beside portrait-painting, their occupations would include painting posts, shop-signs, cloths, coaches, furniture, etc. In *The Owl's Almanach* (1618), Thomas Middleton writes a comic set of predictions for the London livery companies and, as may be expected, painters are set side by side the other artisanal confraternities (starting with the mercers, the grocers, the drapers, the fishmongers, etc.); indeed, painters come last, because the almanac proceeds in order of seniority, and the painters were the twenty-seventh company to be formed. In the same way, Apelles' legendary studio in John Lyly's *Campaspe* (1584) is described as an ordinary Elizabethan painter's shop, just like the one featured in the anonymous Italianate comedy *The Wit of a Woman* (1604). Finally, the phenomenon of civic portraiture

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[199] Abraham Fraunce, *The Golden Book of the Leaden Gods: Third Part of Ivy Church,* ed. by Stephen Orgel (London and New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1976):B1 v.
[200] Robert Tittler, *op. cit.* (2012): 11.
[201] Quoted ibid.: 83.
[202] Quoted ibid.: 77.
[203] R. Malcolm Smuts, *The Stuart Court and Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 100.
[204] Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Rutland* (1905): IV, 446.

grew thanks to the activities of the companies which would often hang the pictures of their most illustrious members in hallways and specially-made galleries. Thus, in the second part of Heywood's *If You Know Not Me, You Know Not Nobody* (1604), Doctor Nowell proudly shows his visitors the pictures of "many charitable citizens". Looking at them would have had this effect: "You may by them learn to refresh your souls"[205].

I.3.3 Miniatures

The technique in which English painters excelled from the Elizabethan to the Caroline period was that of the miniature, the aristocratic art form of painting "in little". Its origin lies in the techniques used in Burgundian illuminated texts in the late Middle Ages. Credit for fist combining them with the uses of detachable portraiture generally goes to the Flemish Jean Clouet (1480-1541), who worked in Tours and Paris at the French court. The Burgundian duchy had sided with England in the Hundred Years' War (the noble families were related), and, throughout the fifteenth century, the English had "exhibited a strong taste for all things Burgundian, including Flemish paintings, tapestries, and illuminated manuscripts"[206]. Among the many innovations introduced by the first Tudor monarch, Henry VII, was the establishment of a royal library at Richmond Palace: for his books, he employed a group of Burgundian illuminators. Henry VIII continued this tradition and recruited illuminators and miniature painters; both were called "limners" (to limn comes from Latin *illuminare* through French *enluminer*), since both used the application of watercolour to vellum as taught by the school of Ghent and Bruges.

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[205] Edited by Madeleine Doran (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935): ll. 761; 763. This gallery can be compared to the collection said to belong to a popular hero of the Tudor era: the clothier Jack of Newbury (d. 1557). According to Thomas Deloney's 1597 novel on him, the merchant had "fifteen faire pictures hanging which were covered with curtaines of greene silke fringed with golde […] [i]n a faire large parlour which was wainscoated all around" (James O. Halliwell ed., *Thomas Deloney's* Jack of Newbury, London: 1859: 74). They depicted historical figures who were born poor and thanks to their diligence and wisdom, had a glorious career. Jack would show the pictures to his servants and friends, encouraging them to follow the examples of the people portrayed. The veracity of this episode is questionable, but it confirms that merchants could own similar collections (and the detail of the silken curtains is also interesting).
[206] Thomas Kren *et al.* (eds), *Masterpieces of the J. Paul Getty Museum: Illuminated Manuscripts* (Los Angeles: J Paul Getty Museum Publications, 1997): 103.

With Henry VIII's patronage, Hans Holbein perfected miniature painting (he is called by Nicholas Hilliard "most excellent painter and limner […] the greatest master truly in both those arts after the life that ever was"[207]). Holbein was not the only great miniature painter at the English court. There were also Lucas Horenbout, and especially Levina Teerlinc, who was appointed "*paintrix*" around 1546 and kept working during the reigns of Henry's children, Elizabeth included. It seems that she developed a particular technique, since Hilliard notes: "There is also an excellent white to be made of quicksilver which draweth a very fine line; this white the women painters use" (*H* 71). However, all these artists were foreigners. Nicholas Hilliard (Exeter, 1546/7–London, 1619) was the first (outstanding) English miniature painter. He was the son of a goldsmith and prominent Protestant reformer who had to endure Mary I's persecutions. Nicholas found refuge alongside the family of John Bodley (the father of the founder[208] of the Bodleian Library) in the Duchy of Cleves, in Frankfurt, and Geneva, where he met the Huguenot Pierre Olivier, a proficient goldsmith and father of Isaac Oliver (who anglicised his surname), his future rival (Rouen, c. 1565–London, 1617). When Elizabeth I came to the throne, Nicholas returned to London and was apprenticed as a goldsmith by the Queen's jeweller, Robert Brandon. He is reputed to have painted a self-portrait at the age of 13, and in 1565, at the age of 18, he produced a portrait of Mary Stuart. This is not surprising, since limning and gold-working were interrelated activities: miniatures were actual, expensive jewels. They were cased in gold and gems, and the pigments used were obtained from the most precious stones and materials, gold and silver included. The surface onto which limning was applied, however, was vellum, and the miniature produced was then pasted on paper. Playing cards were used, occasionally with symbolic meaning: the ace or the queen of hearts were especially fashionable (for instance, a miniature of Henry FitzRoy, the only illegitimate son of Henry VIII to be acknowledged, was painted by Horenbout on an ace of hearts when he was 15, while the backing of a miniature of Elizabeth I by Hilliard of 1572 is the Queen of Hearts).

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[207] Nicholas Hilliard, *The Arte of Limning*, ed. by R. K. R. Thornton and T. G. S. Cain (Edinburgh: Carcanet, 1992): 49. All subsequent references to Hilliard's treatise will be shown in parenthesis in the body of the text, preceded by *H*.

[208] Haydocke dedicated his translation of Lomazzo to Sir Thomas Bodley.

Hilliard was presumably trained by Levina Teerling, and between the end of the 1560s and the beginning of the 1570s, he was appointed miniaturist and goldsmith (also designing coins and seals) to the queen, although he never obtained a complete monopoly of the sovereign's portrait. Thanks to the patronage of the Queen and the ambitious Earl of Leicester, his miniatures became extremely fashionable among the courtiers. From 1576 to 1579, he stayed in France, involved in the duc d'Alençon's suit to Elizabeth I and learning new skills from the local artists. On his return, commissions were numerous, although discontinuous and, owing to his numerous offspring, he was often in financial distress; indeed, he did not serve the queen directly, but set up shop in Gutter Lane in Cheapside, the centre of London's jewellery trade. He had various disciples (who, he interestingly wrote, "now and of a long time have pleased the common sort exceeding well"[209]), but some of them apparently did not meet his standards, since he complained that many circulated botched works not only at court, but also in the city.

His rival, Oliver, joined his workshop but soon developed a different style, one based on *chiaroscuro* techniques developed by Italian and Flemish art. While Elizabeth I and James I favoured Hilliard's style, Queen Anne and Prince Henry preferred Oliver's. Under Charles I, influential miniaturists included Peter Oliver (Isaac's son), Sir John Hoskins, Samuel Cooper (Hoskins' nephew), Joan Palmer (married to the courtly dramatist Lodowick Carlell), and the Anglo-French David des Granges.

"The miniature, though it was not at all confined to court circles, nonetheless became associated with representations of an aristocratic splendour"[210]. There were two main types of miniatures. Portrait miniatures as such were very small, normally oval or round, and could be held in the palm of one's hand, carried around one's neck, and hidden anywhere, from caskets and drawers to pockets: they were "to be viewed of necessity in hand near unto the eye" (*H* 67). Cabinet miniatures, by contrast, were

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[209] Quoted in Katherine Coombs, *The Portrait Miniature in England* (London: Victoria and Albert Publications, 1998): 57. Other studies that I have found useful on English miniatures are: id., "'A Kind of Gentle Painting': Limning in 16th-Century England", in Kim Sloan (ed.), *European Visions: American Voices* (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 2009) (e-book); Daphne Foskett, *Collecting Miniatures* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 1979); Roy C. Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983); Patricia Fumerton, "'Secret' Arts: Elizabethan Miniatures and Sonnets", *Representations*, Issue 15, 1986: 57-97.
[210] Dympna Callaghan, *op. cit.* (2013): 460.

larger, generally rectangular, and could be hung; however, especially in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, "these large limnings were frequently copies of works by old masters, or depicted mythological or religious subjects, although a number of original works of this type also exist"[211]. One of the most famous examples of these rarer artefacts is Hilliard's cabinet miniature of Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland (c. 1590-5), now at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, which measures 25.7 x 17.3 cm. Mary Edmonds notes that Hilliard experimented in this genre from about 1587 to 1595 to rival his former pupil, Oliver[212].

Hilliard wrote his treatise *The Arte of Limning* (of which we only have what reads like an unrevised version) on the invitation of Richard Haydocke, who, in 1598, had just finished his translation of Lomazzo's treatise. Haydocke had written that "Illuminating *or* Limming*, the perfection of Painting*"[213] had found in Hilliard Raffaello Sanzio's equal, and persuaded him to write his own treatise on this technique. In his book, Hilliard strives to demonstrate that limning is the best form of painting (hyperbolically, "a thing apart from all other painting", *H* 43) and, as such, should be enjoyed and practised by courtiers only: "none should meddle with limning but gentlemen alone", since the main virtue expected in limners is discreet "cleanliness" (*H* 45; 53). One can infer from this statement that, to Hilliard's concern, miniatures must have circulated beyond courtly circles, transgressing Baldessare Castiglione's dicta that had persuaded gentlemen to take up the exercise of drawing (this invocation was met in England by Henry Peacham in his 1606 manual *Graphice*).

The ideal sitters were nobles – although Hilliard proudly states that the true nobility is not given by genealogy, but by God, who "giveth gentility to divers persons, and raiseth man to reputation by divers means" (*H* 45). Limners were expected "to carry themselves as to give such seemly attendance on princes as shall not offend their royal presence" (ibid.). Hilliard reminisces about his personal encounters with Philip Sidney and the queen herself, who personally interested herself in the conditions of sitting for a portrait. Elizabeth was an enthusiastic advocate for Hilliard's use of frontal light, "a

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[211] Daphne Foskett, *op. cit.* (1979): 18.
[212] Mary Edmonds, "Nicholas Hilliard", in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (last accessed: 2 October 2016).
[213] Quoted in Katherine Coombs, *op. cit.* (1998): 7.

light that acquires an almost ethical value"[214], in contrast with Oliver's realistic combination of *sfumato* and *chiaroscuro*. Hilliard's attempt to elevate the miniaturists' status was no easy task, since painting was still regarded as a craft by some; he went so far as to state that the limner's use of precious materials "so enricheth and ennobleth the work that it seemeth to be the thing itself, even the work of God and not of man" (*H* 43).

The small size of miniatures rendered them useful objects to strategically show both one's affection as well as one's political allegiance, often at the same time. When they were worn, "the overall sense was of privacy exhibited in public"[215]. There are many famous anecdotes. In 1564, Sir James Melville, the ambassador from Mary Stuart, was admitted into Elizabeth I's own bedchamber, where he was shown "a little cabinet, wherein were divers little pictures wrapt within paper"[216]. One was the miniature of the Earl of Leicester: he could identify him by candlelight, and could read the words on it: "My lord's picture". The queen refused to lend it to Melville because she said she only had that one picture of the earl. Instead, she kissed Mary Stuart's miniature, an action that prompted Melville to kiss the queen's hand, as he wrote, "for the great love therein evidenced to my mistress". In 1611, Sir Edward Herbert of Cherbury was ambushed and wounded by the jealous husband of Lady Ayres, who had got into the habit of wearing Herbert's miniature around her neck "so low that she hid it under her breasts". However, in his memoir, Herbert does not really explain what he was doing in Lady Ayres' bedroom, when he saw her "through the curtains lying upon her bed with a wax candle in one hand, and [his own] picture […] in the other"[217]. When he approached, she blew out the candles, but it was too late, Herbert understood the desire she had for him. As a final example, in 1623, James I wrote a letter jointly to his son, Prince Charles, and his favourite, the Duke of Buckingham. The addressees were in Spain when the prince had flamboyantly tried to obtain the Infanta's hand. James I describes his trepidation and, in the conclusion,

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[214] Camilla Caporicci, "'Many there were that did his picture get': The Miniature in Shakespeare's Work", in Keir Elam and Michele Marrapodi (eds), *Shakespeare and the Visual Arts: The Italian Influence* (Routledge: forthcoming).
[215] Patricia Fumerton, *Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991): 72.
[216] Quoted in Patricia Fumerton, *op. cit.* (1986): 57.
[217] Sidney Lee (ed.), *The Autobiography of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury* (London: Routledge, 1886): 69.

adds: "I have no more [to say], but that I wear Steenie's picture in a blue ribbon, under my waistcoat next my heart[218]". Steenie, the king's nickname for Buckingham, acknowledged this intimacy in another letter: he is overjoyed that his "unworthy picture [is] worn next the worthiest heart living, and all this in absence"[219].

Something that particularly appealed of limning was the artist's desire to "catch those lovely graces, witty smilings, and those stolen glances which suddenly like Lightning pass […] by which the affections appear" (*H* 57). The limners' proficiency was attested in poetry, as well. Joshua Sylvester relies on the trope of lovers' need to possess a miniature of each other to describe his own commentaries (1614) to Du Bartas' *Divine Weeks*. Just as Sylvester's work is a microcosm of the French author's macrocosm, so:

> […] wanton Lovers so delight to gaze
> On mortall Beauties brittle little Blaze;
> That not content, with (almost) daily sight
> Of Those deere Idols of their Appetite;
> Nor, with th'Idëas which th'Idalian Dart
> Hath deepe imprinted in their yielding heart;
> Nor, with Their Pictures (with precisest charge)
> Done by De-Creets, Marcus, or Peake, at large
> (And hangd of purpose, where they most frequent,
> As some faire Chamber's choicest Ornament)
> They must haue Heliard, Isaac, or His Sonne,
> To doe in Little, what in Large was done;
> That they may ever, ever beare about
> A Pictures Picture (for the most, I doubt)[220].

More famously, John Donne wrote in *The Storm* (1597) that "a hand or eye / By Hilliard drawn is worth a history / By a worse painter made"[221]. The enamelled world of miniature is also captured by the words of Lassinbergh, one of the protagonists of the comedy *The Wisdom of Doctor Dodypoll* (first published in 1600). He is a German earl who disguises himself as a limner (another character is called Alberdure, evoking Albrecht Dürer, whose name Hilliard spells "*Albert Dure*", *H* 48). In the very first

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[218] Quoted in David M. Bergeron, *King James and Letters of Homoerotic Desire* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002): 133.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Joshua Sylvester, *All the Small Workes of that Famous Poet Iosuah Siluester Gathered Into One Volume* (London: 1620): 211.
[221] John Carey (ed.), *Selected Poetry* by John Donne (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1996): 50.

lines of the play, he is shown painting the portrait of Lucilia both through miniature and through poetic blazon:

> Welcome, bright Morne, that with thy golden rayes
> Reveal'st the variant colours of the world,
> Looke here and see if thou canst finde disper'st
> The glorious parts of faire *Lucilia*:
> Take them and joyne them in the heavenly Spheares,
> And fixe them there as an eternall light
> For lovers to adore and wonder at:
> And this (long since) the high Gods would have done,
> But that they could not bring it back againe,
> When they had lost so great divinitie. […]
> […]   why the world
> With all her beautie was by painting made.
> Looke on the heavens colour'd with golden starres,
> The firmamentall ground of it, all blew.
> Looke on the ayre, where with a hundred changes
> The watry Rain-bow doth imbrace the earth.
> Looke on the sommer fields adorn'd with flowers,
> How much is natures painting honour'd there?
> Looke in the Mynes, and on the Easterne shore,
> Where all our Mettalls and deare Jems are drawne;
> Thogh faire themselves made better by their foiles.
> Looke on that litle world, the twofold man,
> Whose fairer parcell is the weaker still:
> And see what azure vaines in stream-like forme
> Divide the Rosie beautie of the skin.
> I speake not of the sundry shapes of beasts,
> The severall colours of the Elements:
> Whose mixture shapes the worlds varietie,
> In making all things by their colours knowne.
> And to conclude, Nature, her selfe divine,
> In all things she hath made, is a meere painter[222].

These are touching, rhetorically-charged words. However, limning did not simply provide a repertory of figurative motifs to the poets. It also helped to express profound anxieties that coalesced around the issues of making sense of an elusive and visually embattled reality.

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[222] M. N. Matson, *A Critical Edition of* The Wisdom of Doctor Dodypoll *(1600)* (New York: Garland, 1980): 71.

I.3.4 The Poetics of Limning

We have seen that "limning" derives from *illuminare*, to illuminate. That this primary meaning was still active is easily demonstrated: Haydocke referred to "Illuminating *or* Limning" to describe it. It was commonly used in combination with the verb "to shadow (forth)", although the verbs technically referred to two different practices, as the connoisseur Chapman wrote:

> It serves not a skillful Painters turn, to draw the figure of a face only to make known who it represents; but he must limn, give lustre, shadow and heightening, which though ignorants will esteem spiced and too curious yet such as have the judicial perspective, will see it hath motion, spirit, and life[223].

Hilliard and his imitators painted the face by deepening colours instead of employing shadows, as Isaac Oliver did. Hilliard stated that shadows were really needed in oil paintings and large pictures only, whereas limning did not require *chiaroscuro*, since, as he told Queen Elizabeth: "beauty and good favour is like clear truth, which is not shamed with the light, nor needs to be obscured" (*H* 67).

Apart from this technical difference, with which only few must have been familiar, it can be safely said that, since a word for picture or portrait was "shadow", it was possible to speak of illuminating shadows as well as shadowing forth a shadow. In fact, Hilliard himself spoke of limning as shadowing: "For Limning is but the shadowing of the same Colour your ground is of" (*H* 77); "to shadow sweetly, as we call it, […] is a far greater cunning than shadowing hard or dark […] so to shadow as if it were not at all shadowed" (*H* 67)[224]. This is no pure semantic game, but a consideration that addresses deeply-ingrained cultural issues which grew out of a reflection of Neoplatonic theories on art and Protestant conceptions of earthly life.

According to Neoplatonism, pictures are shadows, just as reality is a shadow of the ideal world. The world is marked by illusoriness and fleetingness. Yet, the meaning of things may be withheld and hidden behind the veil of appearance. Just like emblems,

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[223] *Ovid's Banquet of Sense*, in Algernon Charles Swinburne (ed.), *The Works of George Chapman: Poems and Minor Translations* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1875): 21.

[224] On the shadowing/limning relationship, see Ann Lecercle, "Holbein, Hilliard, and the Strategy of the Portrait in Shakespeare: Alimentary, Apotropaic, Anamorphic", *Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare*, Issue 7, 1989: 171-200. For the emergent new views on shadows (especially those formulated by Giordano Bruno), see Camilla Caporicci, *The Dark Lady: La Rivoluzione Shakespeariana nei* Sonetti *alla* Dama Bruna (Passignano: Aguaplano, 2013).

it is necessary to disclose or pierce through this shroud to get to the truth. Alternatively, external phenomena can "shadow forth" encrypted symbols. Therefore, a portrait is at once a copy of something (a shadow) and a surface that, aptly read, can reveal its true meaning: Elizabethan pictures were designed not only to be looked at, but also to be read and deciphered.

These notions were re-articulated by Protestant thought. The true believer can intuit "a seeming somewhat more than view"[225], like *Shadows in the Water*, as Thomas Traherne put it in one of his most famous poems. Just as Adam, Moses, and King David had foreshadowed Christ (Theophilus Gale wrote later in the seventeenth century: "Did not the wise God herein act like a curious Limner, who first gives an adumbration and dark shadow with a rude Pencil, and then adds lively colours to compleat his Picture?"[226]), so do we live in a world encrusted with deceiving phantasmata and encrypted symbols awaiting correct interpretation.

The language of limning intercepted these discourses. Limning enables men and women to "illuminate" these shadows: it brings clarity where ambiguity reigns. Thus, Fulke Greville remarked that Philip Sidney's most cherished aim was "to limn out such exact pictures, of every posture in the minde"[227]. His writing (following the *ut pictura poësis* maxim[228]) had a heuristic, revelatory value. As Sidney himself had famously proclaimed, poetry, "a speaking picture"[229], is an art of imitation, which is "a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth". The poet "never affirmeth"[230] and yet can persuade and indicate what is good – as Touchstone says in *As You Like It*: "the truest poetry is the most feigning" (III.iii 16-7). The very opening lines of *The True Tragedy of King Richard the Third* (printed in 1594), spoken by Truth and Poetry, testify to this salutary purpose:

POETRY: Truth well met.

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[225] Thomas Traherne, *Shadows in the Water*, l. 4, quoted in Colin Burrow (ed.), *Metaphysical Poetry* (London: Penguin Classics, 2006): 246.

[226] Theophilus Gale, "A Summary of the Two Covenants", preface to William Strong's *A Discourse of the Two Covenants* (London: 1678): unsigned page.

[227] Fulke Greville, *Sir Fulke Greville's Life of Sir Philip Sidney* (Hamburg: Severus Verlag, 2012 [1625]): 16.

[228] See R.W. Lee, *Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967).

[229] Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry*, ed. by R. W. Maslen (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002): 86.

[230] Ibid.: 103.

TRUTH: Thanks Poetry; what makes thou upon the stage?
POETRY: Shadows.
TRUTH: Then I will add bodies to the shadows[231]. (ll. 7-10)

There is another side to this coin, however: limning is not just a revelatory, illuminating process. It is also a creative practice, of course, which does not reflect, but also fashions, alters, and transforms reality. The limner can become an *artifex*, a demiurge that organises and modifies the order of things. Whereas Hilliard himself "does not, like Philip Sidney on behalf of poets, adopt the advanced thought among Italian Renaissance theorists who speak of painters as inspired, godlike creators of a second nature"[232], others did that for him. Many of the poems and prose works employing the theme of the *paragone* of the arts use the trope of the artist as a divine being or, at least, as a competitor with Nature. For instance, these are the two first stanzas of a sonnet by Henry Constable, *To Mr. Hilliard, Upon Occasion of a Picture He Made of My Ladie Rich*:

If Michaell the arch-painter now did live,
 Because that Michaell, he an angell hight,
 As partiall for his fellow-angells, might
 To Raphaell's skill much prayse and honoure give:

But if in secreat I his judgment shrive,
It would confesse that no man knew aright
To give stones and pearles true die and light,
Till first youre art with orient nature strive[233].

What was also felt as an amazing feat was Hiliard's ability to intuit and reproduce the Platonic idea of his subject, as John Harington pointed out: "[M]y selfe have seen him in white and black in foure lines only set downe the feature of the Queenes Majesties countenance, that it was even thereby to be knowne [i.e. recognised] [...] he can set it downe by the Idea he hath without any patterne"[234].

However, if phenomena are characterised themselves as shadows, copies, or mendacious entities, then the painter's agency will turn out to be a *supplément*. By

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[231] W. W. Greg (ed.), *The True Tragedy of King Richard the Third* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929).
[232] Arthur F. Kinney and Linda Bradley Salamon (eds), *Nicholas Hilliard's* Arte of Limning (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1983): 114.
[233] Thomas Park (ed.), *The Harleian Miscellany [...]* (London: 1812): IX, 509.
[234] Quoted in Anna Riehl, *The Face of Queenship: Early Modern Representations of Elizabeth I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): 134.

showing itself as a creative intervention, the artefact functions as a marker of displacement. If it re-presents something that cannot be trusted, then it foregrounds, on the one hand, the separation with its referent, and, on the other hand, the lack of ultimate value in the would-be original "presentation": it is an art that conceals its being art. To a certain extent, all representations are, then, instances of "limning the water", as Bacon, the taxonomist of *idola*, wrote: "Who then to fraile Mortality shall trust / But limmes the Water, or but writes in dust"[235]. The phrase is beautiful also because it plays with the fact that all miniatures were limned in water: watercolours were the artist's medium.

Indeed, the very verbs "limn" and "shadow" mean two opposite things. Whereas limning casts light, "to shadow" implies covering something: it is the reverse of the action of illuminating. Yet, they were often used as synonyms. This enationsemic (that is, simultaneously expressing two contraries) paradox has fruitful bearings for a discussion of the language and discourse of limning.

Finally, it is also necessary to add that limning became a fancy term for "writing", which derives from the original medieval practice of illuminating the letters of the manuscripts. For instance, when Sandys translated Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, he said that it was a piece "limn'd by that unperfect light which was snatcht from the howers of night and repose"[236].

To sum up, by "poetics of limning" I mean a complex framework of tropes and rhetorical paradigms that correspond to the gnoseological practice of coming to terms with a reality which was understood to be simultaneously opaque (needing revelatory illumination) and vacuous (needing demiurgic re-fashioning).

Arguably, it is not coincidental that Foucault locates at the turn of the seventeenth century the gradual shift from an epistemic system based on resemblance to one based on representation, a "transition from an analogical cosmos to a syntagmatic world"[237]. Philosophers started to question the intuited relationship between things and the self, between macrocosm and microcosm, and focussed instead on the ambiguous bond

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[235] Included in Thomas Farnaby, *Florilegium Epigrammatum Graecorum* (London: 1629): sig. A5 v.

[236] George Sandys, *Ovids Metamorphosis Englished by G S* (London: 1626): A2 v.

[237] Loretta Innocenti, "Modalità del Visibile e Modalità dell'Udibile nella Poesia Religiosa del Seicento Inglese", in C. Nocera, G. Persico, and R. Portale (eds), *Atti del XX Convegno Nazionale dell'Associazione Nazionale di Anglistica* (Catania: Rubettino, 2003): 13 (translation mine); "il passaggio da un cosmo analogico a un mondo sintagmatico".

between words and things, which were revealed to belong to distinct philosophical categories. The function of representation is then to order this ambiguity, "so that a 'second' will always be seen to follow a 'first', a sign always to have a referent, a copy an original"[238]. Under the regime of representation,

> the signifying element has no content, no function, and no determination other than what it represents: it is entirely ordered upon and transparent to it. But this content is indicated only in a representation that posits itself as such, and that which is signified resides, without residuum and without opacity, within the representation of the sign[239].

The intellectuals of the English Renaissance investigated the potentialities and risks of this crisis of and within referentiality, and also used the language of limning to address it.

It cannot be denied that the language of limning was appropriated by early modern authors, verbally shaping ways of thinking. It certainly escaped the risk of remaining the jargon of only a niche of *cognoscenti*. "Most strikingly, the sonneteers of the 1590s explicitly spoke the language of limning"[240]. "To limn" was also a favourite word of John Lyly in his plays and romances. Thanks to this divulgation, the language of limning seeped through the classes and across different pictorial techniques: all painting could be called limning. Thus, in this poem by Robert Tofte, the image impressed onto the lover's heart is a hybrid piece, between a miniature and an oil painting: "My Hart's the Boord, where limnde you may her see; / My Teares the Oyle, my Blood the Colours bee"[241]. The language of limning helped to articulate the sense of the difficulty of expressing what is inward, and the divergence between inwardness and the exterior. Poets and painters "sought to adapt their respective media to the representation of the self and the inner life to which it increasingly laid claim"[242]. What is interesting is to note how the two media intersected.

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[238] Robert Cooper, "Technologies of Representation" in Pertti Ahonen (ed.), *Tracing the Semiotic Boundaries of Politics* (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1993): 294.

[239] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, transl. by Tavistock Publications (London and New York: Routledge, 2005): 71.

[240] Patricia Fumerton, *op. cit.* (1993): 105.

[241] Robert Tofte, *Alba. The Month's Minde of a Melancholy Lover. 1598*, in Alexander B. Grosart (ed.), *Occasional Issue of Unique or Very Rare Books* (Manchester: Charles E. Simms, 1880): Vol. XII, 23, vv. 13-14.

[242] Alison Thorne, *Vision and Rhetoric in Shakespeare: Looking Through Language* (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 2000): 105.

Of course, it could be said that all these explorations between limning and literature were part and parcel of the Renaissance motif of "*ut pictura poësis*", and that these tropes were just the ingredients of a literary game. Poets revelled in the creation of mannerist, sophisticated effects; take, for instance, Sidney's description of Stella's knees, "whose bought incaved doth yield such sight, / Like cunning painter shadowing white"[243], or the description of a woman "whose very shadow [i.e. portrait] is so angel-bright"[244], or William Drummond's lament over the untimely death of a lady, in comparison of whom Virtue is "A Shadow from her Frame which did reflect / A Pourtrait by her Excellencies limn'd"[245]. Yet, if mimetic processes were being more and more questioned and contested, then these tropes and imagery acquire major significance. If representation is interrogated, authority can automatically be doubted, as well. This is what Thomas Bayly, a royalist theologian, feared. He tried to defend monarchy on the grounds of its divine similitude, soon after Charles I's beheading:

> If a Limner draw a picture, he may alter and change it, and if he dislike it, race it out at his pleasure […] but if God makes a man after his own Image, and creates him after his own similitude, wee offend God in a high degree, when we cut off, or deface the least part, or member of his handywork. Now Kings are lively representations, living statues, or pictures, drawn to the life, of the great Deity; these pictures, for their better continuance, are done in Oyle, the colours of the Crown never fade, they are no water colours; as Kings with their own statues, will not be angry, though time and age devour them; yet they will not suffer them spitefully to be thrown down, or shot against; so God, though he will suffer Kings to dye like men, and fall like other Princes; yet he will not suffer his character, spitefully to be rased, or his Image defaced; but though he will have them die like men, yet he will have them live like Gods[246].

More famously, in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, the language of limning recurs and intersects the rich "shadow" imagery. The "poetic I" is shown in possession of the Fair Youth's picture[247] (Sonnet 47) and elaborates multiple comparisons between the portrait, the mental image of the Youth, and his body. The poet aims to limn and eternise the beauty of the Fair Youth, but the relationship between shadow and

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[243] Quoted in Judith Dundas, *Pencils Rhetorique: Renaissance Poets and the Art of Painting* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993): 46.

[244] Richard Brome, *The Queen's Exchange* (1634): II, i.

[245] Leon Emile Kasner (ed.), *The Poetical Works of William Drummond of Hawthornden, with 'A Cypresse Grove'* (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1913): Vol. 4, 169.

[246] Thomas Bayly, *The Royal Charter Granted Unto Kings by God Himself* (London: 1649): 5-6.

[247] This is a motif that crops up in many of the English sonnet sequences, stemming from Petrarch's *Sonnets* 77 and 78, in which he refers to a portrait of Laura painted by Simone Martini (see Camilla Caporicci, *op. cit.*, forthcoming).

substance is never fixed. "From a general point of view, the philosophical principle that lies at the background of [Shakespeare's *Sonnets*] is the Platonic opposition between "ideas" and their "imitations" or "shadows"[248]. But words themselves are but shadows, and the Youth's strange substance itself is protean: "you, but one, can every shadow lend" (53, ll. 4). When Shakespeare writes, "Then thou, whose shadow shadows doth make bright / How would thy shadow's form form happy show" (43, ll. 5-6), the distinction between substance, form, and shadow becomes kaleidoscopic; "by identifying form rather than the body with the substance responsible for shadows, the poem brings the real and the shadowed into very close proximity"[249].

The poetics of limning enabled authors to both illuminate and cast doubt over the processes of representation. If this poetics comes into contact with the particular drama of early modern England, the result can very often be quite complex. Pictures (or shadows) shown on stage increase their performativity, becoming spectatorial vectors as well as actors themselves. Looking at someone looking at a picture creates a form of metadrama within a "theatre that was at the same time representation and questioning of what is being represented"[250]. If such a visually-fraught theatre intersects what I have called the contemporaneous "poetics of limning", the result can be highly rewarding and worthy of examination, which has to consider both the theoretical paradigm of an "*ut pictura theatrum*", as well as the historical relationship between painting and playacting. For instance, Richard Burbage, who was both the leading actor of the King's Men and a painter, was saluted in this way in a funeral elegy: "Some skilful limner help me, if not so, / Some sad tragedian help t'express my woe. / But, oh! he's gone, that could both best; both limn / And act my grief!"[251].

Shadows that illuminated as well as darkly troubled their audiences literally walked on the stages of the London playhouses: "shadow" was a richly fraught term for an actor, as two of the most famous lines in all Shakespeare's work testify: "If we shadows have offended / Think but this and all is mended" (*A Midsummer Night's*

[248] Michele Stanco, "Omosessualità e gravidanza poetica. Figure dell'amor platonico da Shakespeare a Forster", in Stefano Manferlotti (ed.), *La Retorica dell'Eros. Figure del Discorso Amoroso nella Letteratura Europea Moderna* (Rome: Carocci, 2009): 45.
[249] Bradin Cormack, "Tender Distance: Latinity and Desire in Shakespeare's Sonnets", in Michael Schoenfeldt (ed.), *A Companion to Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Chichester: Blackwell, 2007): 253.
[250] Alessandro Serpieri, "Abuse and Use of the Theatre: Shakespeare and the Puritans", in Paola Pugliatti and id. (eds), *English Renaissance Scenes: From Canon to Margins* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008): 37.
[251] Quoted in John H. Astington, *Actors and Acting in Shakespeare's Time: The Art of Stage Playing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 33.

Dream, Epilogue, ll. 1-2); "Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage, / And then is heard no more" (*Macbeth* V.v 23-25).

I.4 Portraits on Stage in Early Modern England

The theatre was the site where the beliefs concerning vision (discussed in I.2) could cluster and be most powerfully put to test. As Puttenham defined it, "*theatron*" means a "beholding place"[252], while Ben Jonson had the printers insert an image of a Roman amphitheatre labelled "*visorium*" (a Renaissance coinage[253]) on the frontispiece of his Folio (1616). Both in London's public playhouses and in the private theatres, the scopic vectors were definitely not unilinear: players and audience vigorously interacted; three if not the four sides of the thrust stage enclosed them; each and every theatregoer could see all the other spectators. "Wherever you stood or sat, you were never more than thirty-five feet [c. 10 m.] from the stage platform, and most people were much closer, but from every position you could see most of the other gazers and gapers on the far side of the stage platform. It was a self-conscious grouping"[254]. The display of a picture on stage would shape the looks and gaze of the spectators, while the movements of the actors would direct them in terms of proxemics and kinesics. The spectators would try to see, and if possible to look at the picture, whether it was a miniature or a larger portrait. The question of the size of the picture is not insignificant: particular sizes would "speak" differently to the spectators. The functions and uses the picture had in a particular play would be recognised by the dialogue of the characters as well as by its place on stage: Did it hang? And where was it supposed to hang, in a closet, or in a gallery? Was it covered with a curtain? Was it hidden in a casket, or worn around the neck? Pictures as props are very often

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[252] George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesie* (London: 1589): Chap. XVII.
[253] Rose Wood, "An Unnoted Pun on Visorium in Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio", *Notes and Queries*, Issue 63, no. 1 (2016): 33-5.
[254] Andrew Gurr and Mariko Ichikawa, *Staging in Shakespeare's Theatres* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): 4.

used to "energise a locale"[255], to use G. K. Hunter's phrase, that is, they draw the spectators' attention to the particular nature of the setting.

Beyond the question of size and function, there are other important issues relevant to an analysis of staged pictures: the genre of the play in which they appear, their price, the gender(s) and number of their subjects. This subchapter aims at answering these interrogatives, but, first, it is necessary to understand the question of visual vs. aural engagement characterising early modern English drama, and how this type of drama faced and challenged its contemporaneous visual culture.

I.4.1 Viewing Auditors, Hearing Spectators

There is an ongoing critical debate over the relation of the "original" consumers to early modern English drama: were they auditors or spectators? The publication in 1999 of Bruce R. Smith's book *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor*[256] marked a defining moment in early modern drama studies. Smith brought to the fore the auditory features of this type of drama, which was grounded in the powers of the voice and made proficient use of music. This study promoted a long-overdue consideration of what had, until then, been overlooked or ignored in scholarly criticism. We began to recognise the architectural structure of the playhouses as an instrument "for producing, shaping, and propagating sound"[257]. On the other hand, it can be stated that a consequence of this recognition has been a slight tendency to disregard the visual dimension of drama. The latter had already suffered disparagement for very diverse reasons.

Since the early nineteenth century, Shakespeare's works have often been understood as poetry: no performance could convey their transcendental glory. Any primer on Shakespearean drama will inform readers that Shakespeare's was a "theatre of words". The "Wooden O" was a poor, unadorned stage and the playwright and actors' role was to stir the audiences' imagination through eloquence so that they would visualise in their mind's eye what was going on onstage. Back in the 1960s, Peter

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[255] G. K. Hunter, "Flatcaps and Bluecoats: Visual Signs on the Elizabethan Stage", *Essays and Studies*, Issue 33, 1980: 16-47.
[256] (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press).
[257] Ibid.: 206. It must be said that Smith's argument is much more balanced than other scholars'.

Brook advocated an "empty space" for performance, as a reaction to the "deadly", reactionary tradition of bourgeois drama[258].

Recent studies have shown, however, that both the indoor and the public theatres, from the Elizabethan to the Caroline period, were "painted worlds"[259], spectacular and colourful arenas. We can understand this not only through the Puritan attacks on the ocular corruption caused by the playhouses (consider Gosson: "the longer we gaze, the more we crave"[260]), but through many other hints, for instance, by referring to young Milton's delight in the "*sinuosi pompa theatri*"[261], the "splendour of the curved theatre".

What is less clear is how those theatregoers conceived of themselves and how dramatists and players perceived them. Any student of early modern drama will know of Ben Jonson's conflict with Inigo Jones over the most important aspect of their masques (poetry vs. spectacular machinery and set). It has even been claimed that every time Jonson used the term "spectators" we may detect a half-hidden disdain; "he was covertly sneering"[262]. Similarly, for John Marston, comedies were "writ to be spoken, not read"[263]; Shakespeare, by contrast, intriguingly stopped referring to "auditors" after *Hamlet* and started to use the word "spectator" (which was coined by Sir Philip Sidney himself in his *Apology for Poetry*, c. 1579).

The claim that the English went to "hear" a play rather than "see" it has proved if not false, at least heavily overstated[264]. Plays were shows: when Prince Henry died, the Privy Council drafted a proposal to suppress all "Playes, shewes, Bearebaytinges, *or any other such sighte*"[265] (emphasis mine). In fact, in Shakespeare's time, "the competition" between the conception of theatregoers as auditors or spectators "was on

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[258] Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968).
[259] Marguerite A. Tassi, *op. cit.* (2005): 21.
[260] Stephen Gosson, *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (London: 1582): G6 r.
[261] *Elegia Prima Ad Carolum Diodatum* (1626), l. 27, in John Carey (ed.), *Complete Shorter Poems* by John Milton (Harlow: Longman Pearson, 1997): 20.
[262] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 86. That Jonson's opinion varied is also known: in *Timber*, he wrote that "Picture is the invention of heaven: the most ancient and most akin to nature". See Richard Meek, *Narrating the Visual in Shakespeare* (Burlington and Farnham: Ashgate, 2009): 57 and ff.
[263] "To the Reader" in *Parasitaster, or, The Fawn,* (London: 1606): A2 v.
[264] See Gabriel Egan, "Hearing or Seeing a Play? Evidence of Early Modern Theatrical Terminology", *Ben Jonson Journal,* Issue 8, 2001: 23-50. For a concise survey of the debate, see Michael Neill, "'A Book Where One May Read Strange Matters': En-Visaging Character and Emotion on the Shakespearian Stage", *Shakespeare Survey,* Vol. 66, 2013: 246-64.
[265] Quoted in Terence Hawkes, *Shakespeare in the Present* (London: Routledge, 2002): 151, n. 20.

fairly even terms" and, gradually, "spectators were triumphing over hearers"[266]. Nowadays we still lack a word to encompass the complete, synaesthetic fruition of drama. "Spectatorship" refers only to the visual component, and so it is necessary to settle for the term "audience", which sometimes is rather misleading. Consider, for instance, the famous commentary by a member of Christ College, Oxford, who, in 1610, thus recorded his reactions to Desdemona's death: "*Desdemona* […] *interfecta magis movebat, cum in lecto decumbens* spectantium *misericordiam* ipso vultu *imploraret*". Here is how it was translated by Dawson: "Desdemona […] in her death moved us especially when, as she lay in her bed, *with her face alone* she implored the pity of *the audience*"[267] (emphasis mine).

This is not just a question of semantics, because it impinges on the way we appreciate a play. Alison Thorne's study, *Vision and Rhetoric in Shakespeare: Looking Through Language*[268], has cast light on the incidence of the language of perspective in Elizabethan-Jacobean literature and drama: she argues that the innovation in the field of linear perspective came to England from Italy through the pan-European rhetorical culture. It is a superbly written book, but some of its premises are rather disconcerting. She states that "the way a certain scene was or might be staged" can of course influence how we relate to the play, but

> it needs to be emphasized that plays are primarily verbal constructs that may be said to embody a 'mode of vision' not in any strict or literal sense, but only by virtue of a process of rhetorical suggestion and inference […] we relate to these play-texts as members of an audience, in that they implicitly position or define us as such whether we read or see them performed[269].

One may note a surreptitious hint of denigration of images when she writes that Shakespeare was conscious "of the power of spectacle to impress the eye and influence the mind – a power he conceives […] in terms of the capacity of the visual

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[266] Andrew Gurr, *op. cit*. (2004): 107.

[267] Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin, *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England: A Collaborative Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 19.

[268] (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000). See also Henry S. Turner, *The English Renaissance Stage: Geometry, Poetics, and the Practical Spatial Arts 1580-1630* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[269] Alison Thorne, *op. cit.* (2000): xiii; xv.

image to function rhetorically"[270]. Spectacle here seems to retain the negative meaning of what Jonas Barish famously termed "the antitheatrical prejudice"[271].

A fuller understanding of the theatrical culture of the period in which these plays were originally written and performed (generally without any future publication in mind) can help us better determine how early modern theatregoers appreciated them. We know how pervasive rhetoric was in the fields of education, politics, and art. Drama had been used since the Roman era as an exercise in rhetoric and eloquence. Still, we should not forget that rhetoric does not operate only on the verbal level: the ultimate power of dramatic performance lay (and continues to lie) in *actio*, that sensorial entirety which proceeds from the delivery of words, certainly, but also through the use of non-verbal communication, through proxemics, kinesics, and gesturality.

John Webster documented these metadramatic premises in the note "To the Judicious reader" of *The Devil's Law Case* (1623): "A great part of the grace of this (I confess) lay in action; yet can no action ever be gracious, where the decency of the language, and ingenious structure of the scene, arrive not to make up a perfect harmony" (13-16)[272]. Not only world-creating "words, words, words" then, but an equilibrium between language and the visual was expected, in a cultural context where the difference between the senses was not firmly established, when poetry could "strike, pierce [and] possess the sight of the soul"[273] and the sister arts would "represent things as they are, as a picture to the ear"[274].

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[270] Ibid.: 73.

[271] Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1981).

[272] For a similar interpretation, see Mario Domenichelli, *Il Limite dell'Ombra* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1994): 34 and ff.

[273] Sir Philip Sidney, *op. cit.* (2002): 90.

[274] Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Poetices* (Heidelberg: 1617): IV, i, 401.

I.4.2 "Passioning" over Pictures in the Theatre

> "What art thou doing, passioning ouer the picture of Cleanthes"?
> George Chapman, *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (1598)

In correspondence with the phenomenological beliefs analysed in a previous section (I.2.2), emotions and the powers of the imagination were thought to be forcefully elicited through theatrical performance. Edmund Gayton, although perhaps exaggerating, voiced what these effects could be: "Humours are sodainly imitated, especially if there be any life and fancy in 'um. Many have by representation of strong passions been so transported, that they have gone weeping, some from Tragedies, some from Comedies, so merry, lightsome, and free, that they have not been sober in a week after"[275].

Since the Middle Ages, these beliefs had been lavishly employed by writers all over Europe, who used humouralism and the corollaries of the extramission theory of vision that best suited their aesthetic purposes. In the Shakespearean corpus, visual tropes are everywhere, from *Hamlet*'s "forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep" (III.iv 115), to Lodovico in *Othello*, who thus describes the sight of the bed loaded with Othello and Desdemona's bodies: "The object poisons sight" (V.ii 364). Alternatively, think of Berowne's majestic speech in *Love's Labour's Lost* affirming that love "adds a precious seeing to the eye, / a lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind" (IV.iii 329-30), or Macbeth's soliloquy upon seeing the dagger: "It is the bloody business which informs / Thus to mine eyes" (II.i 48-49). Now, it would be hazardous to claim that the original theatregoers were so naïve that they would take the imagery of lethal eye-darting literally. They were highly competent consumers and an experienced community. Still, we can fully agree with Yachnin's argument that

> Shakespeare's theatre participates in a long-term transition from a material visual regime, a world of penetrating looks and fascinating enchantments, to a modern, psychologized visual regime where seeing and being seen operate only across the surfaces of things and where visual images cannot impinge unless the perceiver wants them to"[276].

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[275] Edmund Gayton, *Pleasant Notes upon Don Quixote* (London: William Hunt, 1654): 140.
[276] Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin, *op. cit*. (2001): 70. He adds: "Indeed Elizabethans commonly thought of seeing as more physical than hearing. The ear was an entry point to the body, but the eye […] was often thought as an organ of both entry and egress".

Yachnin here rephrases Nordlund's thesis, which I discussed in the previous subchapter: in the early modern period, there was a disruption of "speculative visuality" in favour of "enclosed visuality". The power of such cognitive and affective configurations is so strong that, even today, we can refer to a piercing look and use the expression "to look daggers", while the whole phenomenology of "love at first sight" is indubitably imbued with the poetic force immortalised by such texts as *Romeo and Juliet*.

The manipulation of these processes in drama could be very intense. It comes as no surprise, then, to find responses to the anxiety caused by this attraction in the antitheatricalists' texts, for "[w]hat kind of image could be more damned than that presented by the kinetic and constantly fluctuating theatrical scene"[277]? Here follows a compendium of Puritan antitheatricalism.

According to Stubbes, the visual component of drama was more dangerous than the players' rhetorical skills: "such is our gross and dull nature that what thing we see opposite before our eyes do pierce further and print deeper in our hearts and minds than that thing which is heard only with the ears"[278]. Rainolds, instead, focused on the impressions forcedly driven into the spectators' minds: "Vice is learned with beholding, sense is tickled, desire pricked and those impressions of mind are secretly conveyed over to the gazers, which the players do counterfeit on stage"[279]. Prynne saw in the amalgamation of rhetoric, physical performance, and spectacle the ultimate danger for the preservation of the soul: "When a man reads a play he ever wants that *viva vox*, that flexanimous rhetoricall Stage-elocution, that lively action and representation of the Players themselves which put life and vigor into these Enterludes, and make them pierce more deepely into the Spectators eyes, their eares and lewde affections"[280]. Let us conclude with Munday's virulent attacks: "there comes much evil in at the ears but more at the eyes; by these two open windows, death breaketh into the soul"[281]:

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[277] Alessandro Serpieri, *op. cit.* (2008): 20.

[278] Tanya Pollard, *op. cit*. (2004): 117.

[279] Ibid.: 108.

[280] William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix: The Players Scourge [etc]* (London: 1633): 930-1.

[281] Tanya Pollard, *op. cit*. (2004): 76.

Some citizens' wives, upon whom the Lord for example to others hath laid his hands, have even on their death beds with tears confessed that they have received at those spectacles such filthy infections as have turned their minds from chaste cogitations, and made them of honest women light housewives[282].

It is important to note that these quotations refer to terms such as "counterfeiting" and "representation". These words also belong to the sphere of painting. The Elizabethans and Jacobeans used a wide range of terms to denote portraiture, generally in a negative manner: counterfeiting, shadowing, tricking, cunning, etc. Stephen Bateman summed up this cultural approach in a single sentence: "A picture is called *Pictura*, as it were *Fictura*, feyning"[283]. In an aesthetics dominated by such well-studied criteria as the Renaissance *paragone* of the arts, of "*ut pictura poësis*", of poetry as a speaking picture and painting as silent poetry (see previous section, 1.3.3), we can easily perceive how discourses on drama blended the two realms. "[D]ramatists appropriated, celebrated and undermined painting as their 'significant other'"[284]. Pamphlets of the antitheatrical type simply bristle with such examples: in order to learn new vices, crimes and impiety, "you need not go to any other school, for all these good examples may you see painted before your eyes in interludes and plays"[285]. Heywood used the same argument but subverted it in his *Apology for Actors*:

Oratory is a kind of a speaking picture, therefore may some say, is it not sufficient to discourse to the ears of princes the fame of these conquerors? Painting, likewise, is a dumb oratory, therefore may we not as well, by some curious Pygmalion, draw their conquests to work the like love in princes towards these worthies by showing them their pictures drawn to the life, as it wrought on the poor painter to be enamored of his own shadow? […] A description is only a shadow received by the ear, but not perceived by the eye; so, lively portraiture is merely a form seen by the eye, but can neither show action, passion, motion, or any other gesture, to move the spirits of the beholder to admiration[286].

We could divide the semantic fields to which the category of painting was applied in this context into seven classes: 1) art and decoration; 2) poetry and drama; 3) magic and science; 4) religious (Popish) hypocrisy; 5) cosmetics and poison; 6) (socio-

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[282] Ibid.: 70.
[283] Stephen Bateman, quoted in Lucy Gent, *op. cit.* (1981): 44.
[284] Marguerite A. Tassi, *op. cit.* (2005): 22.
[285] John Greene, quoted in Alison Shell, *Shakespeare and Religion* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2010): 125.
[286] Tanya Pollard, *op. cit.* (2004): 220.

political, gender-inflected) corruption. These fields frequently overlap in dramatic discourse. When such rhetorical devices such as ekphrasis, hypotiposis, and *enargeia* concretised themselves through the display of a picture on stage, the agency of a portrait could cause a particular scene to gain force and activate latent anxieties: this was a theatre in which "spectatorship was itself a form of bodily contact"[287].

There is one scene in ancient Roman drama which became for early modern authors the *locus classicus* for discussions on the relationship between imitation and art. In Terence's *Eunuchus*[288], a staple in grammar school curricula throughout the Renaissance, Chaerea, a youth, falls in love with Pamphila and disguises himself as a eunuch to get near her in Thais' house, a brothel. When he is left alone with the girl, who is getting ready for a bath, he notices that she is looking at a "*tabula*", a picture hanging on the wall. It depicts Jupiter's sexual encounter with Danaë in the form of a golden shower[289]. This is how he describes the effect of looking at this object:

> I myself began to look at it as well, and as he had in former times played the like game, I felt extremely delighted that a God should change himself into money […] But what God was this? He who shakes the most lofty temples of heaven with his thunders. Was I, a poor creature of a mortal, not to do the same? Certainly, I was to do it, and without hesitation[290].

The work of art serves him as an example on how to proceed: he imitates Jupiter's behaviour. The picture fires his imagination and instincts, and he rapes Pamphila (he will later consent to marry her). This episode rightly shocked the Church Fathers who railed against Terence's comedy being taught to young pupils. What is important to note, however, is that, as is the norm in classical drama, the spectators could see neither the picture nor the rape: Chaerea relates what he has just done to a friend. Interestingly, St. Augustine, in his commentary on this scene, did not denounce the

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[287] Erika T. Lin, *Shakespeare and the Materiality of Performance* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012): 57.

[288] See Keir Elam, "The Fertile Eunuch: Twelfth Night, Early Modern Intercourse and the Fruits of Castration", *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Issue 47, 1996: 1-36, and id. "'Bridegroom uncarnate': Comedy and Castration from *The Eunuch* to *Epicoene*", in Michele Marrapodi and A. J. Hoenselaars (eds), *The Italian World of English Renaissance Drama: Cultural Exchange and Intertextuality* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998): 258-81.

[289] Donatus influentially commented: the picture was "a very proper piece of furniture for the house of a Courtesan, giving an example of loose and mercenary Love, calculated to excite wanton thoughts, and at the same time hinting to the young lover that he must make his way to the bosom of his mistress […] in a shower of gold. Oh the avarice of harlots!" (quoted in Henry Thomas Riley ed., *The Comedies of Terence*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1872: 101).

[290] Henry Thomas Riley (ed.), *op. cit.* (1872): 101.

powers of art, not even the powers of rhetoric, but the consequences of what he terms corrupted education:

> As if we should have never known such words as "golden shower", "lap", "beguile", "temples of the heavens", or others in that passage, unless Terence had brought a lewd youth upon the stage, setting up Jupiter as his example of seduction. […] Not one whit more easily are the words learnt for all this vileness; but by their means the vileness is committed with less shame. *Not that I blame the words, being, as it were, choice and precious vessels*; but that wine of error which is drunk to us in them by intoxicated teachers; and if we, too, drink not, we are beaten, and have no sober judge to whom we may appeal. Yet, O my God (in whose presence I now without hurt may remember this), all this unhappily I learnt willingly with great delight, and for this was pronounced a hopeful boy[291]. (emphasis mine)

In the Renaissance, this episode became notorious and criticised exactly because it was regarded as the prime instance of the sinfulness of art and drama. In a sermon delivered at Paul's Cross in 1577, John Stockwood condemned the immorality of plays by referring to Terence's scene:

> For if he that beheld but the filthy picture of *Jupiter* in a shower of rain descending unto *Dianae* [sic], could thereby encourage himself unto filthiness shall we think that flocks of as wild youths of both sexes, resorting to interludes, where both by lively gesture and voices there are allurements unto whoredom, they can come away pure and not inflamed with concupiscence?[292]

Similarly, in 1599, John Rainolds in *Th'Overthrow of Stage-Playes*, discussed the vices instigated by this scene. He wrote that some think that Chaerea was following another character's advice, Parmeno: the youth had gone to Thais' house "to bee acquainted with the nature and manners of harlots, that knowing them betime he might for ever hate them". But Rainolds saw the dangers of such an intention:

> But here you will reply percase that in *Chaerea*, beside the good effect which *Parmeno* did boast of, some bad effects might fall out, through the seeing of *Iupiters* picture with *Danaë*, and being neere to *Pamphila*: which in your playes cā not be feared. But I have prevented this reply by shewing that your *Danaës* picture […] may breede some bad effectes in a *Chaerea* too, though he were a beholder onely of your playes, much more if he be a player him selfe[293].

Bishop Jewel commented on Terence's episode as well: "I grant, images do oftentimes vehemently move the mind diversely to sundry affections […] God's house

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[291] Augustine of Hippo, *The Confessions*, ed. and transl. by Edward Bouverie Pusey (Auckland: The Floating Press, 2008): 27.
[292] John Stockwood, *A Sermon Preached at Paul's Cross on Bartholomew Day […]* (London: 1578): 135.
[293] John Rainolds, *Th'Overthrow of Stage-Playes* (London: 1599): 10.

is a house of prayer, and not of gazing"[294]. Whence comes this difference in attitude between the Church Fathers, who saw in Terence's play only a source of impious education and idolatry (Chaerea justifying himself with Jupiter's actions), and the English antitheatricalists, who considered it the prototype of theatrical viciousness? One answer is given by Heather James:

> In Shakespeare's day, this troubling scene illustrated all too vividly that the classics held a dangerous sway over the imagination and were thus far more likely to erode than build up moral principles in schoolboys. Terence does not propose the youth as a model: his Chaerea manifestly abuses the ideal of education through imitation. But Terence's pedagogical meditations do him no good in the Renaissance, since his textual and theatrical medium participates in the corruption of morals. His play, whether it is put on stage or read in the classroom, gathers together the powers of visual and rhetorical figures in a manner calculated to seduce young men[295].

Educators could then campaign for the censorship of Terence's comedy. However, I think that the answer to the previous question lies more precisely in the much more markedly *visual* nature of early modern drama. I have already said that the "bare-stage" idea is a myth. Besides, this was a theatre of alluring props: "the objects of the early modern stage were often intended to not merely to catch, but to overwhelm the eye by means of their real or apparent costliness, motion, and capacity to surprise"[296]. Paintings were not only evoked through ekphrasis *in absentia*, but were also actually displayed on stage. Scenes similar to the one in *Eunuchus* were routinely featured in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama: for instance, visible in Apelles's shop in Lyly's *Campaspe* is exactly a picture of "*Danae*, into whose prison *Jupiter* drizled a golden showre, and obtained his desire"[297]. Prostitutes' pictures and brothels are often featured in plays of the period. Indeed, this is not surprising at all[298]: Southwark was known for its theatres and bear-baiting arenas as much as for its "stews", as bordellos were called. Edward Alleyn, the leading actor of the Admiral's Men, earned so much money from the stews he owned that he could found the College of God's Gift (the

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[294] Richard William Jelf (ed.), *The Works of John Jewel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1848): Vol. 3, 250.

[295] Heather James, "Shakespeare and Classicism", in Patrick Cheney (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 204.

[296] Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (eds), *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 4.

[297] John Lyly, Campaspe *and* Sappho and Phao, ed. by David Bevington and G. K. Hunter (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991): III.iii 17-18.

[298] See the interesting and entertaining book by Duncan Salkeld, *Shakespeare Among the Courtesans: Prostitution, Literature, and Drama, 1500-1650* (Burlington and Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

future Dulwich College), to which he bequeathed his collection of portraits. It has quite intriguingly been speculated that some of "the pictures were destroyed. These had probably been used as decorations of the stew-houses, Alleyn's property"[299].

The ostension of pictures within theatres which themselves were condemned for being dynamised lustful pictures, encouraged the antitheatricalists' vitriolic attacks. Henry Crosse, for instance, wrote:

> For is not vice set to sale on open theaters? *Is there not a Sodom of filthiness painted out?* And tales of carnal love, adultery, ribaldry, lechery, murder, rape, interlarded with a thousand unclean speeches, even common schools of bawdry? […] And *there wanteth no art* neither to make these bawdy dishes delightful in taste. For are not their dialogues puffed up with swelling words? Are not their arguments pleasing and ravishing? And made more forcible by gesture and outwards action? Surely this must needs attract the mind *to imitate such vices as are portrayed out*, whereby the soul is tainted with impiety; for *it cannot be but that the internal powers must be moved at such visible and lively objects*[300] [emphasis mine].

The Puritans' writings on the dire effects of such lively vices on the audience are familiar enough. Actors play lascivious, immoral scenes; reason is benighted, religion confused and virtue forgotten; men become emasculated, "sodomites or worse"[301]; women parade themselves among the spectators and instigate lust; all differences of social class are disregarded; political allegiances are subverted; idolatry and vice of all sorts run amok.

If looking at paintings could alter one's internal balance, the effects of humoural alteration were believed to be enormously multiplied by acting. Players and playwrights explored the classical teachings of Cicero, Horace, and Quintilian, for whom an actor, like an orator, needs to be "passionate"[302], that is, imbued with and dominated by an emotion in order to move the spectator. By making himself angry, sad, jealous, or amorous, he would transmit these angry, sad, jealous, or amorous humours to the spectator, who would, in turn, undergo a constitutive change. The

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[299] John Ingamells, *Dulwich Picture Gallery: British* (London: Unicorn Press, 2008): 19.

[300] Tanya Pollard, *op. cit.* (2008): 189.

[301] Philip Stubbes, *Anatomy of Abuses* (London: 1585): L8 v.

[302] I have found very inspiring Allison P. Hobgood, *Passionate Playgoing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), which elaborates the following studies: Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Conventions and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Matthew Steggle, *Laughing and Weeping in Early Modern Theatres* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2007); Bruce R. Smith, *op. cit.* (2010); Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill (eds), *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

diverse acts of looking at someone looking at a picture could then, firstly, concentrate these "passionate" transactions, and, secondly, create a particular form of metadrama. All playgoing can be construed as a "passioning[303] over pictures", just as Queen Aegiale in Chapman's *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* is shown "passioning ouer the picture of *Cleanthes*"[304], her loved one.

  As a final example, it is fitting to refer to the famous episode of the poisoned paint in the anonymous domestic tragedy *Arden of Faversham* (entered into the Register of the Stationers Company in 1592), one of the Shakespeare Apocrypha[305]. Among the ways in which Alice – aided by her lover, Mosby – tries to murder her husband (Arden), is commissioning a painter, Clarke, to produce either a picture that poisons on sight or a crucifix that kills if touched. Apart from the obvious Catholic stigma of the second item, the picture can also be regarded as an embodiment of a poisoning, Popish idol. The fact is that we never get to see the picture, because Alice and Mosby are too afraid to use it. The painter is described as "the only cunning man of Christendom" who "can temper poison with his oil / That whoso looks upon the work he draws / Shall with the beams that issue from his sight / Suck venom to his breast and slay himself"[306] (228-32). Mosby suggests that the painter should draw Alice's "counterfeit, / That Arden may by gazing on it perish" (233-34). The woman, however, is too scared: "that is dangerous, / For thou, or I, or any other else, / Coming into the chamber where it hangs, may die" (235-37). Mosby tries to solve the problem by advising that they should cover it with a cloth in Arden's study, but neither he nor Clarke can convince Alice: "I'll have no such picture, I" (244). In contemporary productions, this scene and the whole play have been often acted as intrinsically comedic: "It seems that everyone is trying to figure out how to do [Arden] in"[307]. If it

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[303] The *OED* defines this use of the verb "to passion" as follows: "To show, express, or be affected by passion or deep feeling. Formerly *esp.*: to grieve. Also with infinitive. Now *rare*".

[304] George Chapman, *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria*, Sc.VI, ll. 20-1, in Allan Holiday and Michael Kiernan (eds), *The Plays of George Chapman – The Comedies* (Urbana, Chicago, and London: University of Illinois Press, 1970).

[305] The editors (Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan) of the forthcoming Oxford edition of Shakespeare's works boldly argue that the painter scene in *Arden of Faversham* was in fact penned by Shakespeare.

[306] Martin White (ed.), *Arden of Faversham* (London and New York: Bloomsbury 2014).

[307] Michael Meigs, "Review: Arden of Faversham by Hidden Room Theatre", *CTXLiveTheatre.com*, 2014 (https://ctxlivetheatre.com/reviews/review-arden-of-faversham-by-hidden-room-theatre/) (last accessed: 3 October 2016). See also Kathleen M. Bradley, "Staging Comic Conspiracy in Productions of *Arden of Faversham*", paper delivered at the IASEMS Graduate Conference in Florence (British Institute), on 22 April 2015.

is true that some scenes and characters can be very funny, I do not think that this specific dramatic moment should be played farcically. It addresses some central cultural fears of its era and communicates with the contemporaneous beliefs around the dangers of vision. It is also possible to imagine the original audiences' reactions. Some of them knew the story of Arden's death (which was based on an actual, highly-publicised murder in Kent in 1550), but the detail of the poisoned picture is the playwright's invention. The spectators never get to see the portrait, but some of them might have actually gasped at the idea that such a picture could be presented on stage at any moment, caught, as they were, in the suspension of disbelief. After all, Alice says that it could poison "[thee], or [me], *or any other else*" (emphasis mine). Furthermore, the actors are here consciously deploying the very ideas of ocular infection they were accused of provoking by way of the theatrical profession[308].

After having explored the negotiations of early modern painting and drama, together with the historical phenomenology of the visual dimension of playacting, we can now finally turn to an analysis of the types and uses of staged portraits shown in the playhouses of the period.

I.4.3 Seeing and Looking at the Staged Pictures

"Bring in the pictures"
(Philip Massinger, *The Emperor of the East*, II.i 243)

We have grown accustomed to holding pictures in the palm of our hands on the screen of a smartphone, to taking photographs of whomever we want and sharing them whenever and wherever we like. That is why we tend to think of old portraits as cumbersome, unwieldy canvasses nailed on a wall. Indeed, the first mental image we get when thinking of portraits is probably that of a gallery or a museum hall where masterpieces are safely protected by glass cases and cordoned off from the public.

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[308] For further reading, see Laura Tosi, "Painting, Deception and Illusion in Elizabethan-Jacobean Theatre", *Textus*, Vol. XII, 1999: 37-56; Marguerite A. Tassi, *op. cit.* (2005): 130-51; Tania Pollard, *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Yolana Wassersug, *op. cit.* (2015): 247-51.

One can admire them from a distance, visible to all and yet unapproachable. There they have been deprived of their social life and their transactional values.

It may be as a result of this that the idea of holding a sizable portrait in one's hand and carrying it around strikes us as awkward. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Proteus asks for and obtains Silvia's portrait. This is doubtless not a miniature: Proteus asks for the "picture that is hanging in your chamber" (IV.ii 121). However, productions have generally preferred to stage miniatures. Keir Elam regards the size of Silvia's picture as "ambiguous"[309] because, while it is said to "fit his chamber" (IV.iv 118), which implies a large portrait, "[t]he passing of the picture from hand to hand […] and the ease with which it is put aside and picked up […] seems instead to suggest a small and manageable prop"[310]. That these props had to be easily carried around does not mean that they had to be miniatures. Duncan Salkeld is of the same opinion: "References in [Shakespeare's] plays contradict the common supposition that they must have been miniatures"[311]. Furthermore, sizable portraits in the early modern period were commonly handled and shown. An extreme case is the one represented by Kenelm Digby who, after the sudden and mysterious death of his wife Venetia (1633), had Van Dyck paint her on her deathbed. In a letter to his brother, he stated that the painting

> is the onely constant companion I now have […] It standeth all day over against my chaire and table where I sitt writing or reading or thinking, God knoweth, litle to the purpose; and att night when I goe into my chamber I sett it close by my beds side, and by the faint light of a candle, me thinkes I see her dead indeed; for that maketh painted colors looke more pale and ghastly than they doe by daylight. I see her, and I talke to her, until I see it is but vain shadows"[312].

Seventy-five extant English plays from 1566 to 1641 feature the staging of a portrait (see Appendix). The quantity as such deserves attention. If so many portraits were displayed on the stage, it is clear that audiences were keenly interested in them: they

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[309] Keir Elam, "'Most truly limned in your face': Looking at Pictures in Shakespeare", in Jacquelyn Bessell, Fernando Cioni and Virginia Mason Vaughan (eds), *Speaking Pictures - The Visual/Verbal Nexus of Dramatic Performance* (Madison and Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010): 64.
[310] Ibid., 65.
[311] Duncan Salkeld, "Silence, Seeing, and Performativity: Shakespeare and the *Paragone*", in Michele Marrapodi (ed.), *Shakespeare and Renaissance Literary Theories: Anglo-Italian Transactions* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2016): page unnumbered (e-book).
[312] Quoted in Vittorio Gabrieli, *Sir Kenelm Digby: un inglese italianato nell'età della controriforma* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1957): 246.

recognised their value and uses. In approaching portraits as props on the early modern stage, we need to consider their materiality and functions as objects, bearing in mind that their inherent performativity is multiplied when they are subjected to the gaze of audiences on and off-stage.

The idea that seems to emerge from studies on staged pictures (Tassi 2005, Elam 2010, Wassersug 2015) is that they were to be *seen*, not *looked at* – when they were visible at all. It seems that most of these pictures had to be so small that players had to produce in the minds of the audience the mental image of such objects through ekphrasis. It is interesting to ponder whether this was absolutely true: whether sizable pictures were only exceptions on the early modern English stage, or if there was a tradition of displaying such visible artefacts. This subchapter is devoted to reconstructing from textual and paratextual hints (the contemporary stage directions) the features of staged portraits.

   This section will be articulated as follows. As a premise, I discuss the uses of staged portraits and the dramatic genres in which they were featured. Then, I discuss their size and format, by paying attention to cues in the dialogue and the play's stage directions. It is useful to compare these types of portraits with those used in other contemporaneous theatrical traditions: early modern Spanish drama and *commedia dell'arte*. Later, I investigate the value and price of the staged pictures. The final section deals with the issue of the gender of their subjects and how a drama "without women" negotiated the question of female representation.

Dramatic Uses of Portraits and Genre

In the corpus of plays under analysis, pictures serve a great number of functions. They are cherished, kissed, and exchanged by lovers. They can whet the desire for the most dreadful revenges. Through them, betrothals are made and love blossoms at first sight. They advertise the beauty and talents of prostitutes in brothels. They are the reward when a riddle is solved, and the instruments to find long-lost siblings, children, and companions. They can be stabbed, defaced, and burnt, because they symbolise their models or can affect them. They are instruments to detect insanity. They change colour if their subject is not virtuous. They impress their colour on the skin of

foetuses. They trigger admiration, obsession, jealousy, and treason. They are idolatrous icons to be worshipped, and weapons that poison. They mock through caricature; they beautify through exaltation. They are symbols of deception and corruption. They are unique artefacts and have to be stolen; they are merchandise to be copied. Through them, friends are remembered, and curses are placed on enemies.

It is clear that their potential as props[313] is amazingly great. In this type of drama, portraits are not simply part of the décor, as the arras that invariably hung on the back of the stage (a character in Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* refers to the "fresh pictures, that use to beautifie the decayed dead arras in a publick theatre", Induction 139-41). They generate plot patterns as well as affective moments. For instance, in the chapter devoted to William Sampson's *The Vow Breaker*, I try to demonstrate that it is possible to speak of the use of portraits in tragedy as a "theatregram", a combinatory dramatic unit that is engrafted in the action but retains the traces of its previous incarnations. Staged pictures appear in all the dramatic genres of the period, from tragedy to comedy, from history to tragicomedy, and all the possible generic hybrid combinations ludicrously listed by Polonius in his famous speech. Yet, the historical uses of different types of portraits confer to them different connotations. Miniatures are generally associated with amorous scenes, while stately portraits are often linked with "high" politics. Yet, these two main characteristics can be immediately confused by the plot of the play as well as by the ramifications of their use in real life: miniatures were not only intimate love tokens, but also subtly strategic objects showing political allegiance; aristocratic portraiture is not given the didactic status envisaged by Castiglione, Lomazzo, and Peacham, but plays a part in erotic intrigues.

Portraits could be shown at any moment of the dramatic action. This, however, must have depended on the features of the different playing spaces used[314], due to the general smooth-flowing pace of the action, with partial lack of scene divisions. Whereas miniatures could be produced at any time, in the case of sizable portraits, the private theatres would offer more places and nooks to hang them, whereas public playhouses, such as the Globe, should make do with the posts. There, unless

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[313] On the functions of props, see Felix Bosonnet, *The Function of Stage Properties in Christopher Marlowe's Plays* (Basel: Francke Verlag Bern, 1978), and Frances Teague, *Shakespeare's Speaking Properties* (London and Toronto: Bucknell University Press, 1991).

[314] I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Alessandra Petrina (University of Padova) for pointing this out to me.

curtained, a large portrait could hardly remain hidden to the spectators who surrounded the thrust stage. Performances in private households would offer even different architectural configurations.

It would be interesting to discuss the stage lives of staged portraits *sensu* Andrew Sofer: "The stage life of props extends beyond their journey within a given play […] As they move from play to play and from period to period, objects accrue intertextual resonance as they absorb and embody the theatrical past"[315]. Unfortunately, we do not have enough information on these processes as far as staged pictures are concerned. It can be hypothesised that "fake" miniatures (see next section), which probably remained invisible to all but the actors themselves, were probably reused by the same company, whereas portraits on panel could be repainted and/or repurposed to conform to the company's needs. Whether bigger portraits bearing the likenesses of the actors could be donated or bought remains unknown so far.

Measure for Measure: Reconstructing the Size and Format of Staged Pictures

No portrait known to have been staged in early modern English theatres has survived. In order to investigate what they really looked like and what their effects may have been on the audience, one has to embark on a study based on scant data and elusive information. Sometimes, it is very difficult to ascertain how small or how large the pictures presented onstage were. This is daunting because the effects that the spectators experience when looking at actors looking at a miniature or at a sizable portrait are very different in terms of proxemics and kinesics.

Sometimes theatrical companies and directors find assistance through stage tradition. It is the case of the pictures in *Hamlet*'s closet scene (see II.1). There were centuries in which only miniatures were used, and centuries in which large portraits or a combination of the two types were fashionable. When it comes to productions of less well-known plays, it is often up to the directors and designers to make a decision.

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[315] Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003): 2.

For example, in 2015, the Royal Shakespeare Company staged John Ford's *Love's Sacrifice* (1633), a play that has been performed extremely rarely[316]. In the play, there is an interesting "picture scene". The Duke of Pavy has a beautiful wife, Bianca, and as beautiful a sister, Fiormonda. Fiormonda falls in love with the Duke's favourite, Fernando, but he is instead enraptured by Bianca's charms. The devilish D'Avolos, secretary to the duke, suspects Fernando, and shows him the pictures of the two women. The youth cannot help but extol the superiority of Bianca and thus D'Avolos understands his true feelings. What type of pictures are they, though? The stage direction reads: "Enter D'Avolos with two Pictures" (it is the same indication provided for the portrait scene in Shakespeare and Fletcher's *The Two Noble Kinsmen* 4.2: "Enter EMILIA alone, with two pictures"). D'Avolos says: "I have here two pictures, newly drawn" (II.ii 42). He passes the portraits to Fernando one at a time: they are clearly of the same format. Of Fiormonda's he repeats that "it now newly came from the picture-drawer's; the oil yet green" (68-69), and he even adds that "Michael Angelo himself needed not blush to own the workmanship" (71-72). D'Avolos even names the painter: (the fictional) Alphonso Frinulzio, who lives "[b]y the castle's farther bridge, near Galeazzo's statue" (115). Bianca's is also a fine picture because "the artsman hath strove to set forth each limb in exquisitest proportion, not missing a hair" (82-83). The picture is both called a "counterfeit" (87) and a "portraiture" (92). These descriptions are extremely tantalising. The boasted comparison to Michelangelo's works, the provenance from a normal picture-drawer, and the fact that the oil is still green (that is, fresh) would evoke a fairly large format: an easel painting or an oil portrait on canvas. However, the reference to "each limb" being depicted would suggest courtly limning. A related issue (which will be duly investigated below) is, of course, that if these women's portraits were visible, they would have to bear a likeness to the boy actors playing Bianca and Fiormonda. I favour the "sizable format" hypothesis since the connections to limning could well be simply evoked in the spectators' minds[317], whereas all the other indications suggest two reasonably large portraits. T. A. Moore, however, argues that the two pictures

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[316] After the closure of the theatres in 1642, there was perhaps a performance in the Restoration, and sporadic productions in the twentieth century: see the edition of the play edited by A. T. Moore (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002): 85.

[317] In 1.3.4, I discussed how the language of limning was frequently used in common portraiture.

were miniatures because the play was staged at the Phoenix theatre, whose repertory "made use of many small properties"[318]. The RSC's sumptuous production instead staged A3-format, traditional oil paintings. Thanks to the thrust stage of the Swan Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon, the spectators could easily look at the pictures unless they were sitting in the back[319]. I want to emphasise that, at the Phoenix as in the other private playhouses, the richest spectators would sit on benches around the stage (or, in the case of some gallants, on stools directly on the stage), while the less well-to-do would be farther back or in the galleries – in contrast with the usual disposition in the public theatres. It is at least plausible that these privileged members of the audience would have paid attention to the quality of these artistic artefacts.

Whereas nowadays it is occasionally up to the director to decide which type of picture to stage, this does not mean that there are no hints in the texts to reconstruct the size and formats of the pictures. While the new market for portraits among the middling sort has been described in a previous section, showing that portraits were no longer the sole property of the élites, the question of the props' visibility remains disputed. However, we need to take into account the fact that these are the same companies who scrupulously bought tassels and buttons, rings and necklaces, and used props such as cobwebs (used as a medicament in Jonson's *The Case is Altered*), needles, toothpicks, and dice. Is it possible, then, that in the case of pictures, players forced the spectators to use only their imagination and ears? To insist that Hamlet may "mime"[320] the presence of a miniature in the palm of his hand amounts, in my opinion, to say that no handkerchief is needed in *Othello*.

A necessary condition of staged portraits was their capacity of "being portable and transportable"[321]. I argue that as long as a picture could be easily handled, it could be used onstage. Players did use miniatures in many cases, of course: of the 75 plays in the corpus, I have been able to identify 18 which, without doubt, staged miniatures (see Appendix). It is important to notice that, very probably, those staged objects were not "real" miniatures at all. Miniatures, so fashionable at court and among the aristocracy, were actual jewels to all intents and purposes: not only were they cased in

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[318] Ibid.: 99, n. 159.

[319] I would like to thank the staff at the Education Department of the RSC for sharing this information.

[320] Catherine Richardson, *Shakespeare and Material Culture* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011): 119-20.

[321] Keir Elam, *op. cit.* (2010): 67.

gold and gems, but the pigments used by the painters were obtained from the most precious stones and materials. Their prices could be as spectacular as the objects themselves. For example, in 1616, Hilliard earned 35£ for "a table of His Ma[jesty']s picture garnished with diamonds"[322].

Actors would probably use "fake" miniatures: simple cards on which the silhouette of a man or a woman would be drawn and coloured. Exceptions could be represented by Caroline courtly drama: this type of plays could have used real creations of the limners as, for instance, *Arviragus and Philicia* (c. 1636) by Lodowick Carlell (who was married to Joan Palmer, an accomplished portrait painter), which was very successful both at court and at the Blackfriars theatre, and the scandalous staging of Walter Montague's *The Shepherd's Paradise* (1633), performed by Queen Henrietta Maria and her ladies.

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[322] *Exchequer Declared Accounts* (Public Record Office A.O. 1/390/53).

Illustration no. 1

An interesting visual document of an actual miniature used as a prop is to be found in a portrait of a gentlewoman dressed as Cleopatra by an unknown British artist [see Illustration no. 1]. Yasmin Arshad has shown that this portrait possibly depicts Lady Anne Clifford as she was dressed in a household production of Samuel Daniel's closet drama *The Tragedy of Cleopatra*[323]. It has recently been put forward that private performances of similar texts were not simply readings, but actual theatrical shows.

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[323] Yasmin Arshad, "The enigma of a portrait: Lady Anne Clifford and Daniel's *Cleopatra*", *British Art Journal* 11.3 (Spring 2011): 30–36. See also the discussion in James Shapiro, *1606: William Shakespeare and the Year of* Lear (London: Faber and Faber, 2015): 242-47.

These plays are indeed stageable and especially those written for the Wilton circle could "dra[w] on clothes and objects from the house itself"[324]. Arshad conjectures that bold gentlewomen could even have been permitted to play under these circumstances, and boldness was indubitably characteristic of Lady Clifford. In this case, we see a woman dressed up as the queen of Egypt and the costume looks like one used in Jones and Jonson's *Masque of Queens*. She holds in one hand the asp, while sporting as a locket a miniature of a man in Roman robes: Antony. We are not sure if this is really Lady Clifford, but if she is, she may have actually used the miniature of her husband, Richard Sackville, the Earl of Dorset. It is safer to state that Clifford may have simply "struck the pose" of Cleopatra's final moments and let "professional players or […] the sons of gentlemen"[325] speak her lines, but the detail of the miniature remains interesting. Daniel's play does not feature the use of Antony's picture, but its presence in Cleopatra's hands can be easily exploited. Antony is depicted in Roman dress and this style may have been influenced by the fashion at the Stuart court of having one's portrait *á l'antique*, best represented by Isaac Oliver's miniature of Prince Henry as a Roman general (c. 1610, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge). The actor playing Cleopatra (whoever he or she was) may have wielded a similar miniature for a coterie performance.

   As we have seen in the case of the pictures in *Love's Sacrifice*, sometimes the information which can be gathered from the play-text is simply insufficient. Of the 75 plays in the corpus, I have labelled 20 as "undefinable" in size (thus, c. 26% of the total). The very terminology can be confusing. For instance, the *OED* defines "tablet" as a "small slab or panel, usually of wood, bearing or intended to bear a painting or drawing" (2b). Understanding "how 'small'" a tablet in contemporary usage was can be hard. Queen Elizabeth I called a "tablet"[326] Lucas de Heere's *Allegory of the Tudor Succession* (c. 1570), a big oil on panel (131.2 x 184 cm). More normally, however, the size of a tablet was that of a miniature. In John Ford's *The Lover's Melancholy*, the counsellor Sophronus enters "with a tablet" and tells his brother that this is a "jewel" that the prince "hath long worn in his bosom" (V.ii 74). Similarly, in Sidney's

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[324] Ibid.: 34.
[325] Ibid.: 35.
[326] John N. King, "The Royal Image 1535-1603", in Dale Hoak (ed.), *Tudor Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 127.

Arcadia, which was hugely influential also in this respect, we read that the Black Knight has stolen Pamela's picture from Basilius which "in little forme he ware in a Tablet"[327].

In spite of this lack of material evidence, there are often hints in the dialogue that can resolve many doubts. Miniatures are easily spotted when they are contained in a casket (*The Merchant of Venice*), in a ring (*The Atheist's Tragedy*), or in other jewels (*Women Pleased*); when they are worn (the king to Gaveston in *Edward II*: "Here, take my picture, and let me wear thine" I.iv 127), or called "jewels" (in *The Wisdom of Doctor Dodypoll*, in which Prince Alberdure receives a gem which is "made a Iewell in your picture"[328] II, 409). Sizable portraits are less easily identifiable, but there are clues. For instance, as already seen, we know that in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Silvia's portrait is not a miniature because Proteus asks for "[t]he picture that is hanging in your chamber". Similarly, in *Blurt, Master Constable*, we hear the courtesan Imperia tell her servant to "hang this counterfeit at my bed's feet"[329]. Crispiano's portrait in Webster's *The Devil's Law Case* "[h]angs in [Leonora's] inner closet" (III.iii 347). When in *Hispanus*, a Latin comedy, a character announces the arrival of another saying: "look over there, to your left, a young man coming along, carrying a picture" (p. 40), we can infer that the picture must be of some size if it can be seen from afar. In *Fair Em*, one of the Shakespeare Apocrypha, William the Conqueror falls in love with Blanch's picture drawn on a tilting shield.

Another clue is a reference to the material, in particular when we hear that a picture is made of wood, which implies that the prop was definitely not a miniature (miniatures were limned on paper and playing cards). Again in *Blurt, Master Constable*, we hear the courtesan's servant say of his mistress that Fontinell's "wodden picture [he] sent her hath set her on fire" (which refutes Tassi's view that we are dealing with a miniature)[330]. In Rider's *The Twins*, the fool receives his darling's "wooden" picture. When a portrait is called a "table", this generally means that we are dealing with a picture painted on a board: Bess, Heywood's "fair maid of the West"

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[327] Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, edited by Albert Feuillerat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969): 110.

[328] M. N. Matson (ed), *op. cit.* (1965). A very good reading of this intriguing play is provided by Marguerite A. Tassi in her study.

[329] Text to be found at http://www.tech.org/~cleary/blurt.html (last accessed 4 October 2016).

[330] Marguerite A. Tassi, *op. cit.* (2005): 105.

will never relinquish her most cherished possession, her lover's "poor table" (III.i). Nero in Thomas May's *Julia Agrippina* admires the "lovely table"[331] of Acte, a freedwoman, soon to become his mistress.

When spectators are meant to recognise real figures, their likenesses need to be big enough to be perceived. This is the case of the two plays featuring the picture of Richard Tarlton, the greatest of Elizabethan clowns (Robert Wilson's *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*; William Percy's *The Cuckqueans and the Cuckolds Errant*), Jonson's caricature in Dekker's *Satiromastix* and possibly Marston's own picture in his *Antonio and Mellida*.

Finally, one can expect big pictures if they are to be stabbed and defaced (*The Noble Spanish Soldier*, *The Traitor*, *The Fatal Contract*, *Thibaldus*) or poisoned (*The White Devil*).

However, the clearest visual evidence we have as regards a staged portrait is the illustration which follows the frontispiece of William Sampson's *The Vow Breaker* (published in 1636) (see Illustration no. 2). While the details of this picture will be elucidated at length in Chapter II.4, it is interesting to note that the blatantly large format of this portrait has been disputed exactly because of the view that sizable pictures were rarely shown onstage. Wassersug states: "There is no reason to presume that it would have been any larger than a cabinet miniature" and that it was "inflated" [332] in the illustration to highlight its significance in the plot. I beg to differ: the portrait in the illustration is clearly large. Note the frame and the nail by which it hangs; the old man (Bateman's father) kneels in front of it. The fact that the picture hangs in mid-air is simply due to the need of simultaneously portraying different locales and to foreground the symmetry between Bateman's and Anne's fathers. Bateman's ghost is also shown and bears an evident likeness to his picture, especially the hair and moustache. The ghost is depicted as having a broken coin attached to his wrist, the token of Anne's perjury.

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[331] Thomas May, *The Tragedy of Julia Agrippina, Empresse of Rome* (London: 1639): unnumbered page.
[332] Yolana Wassersug, *op. cit.* (2015): 221.
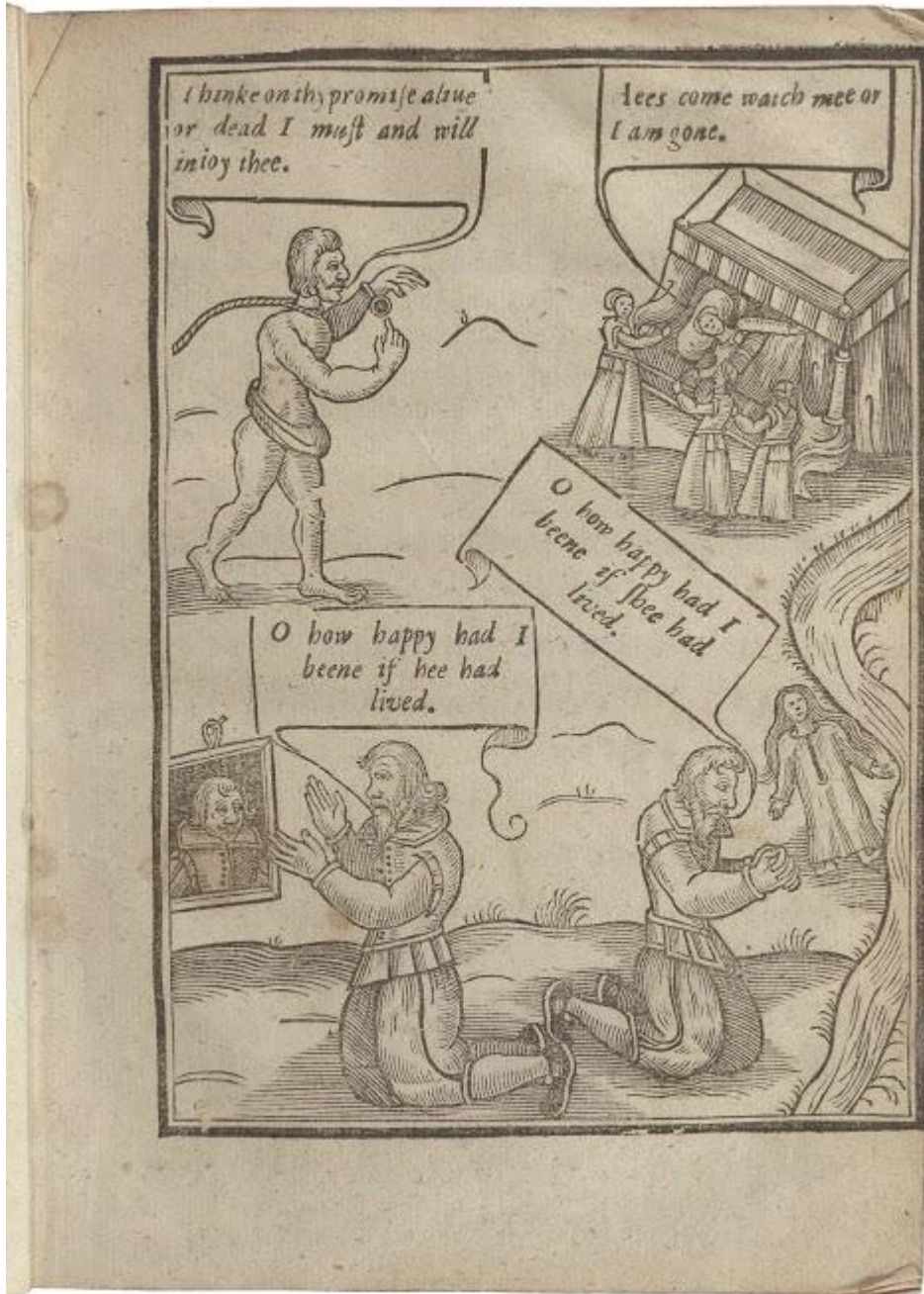
Illustration no. 2

I have been able to identify 37 plays in which a picture was staged which was clearly meant not to be a miniature. In these plays, textual and paratextual information indicates the presence of a hanging portrait or of one that was designed to be visible to the audience. I argue that it is more of a modern conception that staged pictures were mostly "[i]n shape no bigger than an agate stone" (*Romeo and Juliet*, I.iv 55; such stones, , by the way, could indeed be made into miniatures: John Florio refers to "agath-stones, cut and graven with some formes and images on them, namely, of famous men's heads"[333]).

There are two plays which feature the display of very large pictures with multiple subjects. At Mitcham in September 1598, on her visit to Sir Julius Caesar, Queen Elizabeth was the main spectator of an entertainment sometimes attributed to John Lyly. A painter, a poet, and a musician bicker over who can best represent Her Majesty's virtue and beauty. The painter shows them a board portraying some of the English monarchs, which is belittled by the poet. The large painting in the other play must have also been specially commissioned. In William Heminge's *The Fatal Contract* (c. 1634, staged c. 1639 at the Salisbury Court Theatre by Queen Henrietta's Men), Queen Fredigond plans her revenge for her baby brother's murder. She draws the curtain and unveils a terrible picture (I.ii 17-33; 47-50)[334]:

> This picture drawn by an *Italian*
> (which still I keep to whet my revenge)
> Does represent the murder of my brother;
> For ravishing this beautious piece of ill;
> A bloody and a terrible mistake,
> To murder *Clodimir* and for *Clotairs* fact,
> For which behold how Fredigond's reveng'd,
> This old *Dumaine* and father to this maid,
> With all his kindred, sociates and alies,
> (These brace of wicked ones, and that ravisht whore,
> The fair and fatall cause of these events
> Onely excepted) are here, here in this picture:
> Is't not a brave sight, how doth the object likes thee?
> How prettily that babie hangs by th'heels,
> Sprawling his Armes about his mothers wombe,
> As if againe he sought for shelter there?
> Here's one bereft of hands, and this of tongue […]
> Two horie Gray-beards in this angle lyes,

[333] John Florio, *Queen Anna's New World of Words* (London: 1611): 193.
[334] Carol A. Morley (ed.), *The Plays and Poems of William Heminge* (Madison-Teaneck: Fairleigh-Dickinson University Press, 2006).

Will find their way to Hell without their eyes,
Villaines that kil'd my Brother; how does this like thee?
To execute the men in picture, is't not rare?   *(Stabs the picture)*[335]

It is necessary to be cautious with Fredigond's ghastly ekphrasis. In her fury, she must add details which were not there: it is unlikely that the painting could be so elaborate. We are told that the picture was painted by an Italian (the action takes place in Merovingian France). While it would be tempting to think of such gory, fierce scenes as Italian Baroque pieces depicting the massacre of the innocents, it is probable that the reference to an Italian painter is placed simply to evoke stereotypical Italianate vice and horror. Alternatively, this could stir the memory of those select few who were familiar with similar pieces through prints and engravings. However, the idea of commissioning a picture to commemorate a murder and ask for revenge was not unheard of in early modern Britain. The so-called "revenge portrait" or "vendetta picture" was an essentially Scottish pictorial genre: "done of murdered leaders, and preserved as invocations for revenge in the persistent Scottish tradition of the blood feud"[336]. The best-known example is the one showing the mangled corpse of James Stewart, Earl of Moray by an anonymous artist (1591, now in Darnaway Castle, Morayshire).

Finally, it is possible to compare the use of staged portraits in early modern English drama with those employed in different types of European theatre of the same period. Though no studies on the topic in early modern French drama currently exist (Emmanuelle Hénin's study[337] on the negotiations between the language of painting and theatre in France does not refer to any play featuring the staging of a portrait), we do have Laura R. Bass's book on staged portraits in early modern Spanish drama[338]. Moreover, it is possible to give an outline of the use of these props within the (originally Italian, but soon enough pan-European) theatrical tradition of *commedia dell'arte*.

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[335] On stabbed portraits, see Fredson Thayer Bowers, "The Stabbing of a Portrait in Elizabethan Tragedy", *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 47, no. 6, 1932: 378-85.

[336] Robert Tittler, "Portraiture, Politics, and Society", in Norman L. Jones and id. (eds), *A Companion to Tudor Britain* (Carlton, Malden, and Oxford: Blackwell, 2004): 461.

[337] Emmanuelle Hénin, *Ut Pictura Theatrum: Théâtre et Peinture de la Renaissance Italienne au Classicisme Français* (Geneva: Droz, 2003).

[338] Laura R. Bass, *The Drama of The Portrait: Theatre and Visual Culture in Early Modern Spain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008).

What can be garnered by a comparison with the contemporaneous Spanish drama is the reflection on the quantity of English plays featuring staged portraits. Bass does not give a number, but begins her study by saying that: "Portraits circulate in dozens of dramas of early modern Spain"[339]. Most of the plays she discusses, however, are much later than the plays on which I focus in my dissertation. Let us look at the dates of some of the Spanish plays in which, arguably, the acutest use of staged portraits is made: Lope de Vega's *La dama boba* (1613); Tirso de Molina's *El vergonzoso en palacio* (published in 1621); Calderón's *La vida es sueño* (published in 1635-6), *El pintor de su deshonra* (written in the 1640s); *Darlo todo y no dar nada* (1651) and *El mayor monstruo del mundo* (1672); Alonso de Castillo Solórzano's *El mayorazgo figura* (published in 1637). Apart from Lope's masterpiece, all the others were written at a much later time in comparison with Elizabethan and early Jacobean plays that subtly explored the use of a staged portraits, such as Lyly's *Campaspe* (1583-4), Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1598), *Hamlet* (1600-1), and *Timon of Athens* (1605-8), and Webster's *The White Devil* (1612). The Spanish plays use both miniatures and larger pictures, but these portraits reflect the vastly different visual culture of their country in terms of religion, politics, and pictorial expertise. A final note: when large pictures are employed in Spanish drama, they are sometimes given very complex mechanisms, such as swivelling devices[340]. For instance, in Guillén de Castro's *Dido y Eneas* (c. 1616), the face of Dido's late husband as drawn in his portrait is suddenly replaced by a sword pointing at Dido's heart, foreshadowing her death. Instead, in Diego Muxet de Solís's *El hermitaño seglar* (published in 1624), the pictures of heathen emperors vanish and instantly reappear showing their tragic deaths. On the whole, it is very difficult to compare early modern Spanish and English drama for many reasons, and, apart from indicating these peculiarities, not much more can be said: none of these Spanish plays were translated or adapted into English.

The case of the *commedia dell'arte* is different. There are a few scenarios which include portraits among the *robbe*, the required props. In *Il ritratto*, one of the most metatheatrical plays of this tradition, "*un ritratto di donna picciolo*"[341] (a woman's

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[339] Ibid.: 1.

[340] See Steven Alexander, "The Portrait that Comes to Life on the Spanish Golden-Age Stage", *Journal of the Institute of Romance Studies*, Vol. 5, 1997: 99-110.

[341] Anna Maria Testaverde (ed.), *I Canovacci della Commedia dell'Arte* (Turin: Einaudi, 2007): 126. All the other scenarios quoted here can be found in this edition, except for *La fortuna di Foresta* and *Il*

picture in little) lies at the heart of the dramatic action. Pantalone visits Vittoria, the leading actress of a playing company lately come to Parma, and sees in her apartment his wife's miniature. The actress tells him that a gentleman, Orazio, who wore it around his neck in a gold locket, had given it to her (in fact, she had stolen it from him), and Pantalone thus discovers that his wife has been cheating on him. The end of the play sees the triumph of the two lovers over the cuckolded Pantalone. Very interestingly, *Il ritratto* has been quoted among the sources of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the first play by Shakespeare to include a staged portrait[342]. In another play, the Arcadian *Li ritratti*, Clizia, a Scottish princess, disguises herself as a fisherman[343], to meet Prince Nicandro (masked as a fisherwoman): the two have fallen in love by looking at each other's pictures. The problem is that two other foreign kings also have Clizia's picture and try to meet her by comparing her face (and, predictably, Nicandro's in drag) with the one painted on the portrait. Cupid himself solves the problem: he gives the two kings the pictures of two other princesses in need of lovers. What is striking is how Clizia and Nicandro's speeches upon looking at the pictures are codified: Nicandro "*cacciando fuori il ritratto, lo vagheggia e fa discorsi*" ("pulling out the portrait, talks to it dreamingly"); Clizia "*fa discorsi amorosi sopra il ritratto*" ("holds amorous speeches upon the portrait"[344]). These general sketches simply instruct the actors on how they should proceed, without giving detailed information on what exactly they should say, as was the norm in this type of scripts. In *La fortuna di Foresta, prencipessa di Moscovia* (a play that has, perhaps too rashly, been linked with Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*)[345], the Prince of Poland falls in love with the Muscovian princess by looking at her picture, of which we are told there are various copies. Small portraits are also featured in *Il torneo*, *La regina statista regnante*, *Marescial di Biron*, and *Lo schiavo del demonio*.

Torneo. *Il Ritratto* and *La fortuna di Foresta* were included in Flaminio Scala's *Il teatro delle favole rappresentative* (1611); *Li ritratti* in Basilio Locatelli's *Della scena dei Soggetti comici* (1618-22); *La Regina statista regnante*, *Marescial di Biron*, and *Lo schiavo del demonio* in Ciro Monarca's *Dell'opere regie* (mid-seventeenth century); *La dama demonio* in *Codice Vaticano Latino 10244* (from, approximately, the Seventies or Eighties of the seventeenth century). The text of *Il torneo* can be found here: Stefan Hulfeld (ed.), *Scenari più scelti d'istrioni. Teil 1* (Göttingen: V & R Press, 2014): 714-23 (the original MS is in the Corsini Library in Rome).

[342] Max J. Wolff, "Shakespeare und die Commedia dell'Arte", *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch*, Issue XLVI, 1910: 11.

[343] In another version, the two lovers disguise themselves as shepherds.

[344] Anna Maria Testaverde (ed.), *op. cit.* (2007): 422-23 (translation mine).

[345] Max J. Wolff, *op. cit.* (1910): 19.

All portraits used as props by *commedia dell'arte* performers seem to have been small, hand-held objects. This can surely be explained by the main characteristics of this theatrical tradition: they did not generally have a stable playhouse in which to perform. They were travelling companies that did not require elaborate sets. However, this changed across the centuries, as they adopted scenotechnical inventions more and more. For instance, around the middle of the second half of the seventeenth century, in an adaptation of Calderón's *La dama duende*, *La dama demonio*, they used not only two small portraits to be found in a chest, but also a huge painting, through which the protagonist, the phantom lady, could make her appearances (whereas, in the Spanish source, she used a cupboard). Another mixture of Spanish drama, *commedia dell'arte* elements, and staged portraits is represented by *The Spanish Gypsy* (1623) by Thomas Dekker, John Ford, Thomas Middleton, and William Rowley, examined below.

The Worth of the Staged Pictures

The information we have concerning the prices of staged pictures is unfortunately very scant and ambiguous. We know that the "[p]rices [of pictures] would vary considerably depending on the skill of the artist, the size of the portrait and the complexity of the composition, but it was certainly possible for middle-class and modestly wealthy individuals to afford their own portraits"[346].

As regards the material, it can be safely said that staged pictures could be "fake" miniatures, easel paintings (on wood), and paintings on canvas. A further material perhaps used was the painted cloth: Henslowe records, for instance, "a clothe of the Sone & Mone"[347]. Painted cloths are often referred to in drama (for example, Falstaff speaks of his soldiers being "as ragged as Lazarus in the painted cloth", *2Henry IV* IV.ii 28, while Pandarus asks the other "traders of the flesh" to set his fate in their "painted cloths", *Troilus and Cressida* V.x 47) and were a common item in both aristocratic and middle-class households. They could be hung in any part of the stage and were cheaper than the other types of pictures.

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[346] Tarnya Cooper, *op. cit.* (2008): 10.
[347] R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert (eds.), *Henslowe's Diary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961): 320.

From valuations in contemporary inventories, the price of Elizabethan and Jacobean portraits

> [o]ccasionally […] might be as little as sixpence, but more typically paintings were valued between one and five shillings […] New portraits probably cost more to commission, typically around ten to twenty shillings; however, courtiers who employed distinguished artists, such as Hans Holbein the Younger, would pay considerably more[348].

In the Caroline period, the prices of the courtly, fashionable pictures were much higher: "25 £ was the usual price for a Van Dyck portrait"[349]. It is clear that that the playing companies could not have afforded such pictures. I was able to find four references to the price of pictures in early modern English drama, but these results require clarification.

Famously, in the Second Quarto and Folio editions of *Hamlet*, we are told by the Prince of Denmark that courtiers who mocked Claudius before his accession to the throne are now paying "twenty, forty, [fifty, Q2] an hundred ducats apiece for his picture in little" (II.ii 366-67). One can easily understand that these are only extravagant sums, exaggerated by Hamlet: in the First Quarto, this is rendered even more patent by referring to English currency: "a hundred – two hundred – pounds for his picture".

In Thomas Middleton's *The Witch*, the protagonist, Hecate, comments on a rich man's wish to record his "years", i.e. his age, inscribing them on the canvas of his portrait: "They must be chambered in a five-pound picture / A green silk curtain drawn before the eyes on't / His rotten diseased years" (I.ii 138-40). The editor, Marion O' Connor, comments that: "Although £ 5 was a substantial sum in 1616" when the play was presumably written, "it probably was not a very high price to pay for a portrait"[350]. Actually, we have seen that this price would be rather high for an ordinary picture: such a sum would highlight the prodigality of the commissioner.

In 1635, *Eumorphus: Sive, Cupido Adultus*, a Latin comedy by George Wilde performed at St. John's College, Oxford, we meet an old, extremely rich widow,

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[348] Ibid. It may be useful to remind readers that 12 pence make 1 shilling and that 20 shillings make 1 pound.
[349] Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass (eds), *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 38.
[350] In John Lavagnino and Gary Taylor (eds), *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 1136.

Maleola, besotted with a youth she believes to be Eumorphus (but who is actually Eumorphus' servant, Panergus). She asks for his picture and exclaims: "I beg you / let me buy it for these eighty pounds" (the Latin text has "viginti his minis")[351]. The enormity of such a price is of course ridiculous, even though in this case we may be dealing with a miniature. Maleola is so short-sighted that she will not realise whether what he gives her is a "man's or a woman's" picture "and half-blind she cannot even judge the colours". Putting on her glasses, she does notice that it is the picture of a bearded man while Eumorphus is still hairless, and Panergus replies that he has commissioned a picture which should show him in a year's time.

Finally, in William Davenant's tragedy *The Unfortunate Lovers* (performed in 1638 at Blackfriars and having among the spectators there even Queen Henrietta), Rampino, a gallant soldier, tells a widow, Fibbia: "It shall cost mee foure Duckets but I'll / Get thy Picture, and by thy side I'll have / Young *Antiphones* thy sonne drawne too, / Eating of Cherries in a green Coat"[352]. The play is set in Verona and, since one Venetian ducat[353] made 10 shillings (half a pound), this means that the soldier intends to pay two pounds, which is regarded as a remarkable sum.

A peculiar case is the one provided by an incident recorded in Philip Henslowe's diary. It is not particularly striking that the great impresario never mentions paying for a picture among the props and other acquisitions he listed for the Admiral's Men at the Rose. Portable props are often ignored in his diary, and besides, the Admiral's Men performed only two plays, that we know of (Chapman's *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* and *The Comedy of Humours*), which featured a staged picture before 1609, when Henslowe stopped making entries in the diary. There is, however, one exception. On 14 July 1598, he recorded the payment of five shillings to the actor William Bird (or Borne) "for to geue the paynter in earneste of his pictor"[354]. Payments were generally made in three parts at that time and a payment "in earnest" would indicate the first instalment. Edward Town (Yale Center for British Art) has pointed out to me that if the picture cost 15 shillings, this would be "comparable to the

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[351] Edited by Heinz J. Vienken (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1973): 157.

[352] William Davenant, *The Unfortunate Lovers: A Tragedie* (London: 1643): 26.

[353] It has been demonstrated that playwrights expected their audiences to be competent in questions of foreign currency (the most famous case is the references to money in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*). See Barrie Cook, *Angels and Ducats: Shakespeare's Money and Medals* (London: British Museum Press, 2012).

[354] R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert (eds), *op. cit.* (1961): 93.

price that Richard Madox, a Fellow of All Souls, paid for his picture in the previous decade from the reputable but not particularly distinguished painter, John Bettes in London"[355]. The most plausible argument is that Henslowe lent the money to Bird so that the actor could commission his portrait. Alternatively, this payment has been connected with a staged picture. On 10 March 1598, Henslowe listed an inventory of all the properties in possession of the Admiral's Men. Among such fascinating props such as Tamburlaine's bridle, Dido's tomb, and the three heads of Cerberus, we can read "Tasso picter"[356]. It is known that a no-longer-extant comedy entitled *Tasso's Melancholy* was staged in that period and that it was rather successful. This lost play would presumably relate some episodes of the life of the great Torquato Tasso, who had died only in 1595 and whose influence was profound on Elizabethan poets. In his 1790 transcript of Henslowe's diary, Edmond Malone connected this picture with Bird's portrait, generating thus the conjecture that Henslowe commissioned a picture of Bird who would play Tasso, pictorially impersonating the Italian poet (laurel crown and all). While this is unlikely due to problems of dating, the prospect has proved tantalising. For instance, in their catalogue of British Drama[357], Wiggins and Richardson also conjecture that Bird's picture may have been drawn in connection either with *The Funeral of Richard Coeur de Lion* or George Chapman's *The Ill of a Woman*. Neither of these plays is extant, and the ascription of the picture to either derives only from the fact that they were performed by the Admiral's Men in 1598. I would say that it is safe to state that Tasso's picture and Bird's portrait were two different paintings; still, Tasso's picture can be related to another artefact. As already mentioned, in 1605, Edward Alleyn, the star of the Admiral's Men, the actor who had played Tamburlaine, Faustus, and so many other great roles (and Henslowe's son-in-law), started one of his new projects: the founding of Dulwich College. When he died in 1626, he bequeathed the college of his collection of pictures which would become the first nucleus of the Dulwich Picture Gallery. Among these pictures was (and can be still seen) a portrait of Dante Alighieri. It was painted by a British painter and its "size and format compare closely with Alleyn's sets of Kings and Queens and

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[355] Private email exchange. I would like to thank Dr Town and Dr Jane Eade for their precious assistance.
[356] R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert (eds), *op. cit.* (1961): 320.
[357] Martin Wiggins, in association with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): Vol. IV, 44-43.

Sibyls"[358]. It has been suggested that this *Dante* "may have belonged to a set of poets otherwise including perhaps Ariosto, Tasso and Petrarch"[359]. It is true that Alleyn bought the sets of monarchs and sibyls only in 1620 from a "Mr Gibkyn", but I would say that this picture can be related to the staged portrait of Tasso and may also give us some information on its size. It had to be fairly large, its subject capable of being recognised, and the size of the *Dante* complies with this requirement: 61.9 x 49.5 cm. The date of the *Dante* can unfortunately only be hypothesised: "Late 16th Century / early 17th Century".

It is time to recapitulate. Of the four references to prices of portraits in drama, only two are to be taken into account: 5£ (*The Witch*) and 2£ (*The Unfortunate Lovers*). To these, we can add the total price of 15 shillings (thus less than 1£) which can be derived from Henslowe's account of William Bird's picture. From the comments in the plays, we can glean that a price around 2- 5£ would be regarded as fairly high. In order to understand this value, we can compare it with the following figures: that 1 shilling was the daily wage of a building craftsman in 1600, that a normal actor's wages would be around 10 shillings a week, and that household servants would earn 2-5£ per year. Instead, one court performance "could earn £7 to £10"[360]. We can moreover contrast these prices with how much a company had to pay for costumes. Clothes were the actors' most expensive possessions, "a company's wardrobe often being more valuable than its theatre"[361]. Some of their clothes had belonged to nobles who, dying, had bequeathed them to their servants, who in turn sold them to the actors. Theatrical apparel was often extremely expensive: Francis Langley had to spend 300£ on players' apparel when he built the Swan theatre in 1586, and a black velvet gown commissioned for *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603) "cost six pounds thirteen shillings, more than the six pounds Thomas Heywood was paid for writing the play"[362].

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[358] This and all subsequent references are to be found here: http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/explore-the-collection/401-450/dante/ (last accessed: 3 October 2016).

[359] Ibid. By 1590, Lord Lumley is known to have owned a similar cluster of portraits of Italian poets: Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Ariosto (Elizabeth Goldring, *op. cit*., 2014: 187).

[360] Jane Shuter, *Shakespeare and the Theatre* (Oxford: Raintree, 2015): 40.

[361] Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells (eds), *op. cit.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): 78.

[362] John H. Astington, "Playhouses, Players, and Playgoers in Shakespeare's Time", in Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 110.

I suggest that we apply Paul Yachnin's notion of the "populuxe" to understand the type of pictures staged. Yachnin sees players as active traders in a market which offered "popular, relative inexpensive versions of deluxe goods"[363]:

> The theatre, as one of the first populuxe businesses, actively encouraged conspicuous consumption and sumptuary display in a distinctly popular audience. The stage provides a model of consumerism as an adjunct to a democratic polity because it transvalued the status system on which it depended by *trading* in courtly high style and high status, developing a critique of fashion and rank, and making both ersatz rank and social analysis available to a broadly constituted London audience[364].

Considering that "[w]hatever aesthetic requirements Elizabethan drama fulfilled, a large part of the visual appeal of the spectacles was surely directed toward satisfying middle-class aspirations"[365], the staging of seemingly costly miniatures and portraits could address that "heightened degree of sensitization"[366] which marked the desire for new commodities within an emerging consumer society. Portraits were the object of consumerist desire and their display onstage would incite it. For instance, the staged miniatures were, as already said, not real miniatures, but indeed, "populuxe" versions of courtly limning. Pictures resembling aristocratic portraits (for instance, Duke Brachiano's in *The White Devil* or the one in Suckling's *Aglaura*) would also retain the glamour of rank and court life. Portraits of citizens (such as those hanging in the gallery of Heywood's *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody*, II) would also promote such commerce and endorse identification among the middling sort, importantly bearing in mind that citizens

> did *not* try to emulate the nobility or the gentry. In contrast to the diarist Samuel Pepys, who a hundred years later hired a special gown in which to have his portrait painted, these middle-class Elizabethans appear to be depicted wearing their own, albeit respectable clothes, presenting the virtues suitable to their own position in life[367].

Two consequences follow from this. Firstly, when a character says in a play that he or she has bought a portrait for 2 or 5£, the audience would be keenly interested in this

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[363] Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin, *op. cit.* (2001): 40.
[364] Ibid.: 56.
[365] Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975): 8.
[366] Catherine Richardson, "Properties of Domestic Life: The Table in Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*", in Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (eds.), *op cit.* (2002): 145.
[367] Tarnya Cooper, "Elizabethan Portraiture: Taste, Style and Patronage" in id., *Elizabeth I & Her People* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2014): 18.

information. Secondly, we can surmise that these pictures did not cost as much as claimed in the play.

Finally, it is important to consider the relationship between painters and actors. Not only were their professions closely linked, as we have seen in numerous texts of the period, but the playing companies must have often needed the painters' services. Their main use would not have been portraits, but the painting and repainting of the playhouse and its stage properties. Moreover, some of the actors doubled as painters. It is well known that Richard Burbage, the star of the King's Men, was also a painter. He received a commission from the Early of Rutland for an *impresa* for the Accession Day tilt on 24 March 1613. Burbage drew it, while Shakespeare composed the motto: Rutland paid each of them 44 shillings in gold. Whereas in the past, the *Chandos Portrait* of Shakespeare had been attributed to Burbage, "his abilities may have been limited to theatrical banners and coats of arms"[368]. The *Chandos Portrait* is now generally ascribed to John Taylor, a painter as well as (reputedly) a boy actor of the Children of Paul's. He was a well-established member of the Painter-Stainers' Company with at least six apprentices between 1626 and 1648[369]. Another example: when he died in 1686, the actor and bookseller William Cartwright, who played both before the civil war and after the Restoration, bequeathed his collection of pictures to Dulwich College. The inventory shows he owned many portraits of his fellow actors: Richard Burbage, Nathan Field, Richard Perkins, William Sly, and Tom Bond[370]. At the beginning of Charles I's rule, the actor Richard Robinson, one of the King's Men, had invited one of England's leading connoisseurs, Sir Henry Wotton, to his house to show him "some pictures and other rarities"[371]. In sum, in early modern London, painters and actors lived not just in the same streets, but often in the same apartments.

Painted Boys and Women's Paintings

Numerous pictures which are staged in this corpus of plays depict a woman. Since women did not publicly appear on the English stage before the Restoration (except for

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[368] Tarnya Cooper, *op. cit.* (2006): 134.

[369] Ibid.: 57.

[370] Famously, Oscar Wilde imagines a Shakespeare who is in love with Willie Hughes, a boy actor, in his story *The Portrait of Mr. W. H.* (1889).

[371] Logan Pearsall Smith (ed.), *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907): Vol. 2, no. 447.

the few known, odd instances), a pressing question that arises is what the picture of a woman would look like if it had to bear the likeness of the boy actor playing that role. The companies had to come to terms with this issue and I claim that they resorted to three different solutions: 1) the use of miniatures or small pictures; 2) the display of a picture whose subject never comes onstage; 3) the use of a reasonably well-made portrait.

By using miniatures or small pictures, the spectators would be able to see only the contours of the figure and not be able to assess the resemblance. This seems to have been the most common way to stage women's pictures. From "Fair Portia's counterfeit" in the leaden casket (*The Merchant of Venice*, III.ii 115) to the jewel ("'Tis a rich one, curious set, / Fit a prince's burgonet" IV.iv) snatched from the Duke of Siena's helmet in Fletcher's *Women Pleased*, miniatures of women abound: there are 13 plays in which one or more identifiable miniatures of women are used, and many of the pictures I listed as "undefinable" in size probably fall into this category.

The second solution is quite interesting: actors hang or display a woman's picture, but that woman never comes onstage as a character; she is simply referred to in the play. We may call this the strategy of using "ghost models". This must have been a very attractive choice for the companies; they could use a large picture of a woman without needing her to look like a particular character. This instantiates a particular kind of ekphrasis: while normally we hear a character describe an absent work of art, here we can see a picture and the character has to connect it to its absent subject. In George Chapman's *The Comedy of Humours* (1597)[372], a Hamlet-like character, Dowsecer, suffers from severe melancholy. This becomes a show for the other courtiers and, in order "to see his humour" (II.ii 24), they watch unseen while he scrutinises three props: a hose and codpiece; a sword; and a picture of a woman. When he notices each of them, Dowsecer inveighs on the vanity of the aspects of human life they symbolise (respectively, the court, the military profession, and love). While the lines he devotes to criticising the first two are few, he is much more taken with the picture. The significance of the picture in comparison with the other props can also be understood through the stage direction: although the painting is the last to

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[372] Allan Holiday and Michael Kiernan (eds), *op. cit.* (1970).

be referred to, we can read *"Enter Lauele with a picture, and a paire of large hose, and a codpeece, and a sword"*. He pretends to court the portrait and says:

> She is very faire, I think that she be painted;
> And if she be, sir, she might aske of mee,
> How many is there of our sexe that are not?
> Tis a sharp question: marry and I thinke
> They haue small skill; if they were all of painting,
> Twere safer dealing with them […]
> But to admire them as our gallants do,
> O what an eie she hath, O dainty hand,
> Rare foote and legge, and leaue the minde respectles,
> This is a plague, that in both men and women
> Make much pollution of our earthly being:
> Well I will practice yet to court this peece. (136-41; 148-53)

He thus launches himself into a critique of the blazon motif among courtiers, who only describe the outer beauty of a woman instead of her inner virtues. The spectators are not given information on whom the subject of the picture is. Soon enough, however, Dowsecer falls in love with one of those who had been watching him, Martia. He does so in the best Platonic style, which very much contradicts the way he had described the painting in its artificiality:

> Is she a woman that obiects this sight,
> Able to work the chaos of the world
> Into gestion? O diuine aspect,
> The excellent disposer of the mind
> Shines in thy beautie, and thou hast not changed
> My soule to sense, but sense vnto my soule. (205-10)

This is the same solution opted for in Philip Massinger's *The Emperor of the East* (1631). In this play, the young emperor Theodosius has to decide which woman to marry only by looking at their pictures (the two suitors are the princess of Epire and the sister of the Duke of Athens): "Must I then judge the substances by the shadows?"(II.i 244), he cries. Both portraits are profusely commented on, but Theodosius chooses neither. Similarly, in Suckling's *Aglaura*, Thersames, the prince of Persia, is in love with the beautiful Aglaura and thus, when presented with the picture of a noblewoman whom his father (also in love with Aglaura) wants him to marry, he mocks it and the audience never gets to see the girl in question. Interestingly, we are not even given any information about the subject of the portrait;

we know neither her name nor her exact rank. Moreover, the picture is described by the messenger as: "Something made up for her in haste" (I.i 34) – as if excusing for the rough quality of the object.

The same solution is the one provided by the pictures of women used in brothels. It was a common practice for the "stews", as they were called, to advertise the beauty of the prostitutes through their pictures. Such pictures are shown in a few plays such as *The Wise Woman of Hoxton*, *The Renegado* (where the portraits of Venetian courtesans are passed off as "curious Pictures of the rarest beauties of *Europa*" I.iii 5), and Shirley's *The Gentleman of Venice* in which there is even a scene (III.iii) set in a gallery "adorned with pictures". All these pictures would have not needed a special commission: any picture of a woman would have suited the company's needs. "Wanton pictures", such as those referred to in the dramatic frame of *The Taming of the Shrew* were probably similar objects (although they may also have been prints and engravings as those produced by Giulio Romano for Aretino's *Sonetti Lussuriosi* – as has been astutely claimed by Elam[373]). Robert Burton testifies to this when he writes that: "Nero would have filthy pictures still hanging in his chamber, which is too commonly used in our times"[374].

It is *The Spanish Gypsy* (by Thomas Dekker, John Ford, Thomas Middleton, and William Rowley, 1623) which maybe provides us with the best example of a "ghost model". This interesting comedy mixes *commedia dell'arte* elements with its source material, two novellas by Cervantes. Roderigo joins a troupe of gypsies (in reality a group of banished Spanish nobles) who stage a play within the play in the foreign acting style: "a way / Which the Italians and the Frenchmen use: / That is, on a word given, or some slight plot, / The actors will extempore fashion out / Scenes neat and witty" (IV.ii 39-43). Roderigo's father has recognised his scoundrel son in disguise and has him play the leading role in the comedy, that of a youth who is forced to marry a very ugly heiress. He is presented with her picture, which hangs onstage curtained and then is revealed. Roderigo exclaims:

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[373] See his enlightening reading of the theme in Keir Elam, *op. cit.* (2010): 65-66, and id., "'Wanton pictures': The Baffling of Christopher Sly and the Visual-Verbal Intercourse of Early Modern Erotic Arts", in Michele Marrapodi (ed.), *Shakespeare and the Italian Renaissance: Appropriation, Transformation, Opposition* (Burlington and Farnham: Ashgate, 2014): 123-46.

[374] Rhonda L. Blair, Thomas C. Faulkner, and Nicolas K. Kiessling (eds), *Robert Burton's* The Anatomy of Melancholy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997): Vol. III, 95.

RODERIGO: Sink, let her, to her grannam! Marry a witch? Have you fetched a wife for me out of Lapland? An old midwife in a velvet hat were a goddess to this. That, a red lip?
PRECIOSA: There's a red nose.
RODERIGO: That, a yellow hair?
EUGENIA: Why, her teeth may be yellow.
RODERIGO: Where's the full eye?
CHRISTIANA: She has full blubber cheeks. (IV.iii 132-140)

His father then discloses to him that he had understood his intent and that Roderigo really has to marry the ugly woman. At the end of the play, this does not take place and we never see the woman in the flesh. However, the interrelatedness of metadramatic levels is quite complex: in a play within the play, a man is shown a picture of a woman; that man is playing the gypsy actor in a troupe of nobles playing the part of gypsies, only to discover that he really has to marry that woman. Moreover, among these pseudo-gypsies there are also women (who were of course played by boys) – not to mention that nobody was really Spanish. The theme of deception could not be better represented.

Alternatively, this can work for pictures of goddesses, personified abstractions, and other mythological characters. For instance, in the very early epithalamic masque by William Pounde, performed in front of the queen in 1566, the spectators could admire a painting of the nude Diana. A few years before the closure of the theatres, John Gough dramatised the hugely popular romance of Theagenes and Chariclea by Heliodorus in *The Strange Discovery* (c. 1638): Chariclea discovers that she is the real Ethiopian princess though born white because at her conception her mother had admired the fairness of the picture of Andromeda: "contemplatively eying the faire picture […] and firing / A strong imagination thereupon" (V.vi). This picture is then brought onstage[375] for the final *anagnorisis*. In the Latin play *Stoicus Vapulans*, performed in Cambridge in 1619, allegorical characters are given the pictures of heroes and gods, among which the picture of Discord with her companion, Mars, is also included.

The third solution is the trickiest: the company would stage a sizable portrait of a woman character in the play. This would require an object that would be so skilfully

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[375] It has to be said that there may be hints that the play was never meant to be staged, but only read. See Alfred Harbage, *Cavalier Drama* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964): 145.

made as to enable at least a partial identification of its subject with the boy player. This was of course very difficult, and among all the plays in the corpus which feature a woman's sizable portrait it is difficult to find examples. It may be conjectured that a woman's picture was used as long as the company owned a wig of the same hair colour, that being the most salient feature of the portrait.

We can take as instance *The Honest Whore, Part One* (by Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton, 1604). Here we have Hippolito, who believes that his beloved Infelice has died. In fact, this is part of a plan of Infelice's father, the duke of Milan, who is against his suit and pretends that the girl has died. Instead, he has her abscond to Bergamo. Hippolito vows that every Monday (on the day of her supposed death), he will remain "locked up" (Scene 1, 128) in his chamber and "meditate / On nothing but my Infelice's end, / Or on a dead man's skull draw out mine own" (130-31). Indeed, in Scene 10, he has his servant set out a table and place there "a skull, a picture, a book, and a taper" (S.D.). He begins to study the picture:

> My Infelice's face: her brow, her eye,
> The dimple in her cheek; and such sweet skill
> Hath from the cunning workman's pencil flown,
> These lips look fresh and lively as her own,
> Seeming to move and speak. 'Las! Now I see
> The reason why fond men love to buy
> Adulterate complexion: here 'tis read,
> False colours last after the true be dead.
> Of all the roses grafted on her cheeks,
> Of all the graces dancing in her eyes,
> Of all the music set upon her tongue,
> Of all that was past woman's excellence
> In her white bosom – look! A painted board
> Circumscribes all. Earth can no bliss afford.
> Nothing of her but this? This cannot speak.
> It has no lap for me to rest upon,
> No lip worth tasting; here the worms will feed,
> As in her coffin. Hence, then, idle art,
> True love's best pictured in a true love's heart. (46-56)

Hippolito then proceeds to speak to the skull and prefers its image to the painted "figure of my friend" (59): the (possibly satirical) homage to *Hamlet* is evident[376]. Now, the picture is not a miniature because it is called a "painted board". It is true that it could be small, but we have to remember that this play (which was quite successful)

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[376] For a discussion of skulls as props, see Andrew Sofer, *op. cit.* (2003): 89-116.

was first performed at the Fortune theatre by Prince Henry's Men. Although square in structure, unlike the other public playhouses which were circular, it is improbable that the audience did not get to look at the picture because the apron stage thrust into the middle of the square. Moreover, in order to be contrasted with the skull, the portrait should not be too small. Thus, the picture had to bear a general likeness to the actor playing Infelice, whom we see in various scenes.

Hippolito's discourse on "adulterate complexion" needs to be discussed. In play after play in which a picture is staged, one encounters *ad nauseam* the theme of painting as adulteration and corruption. It should be borne in mind, though, that the painted surface of the picture was as painted as the boy player personating Infelice. The picture is the painting of a painting. Indeed, sometimes the same ingredients were used for face painting and portrait painting[377]. Thus, the players asked the spectators to despise counterfeit by using counterfeit. This is foregrounded in the play by juxtaposing this scene with a previous one, Scene 6, in which the prostitute Bellafront puts on make-up in her apartment. Her servant, Roger, mimics her, as the stage direction reads: "he pulls out of his pocket a vial with colour in it, and two boxes, one with white, another red, painting […] he rubs his cheek with the colours" (S.D.). When Bellafront puts on make-up, we have to imagine a boy in female dress with his face already whitened by paint who puts on more painting, red and white. The players asked the spectators to differentiate among different degrees of cosmeticisation, but the level of theatricality and that of portrait-painting cannot be so easily separated. When Hippolito remembers "all the roses grafted on her cheeks", he considers that a picture can imitate the proverbial red and white of the ideal woman's face, but does not remark that his Infelice will always already be a painted boy when impersonated.

A similar relatively large portrait was displayed in a tyrant play, *Periander*[378], which was performed and very well liked at St. John's College, Oxford in 1608. Periander is the despot of Corinth and a monster of iniquity. In his cruelty, he kills his own wife, the pregnant Melissa, and banishes his son Lycophron (and soon has him murdered).

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[377] Farah Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006): 192. This study has been of seminal importance to me.

[378] Dana F. Sutton (ed.), *Periander* (2015), at http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/periander/ (last accessed 3 October 2016).

Eugenia, Periander's daughter, fears for her brother's fate and tells one of the courtiers (IV.v) to provide a picture of him:

> Philarches, when you come to Corcyra
> Get me my brothers picture truly drawne.
> Let it be your first token, I'le requite it.
> Meanwhile in the next gallery hangs Melissa's.
> There Ile go gaze till it have drawne some teares
> For Lycophron, while to our country gods
> I kneele for all your safeties. (*Exit.*)

In a following scene (IV.vii), Eugenia enters holding Melissa's picture in one hand and a mirror in the other. The portrait must have been sizable since it generally "hangs" in the gallery, as we have read. The girl is distraught and mourns the fact that she cannot equally cry for both her mother and Lycophron:

> Helpe, helpe, yea watry planets. I am spente,
> Teares flowe not fast enough for Lycophron.
> This picture has not powre enoughe to drawe
> Their vaporous matter highe enoughe for sighing.
> Me thinks I should have streame enoughe for both,
> Theis eyes beg from my brain to furnish them.
> But my suspiring heart prevents them both.
> Looke once again. Why howe I thanke yea both,
> They came togeather in divided drops.
> This is Melissa's picture, very like her,
> Yet now methinks 'tis Lycophrons, compare them.
> This glasse sais 'tis Melissa's, this glasse lies.
> 'Tis perfect Lycophron. Yet hee's not like me.
> I was most like my mother, it's true to mee.
> Again – still Lycophron. Bet it so. Kind fancy,
> Retaine no other objects but these two.

She beholds Melissa's picture and sees Lycophron's features both in her own and Melissa's faces by comparing it with the image reflected in the mirror. The mirror reflects Eugenia as well as Melissa's portrait. On stage, the effect could be striking: all three characters were played by boys, which would interrogate the social constructs regarding gender. The play also explores the theme of incest: Periander's mother falls in love with her son and goes to bed with him. This interlinking of passions can find a counterpart in the mirror's confusing reflection of painted boys and women's paintings.

Here ends the first part of the dissertation. We have investigated how portraits were situated within the material and visual culture of the period, their types and uses in drama, and how they negotiated cultural issues involving the relationship between the theatre and painting, gender portrayal, and class. Ideally, we now have all the necessary critical instruments to embark on a close reading of those play-texts which made the most of the potentialities of these props.

II. Case Studies: Portraits in Action

II.1 "Closet Scenes": The Case of *Hamlet*'s First Quarto (1603)

> Consider in thy mind, Pierre, whether we two paintings may not make only one.
> – Henry Melville, *Pierre: Or, The Ambiguities*, 1852

> Yes, I've seen those pictures, thank you very much.
> – Margaret Atwood, *Gertrude Talks Back*, 1992

Closets seem to have had an uncannily attractive force throughout Shakespearean stage history and textual studies. Few would still agree with S. T. Coleridge's view that Shakespeare could not abide the bareness of the Elizabethan playhouse and that he "found the stage as near as possible a closet, and in the closet only could it be fully and completely enjoyed"[1]. Indeed, Shakespeare's own closet has always been a coveted, legendary place: "How many eyes have strained themselves into a present impossibility of seeing at some loophole of Shakespeare's closet!"[2] One theory on the publication of the Quarto *Lear* would have us imagine that "[t]he actors playing Goneril and Regan [...] hastily assembled and dictated the text from papers filched out of Shakespeare's closet"[3]. Queer readings of Shakespeare's works, spurred by E. K. Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet*, have interrogated the texts in new ways, carrying out biographical investigations of Shakespeare's gender and subtler interpretations of the complex networks of desire in the English Renaissance. Thus, one can read of 1609 as the year in which the *Sonnets* "moved from the private milieu of Shakespeare's closet to the public world of the bookseller's stall"[4], or even leaf through the pages of a book entitled *Post-Closet Masculinities in Early Modern England*[5]. Alternatively, the debate has raged for many decades over the topic of Shakespeare as a closet Catholic. Finally, many eminent figures have called

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[1] Quoted in Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, *Stage Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 9.

[2] James Russell Lowell, quoted in John L. Idol and Buford Jones (eds), *Nathaniel Hawthorne: The Contemporary Reviews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 317.

[3] John Kerrigan, *On Shakespeare and Early Modern Literature: Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 17.

[4] Paul Hammond, *Figuring Sex Between Men from Shakespeare to Rochester* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002): 84.

[5] By A.W. Barnes (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2009).

Shakespeare their "closet companion", from Charles I, as attested by Milton, to R. W. Emerson, and many, many others.

From closets, both texts and pictures related to Shakespeare have emerged. In May 2001, a journalist[6] sparked the interest of many when she stated that a portrait of Shakespeare painted from life hung in the closet of a retired engineer in southern Ontario: the Sanders Portrait. While this attribution is still debated, the organisers of a 2013 conference were particularly felicitous in their choice of name by quoting Hamlet's speech in the closet scene: "Look Here Upon This Picture: A Symposium on the Sanders Portrait of Shakespeare". More importantly for *Hamlet* studies, in 1823, Sir Henry Bunbury discovered in the closet of his manor house at Barton what was thought to be the only copy of the First Quarto of *Hamlet* extant. Luckily integrated with the one found in Dublin in 1856, the discovery of this quarto was an immense find for all interested in the play, but has also remained an enigma and a challenge. Indeed, the vehement tones used by the detractors of this new *Hamlet* ("muddled and mangled", "mutilated", "corrupt", "degraded"[7]) indicate in some almost the desire that that English nobleman had gone bunburying like his Wildean namesake instead of prying into his closet.

The closet scene in *Hamlet* has been assailed and sifted through for centuries by spectators and critics in search of new details. According to Catherine Richardson, this is because:

> unlocated or public scenes create the reality effect of Gertrude's closet. To an extent, *Hamlet* is about a desire to penetrate beneath the surface in order to get to the inner truths of both this life and the next, and the room represented in 3.4 is central to that endeavour. This scene is the closest the play gets to those 'things which pass show', because of the painful honesty its space permits[8].

This longing to look into Shakespeare's closet and into the closet scene of *Hamlet*, the play with which this playwright has been most personally associated, is of interest because the closet scene itself dramatises and enacts a desire for, as well as a fear of,

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[6] As later recounted in Stephanie Nolen, *Shakespeare's Face* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002).

[7] These adjectives are all reported in the Introduction of Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey (eds), *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmark* (Maryland: Barnes and Noble Books, 1992): 18. For a recent take on the First Quarto, see Zachary Lesser, *Hamlet After Q1*: *An Uncanny History of the Shakespearean Text* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).

[8] Catherine Richardson, *Shakespeare and Material Culture* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011): 127.

looking, perceiving, and knowing. This situation reaches one of its climaxes in Hamlet's comparison of the two pictures of his father and his uncle.

The aim of this chapter is to offer a close reading of this speech as presented in the First Quarto of *Hamlet* (1603), which shows peculiar differences from the "canonical" version of the Second Quarto (1604-05) and the First Folio (1623). In order to do so, it is necessary to comprehend the wide gamut of social meanings with which pictures in early modern closets were endowed in terms of material culture and gender studies. If the theatregoer grants a degree of independence to the allegedly "weak" character of Gertred[9] in Q1, one starts to find complex networks of cultural negotiations even in this reputedly "debased" version of the play. I will try to ascertain how visuality has a different significance in the First Quarto and how this has a bearing on the general structure of the three *Hamlets*.

If one is expected to give an original reading of *Hamlet* or of the "closet scene", the reaction may indeed cause one's "particular hair to stand on end, / Like quills upon the fearful porpentine" (I.v 19-20)[10]. Still, the "hermeneutical inexhaustibility"[11] of *Hamlet* has endured across time and space, and the play has not finished interrogating us yet.

First Steps Into the Closet and Q1

Hamlet has a double centre: the play-within-the-play and the closet scene. While the staging of *The Mousetrap*, set as it is in the very middle of the tragedy, interpellates our conceptions of reality and (artistic, psychological, social, political) representation, the closet scene powerfully concentrates the themes that flicker and hover around the entire play, in the tumultuous multiplicity of issues incessantly posed, toyed with, or explored. Speculative, pathetic, and theatrical at its utmost, this scene is decisive for the tragic outcome of the play; it is both violent and intimate, physically frenzied and

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[9] In order to mark the difference between the queen character in Q1 from the one in Q2 and F, I will retain the spelling found there throughout the chapter. For the sake of clarity, I will not change the spelling of the other characters' names (except for Corambis / Polonius), and I will not differentiate Q2's Gertrard from F's Gertrude.

[10] Q1 and Q2/F references are to Neil Taylor and Anne Thompson's two-volume edition (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2006). Unless otherwise stated, all references to other Shakespearean plays and poems are to the *Complete Works* (edited by Gary Taylor and Stanley Wells, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).

[11] See Angela Locatelli, "*Hamlet*: Indecisione/Indecidibilità ovvero i casi dell'interpretazione", in Mariangela Tempera (ed.), *Amleto: Dal Testo alla Scena* (Bologna: CLUEB, 1990): 43-50.

intellectually profound. The minutest detail has been studied, pored over, and scrutinised by generations of theatregoers, actors, and scholars; it has been called "the greatest scene in *Hamlet*, the greatest of Shakespeare's plays"[12]. Psychoanalytic criticism was pre-eminent in the last century: Freud[13] found here the confirmation of his theory of the Oedipus complex, while Lacan[14] argued for the manifestation of the desire of the (m)other. Nonetheless, this scene also asks questions about semiotics[15], morality, theology, spying and repressive regimes, cognition, and epistemology.

It is true that the autonomy of III.iv, which is now universally known as the "closet scene", can be questioned. It is set between two scenes, the action of which it seems to immediately precede and follow, and the later division into acts and scenes must not render us oblivious to the possibility that Shakespeare conceived of it as a single episode. Theatregoers have just seen Claudius first planning to despatch Hamlet to England, then, trying in vain to pray after hearing that the prince has been summoned into the queen's closet. We witness Hamlet's decision not to kill him, and then the scene in the closet almost begins *ex abrupto*. Importantly, it ends differently according to which edition of the play one is following. In Q1, it goes on: Hamlet exits dragging Polonius' body, while the queen remains onstage and is confronted by the king, to whom she relates what has happened. The Folio also seems to indicate, though more ambiguously, such a continuation, whereas Q2 splits this scene in two and marks the beginning of a new act. However, the progressive motion of III.iv does not necessarily mean that it cannot be analysed separately, since its significance cannot be overstated.

On the question of these different lengths, the late Lisa Jardine has provided one of the most insightful readings of the scene. She focuses on the thorny issue of Gertrude's guilt, and lays bare the male-centredness of much old and new criticism on this question. First and foremost, T. S. Eliot resolved that the play is an aesthetic failure since Hamlet's disgust towards his mother (or, to use Bradley's terms, towards

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[12] John Kerrigan, Hamlet'*s Perfection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994): 58.

[13] See Ernest Jones, *Hamlet and Oedipus* (New York: Norton, 1976 [1949]).

[14] Jacques Lacan, "Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in *Hamlet*", in Shoshana Felman, *Literature and Psychoanalysis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1982): 11-52.

[15] See Angela Locatelli, "Un messaggio per Amleto: Una lettura del dramma in prospettiva semiologica" in id., *L'Eloquenza e gli Incantesimi: Interpretazioni shakespeariane* (Milan: Guerini e Associati, 1988): 17-26.

her "coarse sensuality"[16]) is so excessive that Gertrude "is not an adequate equivalent for it"[17], thus implicitly equating aesthetic issues with a jaundiced idea of debased femininity (*Hamlet* / Hamlet as the "Mona Lisa of Literature"). But, as Jardine signals,

> Every modern edition of *Hamlet* (including the one Eliot was using) has – literally – too much text in the scene between Hamlet and Gertrude: there is textual excess even before the critic sets to work on it. And lo and behold, what an outstandingly alert and sensitive reader like Eliot detected in the scene is excessive emotion – too much emotionally going on in the text to be sustained by the plot structure[18].

As many as 27 lines of the scene in Q2 do not occur in the Folio. What is more, as Jardine aptly adds in a footnote: "Q1 contains a further, almost entirely distinct version of the most emotionally complex component in this scene, the 'Look here upon this picture' speech"[19]. Indeed, whereas the scene in Q2 is 215 lines long, the corresponding scene in Q1 has merely 125 lines (also comprising 22 lines which correspond to IV.i in Q2 and the Folio). It is exactly this version which I would like to read closely, an exercise which begs the question of why one should pay attention to the speech of a supposedly corrupted version of the play[20].

I consider the Q1 version as a valid text in its own right. It would be foolhardy to cursorily touch on the issue of the three different versions of *Hamlet*. The nature of the First Quarto has not been satisfactorily accounted for by any scholar so far. In the spectrum of hypotheses that runs from Shakespeare's first draft to an adaptation of a memorial reconstruction done by actors/rival playwrights/spectators, I position myself towards the former end, and I examine the first quarto as a "generative", rather than as a "degenerated" text, in Alessandro Serpieri's words[21]. Recent studies[22] have demonstrated that the First Quarto has closer links with its sources (Belleforest's

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[16] A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on* Hamlet, Othello*, King Lear*, Macbeth (London: Macmillan, 1956): 120.

[17] T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays, New Edition* (New York: Harcourt, 1950): 25. For a riposte, see Jacqueline Rose*, "Hamlet*: The Mona Lisa of Literature", *Critical Quarterly* 28 (1986): 35–49.

[18] Lisa Jardine, *Reading Shakespeare Historically* (London: Routledge, 1996): 155.

[19] Ibid.: 200, n. 17.

[20] For some scholars, indeed, "[t]o prefer Q1 over Q2 would be to demonstrate the same base perversity of taste that has caused Gertrude to prefer loathsome Claudius over fidelity to the memory of King Hamlet" (Emma Smith, *Shakespeare's Tragedies: A Guide to Criticism*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004: 311.

[21] Alessandro Serpieri, "Is *Hamlet* Q1 a generative or a degenerate text*?", Textus* IX (1996): 461–84.

[22] See Laurie Johnson, *The Tain of* Hamlet (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing: 2013), and Margrethe Jolly, *The First Two Quartos of* Hamlet: *A New View of the Origins and Relationship of the Texts* (Jefferson: MacFarland and Company, 2014).

story) than the Second Quarto, which would mean that it was written first[23]. It has its defects in versification and spelling (from Gonzago being murdered in Guiana instead of Vienna[24], to the glow-worm showing "the Martin to be near" V.68, instead of the matin), but I will try to demonstrate that this version of the speech, like the overall play-text, shows "a surprising coherence and a scenic as well as semantic coherence"[25]. The plurality of texts

> should not […] deter us in locating the emotional crux of the encounter between Gertrude and Hamlet here, in this scene. For we might well want to argue that it is precisely because the exchanges between them carry such a heavy emotional freight that the dramatist worked over and reworked them in successive stagings, or textual renderings of the play[26].

Moreover, Q1 provides us with a different angle to view the closet scene: a close reading of the "two pictures" speech can have a defamiliarising function which can prove particularly desirable.

Staging the Two Pictures

"When Hamlet compares the two pictures of Gertrude's first and second husband, who wants to see the pictures?"[27], asked Charles Lamb. He preferred the peaceful reading of Shakespeare's sublime poetry without being distracted by "[t]his shewing of everything [which] levels all things: it makes tricks, bows, and curtseys, of importance"[28]. Indeed, many productions cut the "Look here upon this picture and on this" speech (also, for example, Almereyda's 2000 film adaptation), or do not seem particularly interested in these two props.

Conversely, much ink has been spilled over the question of the size of the pictures in the closet scene. The theatre history of these props has been carefully analysed by

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[23] I regard this explanation as more practical and plausible than Q1 being a "Zielforming" of Q2/F (Lene B. Petersen, *Shakespeare's Errant Texts*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
[24] Patricia Parker, however, defends this location ("Murder in Guyana", *Shakespeare Studies*, Vol. 28, 2000: 169-174).
[25] Alessandro Serpieri, "The Translator as Editor: The Quartos of *Hamlet*", in A. J. Hoenselaars (ed.), *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen, 2004): 176.
[26] Lisa Jardine, *op. cit.* (1996): 155.
[27] Charles Lamb, *Essays of Elia* (Paris: Baudry, 1835): 364.
[28] Ibid.

Frank Nicholas Clary[29]. It is very difficult to garner this type of information from the three text versions of *Hamlet*. The pictures are described as "the counterfeit presentment of two brothers" (III.iv 52), which, for some scholars[30], means that they are of the same size. We hear that sycophants now are rushing to buy Claudius' "picture in little" (II.ii 303 Q2/F) for the most exorbitant prices, which would indicate courtly miniature limning, while Q1 only mentions "his picture" (VII.277). On the other hand, Old Hamlet's picture shows, according to his son's more-than-biased words, "A station like the herald Mercury / New-lighted on a heaven kissing hill" (56) – which, for Taylor and Thompson, would indicate that it is "a full-length portrait". Bullough notes that a passage in *The Hystorie of Hamblet* (Belleforest's story, translated into English in 1608) might have influenced the staged pictures in the play: the queen is said to lament "her lawfull spouse[…] inwardly […] when she beheld the lively image and portraiture of his vertue and great wisedome in her childe, representing his fathers haughtie and valiant heart"[31]. Alternatively, this translation might have been inspired by direct experience of Shakespeare's play, since Belleforest only writes of "*la vive image*" of the dead king. The frontispiece of William Sampson's *The Vow Breaker* (published in 1636) shows an episode of that play clearly inspired by *Hamlet*'s closet scene; here, a character kneels in front of a half-length picture of his dead son. I do not think that Wassersug's opinion is correct in this case, when, trying to support her theory that big pictures were very rarely used onstage, she conjectures that "[t]he portrait of Young Bateman is […] inflated, depicted here as larger than it would have been on stage, in order to reveal its value within the story"[32].

In *Der Bestrafte Brudermord*, the first German adaptation of *Hamlet* (supposedly derived from Q1), we hear the prince exclaim: "But look, there in that gallery hangs the counterfeit resemblance of your first husband, and there hangs the counterfeit of

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[29] Frank Nicholas Clary, "Pictures in the Closet: Properties and Stage Business in *Hamlet* 3.4", in Hardin L. Aasand (ed.), *Stage Directions in* Hamlet*: New Essays and New Directions* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003): 170-88.

[30] For instance, Jerry Brotton, "Ways of Seeing *Hamlet*", in Arthur F. Kinney (ed.), Hamlet*: Critical Essays* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002): 167.

[31] Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare: Major tragedies:* Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth (New York: Routledge and Paul, 1973): 98, n. 3.

[32] Yolana Wassersug, *'My picture I enjoin thee to keep'*: *The Function of Portraits in English Drama, 1558-1642* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2015): 212. On this illustration, see Chapter II.4.

your present one"[33]. This would indicate large, hanging portraits (but we do not know how and if this was staged). Whereas Nicholas Rowe's 1709 edition of Shakespeare's works includes a famous illustration with such half-length pictures, later productions seem to have preferred miniatures. William Macready initiated a fashion for big portraits in the nineteenth century, but a combination of miniatures and half-length pictures was often staged within the same production. Some find it absurd that Hamlet would be wearing a miniature of his uncle, thus theatregoers could sometimes see him tearing one from his mother's neck, or even trampling or spitting on it. Others showed the unveiling of one or both portraits hidden behind a curtain. A Gothic element was also introduced in the productions of the nineteenth and in the early decades of the twentieth century: the haunted portrait, with the Ghost emerging from it or a picture coming to life. Imaginary portraits were also used: Henry Irving gestured towards the audience as if the portraits hung on the fourth wall.

Harold Jenkins has offered the most influential commentary on the type of pictures used. According to him, they must have been miniatures: there is "too much of taking portraits out of bosoms, passing them from hand to hand, and holding them while apostrophising or discussing them for there to be any reasonable doubt of the kind of stage-business called for in *Hamlet*"[34]. He thinks that Hamlet alone brings two miniature portraits into Gertrude's closet.

Every staging and every reader has had to come up with a preferred solution. Sometimes these pictures have exercised a powerful influence on the actors themselves: for instance, Edwin Booth played Hamlet wearing a miniature of his own father and stated that he could hear him in the voice of the actor playing the Ghost[35].

To recapitulate, the exact size of the pictures in the scene cannot be ascertained from the texts and still remains uncertain. What I would emphasise is that we should not be so dismissive about the playing company's need to capture the attention of the audience. Why should we entertain the idea that Hamlet might simply "mime a miniature, as an object which fits into the palm of the hand"[36]? How sure are those

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[33] Geoffrey Bullough, *op. cit.* (1973): 145.
[34] Harold Jenkins (ed.), *Hamlet* (London: Methuen, 1982): LN 517.
[35] See Arthur F. Kinney, *op. cit.* (2002): 50.
[36] Catherine Richardson, *op. cit.* (2011): 119-20. For a similar view, see Alison Thorne, *Vision and Rhetoric in Shakespeare: Looking through Language* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave, 2000): 130.

critics who state that the audience could not possibly see the pictures brought onstage? The willingness to extol the marvels of Hamlet's "mind's eye" without paying attention to their theatrical performance seems still touched by Romantic attitudes towards Shakespeare's theatre of words.

"The objects of the early modern stage were often intended not merely to catch, but to overwhelm the eye by means of their real or apparent costliness, motion, and capacity to surprise"[37]. If indeed miniatures were used, this does not necessarily mean that they were not visible. Those who have visited the reconstructed Globe in Southwark can attest that even the minutest prop, such as a jewel, can be seen from the furthest end of the pit, and one should bear in mind that the diameter of the playhouse is larger than the original one. Spectators would be naturally curious to see what Hamlet showed his mother and would want to assess how much his rhapsody matched with the quality of the prop.

To try and understand what types of pictures early audiences might have seen is not futile, because, as Andrew Sofer has argued, "the prop's impact is mediated both by the gestures of the individual actor who handles the object, and by the horizon of interpretation available to historically situated spectators at a given time"[38].

To contextualise the display of pictures in the early modern closet can indeed be a fruitful operation. For instance, we have forgotten that in Elizabethan times, people were instructed not to expose melancholiacs to "paynted clothes, nor paynted walls, nor pyctures of man nor woman or foule or beest: for suche thynges maketh them full of fantasyes"[39]. "Diverse shapes of faces and semblaunt of painting shall not be shewed to him, lest he be tarred with woodnesse [i.e. madness]"[40]. In his "antic disposition" (I.v 170), we see Hamlet fixing his eyes on the two pictures: he may remind original theatregoers of the dangers of the image-making faculty when unbridled.

One needs to end here with hypotheses before briefly entering into the realm of conjecture, which would include the theory that the theatregoers of some

[37] Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, *op. cit.* (2002): 4.
[38] Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2003): 61.
[39] Quoted in Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye. Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 67.
[40] Stephen Bateman, *Batman upon Bartholomew* (London: 1582): 88r.

performances of this play could see a portrait of William Shakespeare himself at centre stage. That Shakespeare played the Ghost in *Hamlet* is one of the most ancient theatrical traditions concerning him. Whole essays have been devoted to this intriguing aspect of the play, first and foremost Freudian and Bloomian theories of a father mourning his dead son, Hamnet. One biographer has linked the picture in the closet scene to that alluded to in the 1599 university play *The Return from Parnassus*, in which a foolish young man as well as the first Bardolater, Gullio, exclaims: "I'll have his picture in my study at the court" (ll. 1054-55). René Weis comments:

> The *Parnassus* picture of Shakespeare may well be the one in the First Folio that seems to show Shakespeare in his mid- to late thirties, as he was in 1600. Hamlet's invitation to his mother, 'Look here upon this picture, and on this, / The counterfeit presentment of two brothers', may similarly be inspired by a picture of Shakespeare that had been drawn or painted around this time, if not by the same image to which Gullio refers. If Shakespeare played Hamlet's father's ghost, the subject of one of the two pictures, that would have rendered the lines especially poignant[41].

That Shakespeare wrote such an idolised description of his own features, however, is open to debate.

What is important is that the pictures used in this scene proved very influential[42] for Jacobean and Caroline drama. If (and it is a big question) Shakespeare's portrait was actually brought onstage in one of his plays, his example was quickly followed by John Marston, who in *Antonio and Mellida*[43] has a character display his picture (punning on the dramatist's age, we see a fool misunderstanding the meaning of the words inscribed, *Etatis suae 24*). Even earlier, in *Satiromastix*, Ben Jonson is satirised by having his *alter ego*, Horace, shown two pictures brought onstage "under a cloak"[44]: one is his (that is, Jonson's) portrait, with a face like "the cover of a warming-pan" (V.ii 259), the other is a likeness of the Roman poet. Later on, Fletcher used the two pictures device in a scene of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, a play co-authored

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[41] René Weiss, *Shakespeare Unbound: Decoding a Hidden Life* (New York: Henry Holt, 2013): 289.

[42] The suggestion made by Rebecca Olson (*Arras Hanging: The Textile that Determined Early Modern Literature and Drama*, Lanham and Plymouth: University of Delaware Press, 2013) that the pictures in the closet scene were painted on an arras is discredited simply by this thread of adaptations.

[43] The dates of *Hamlet*, *Satiromastix*, and *Antonio and Mellida* are very close to each other. The staged pictures in *Hamlet* could actually imitate the scenes in these two plays, rather than vice versa, which all the same would indicate the popularity of this stage usage.

[44] See Fredson Bowers ("The Pictures in *Hamlet* III.iv. A Possible Contemporary Reference", *SQ*, Vol. 3, no. 3, 1952: 281): "If so, the bringing in of the pictures under the boy's coat shows that portraits of some size were exhibited. In turn, this would seem to be a comic exaggeration of a scene in *Hamlet* in which miniatures were carried rather than fixed portraits hung on the walls of the inner study or chamber."

by Shakespeare. William Sampson appropriated and adapted this convention (which I regard as a theatregram) in his *The Vow Breaker* (published in 1636, see II.4). Lastly, one can mention William Heminge's (published in 1653), a late revenge play humorously dubbed "a Frankenstein monster"[45] for its plagiarism (however hard its modern editor, Carol A. Morley has strived to underplay its derivativeness). *The Fatal Contract* amplifies as well as parodies the sensationalism of the scene which is here duplicated. First we see Queen Fredigond stabbing what must have been a big, full-length picture described to have been "drawn by an Italian" (I.ii 17). It represents the murder of her brother and the ensuing bloody massacre ("Here's one bereft of hands, and this of tongue" [33], an infant mutilated, blinded old men, and so on): she keeps it "to whet [her] anger" (18). Later a second picture, a miniature, becomes the cause of a character's banishment (III.iii), an episode that is pitted against a gory plot with multiple ghosts and adulteries.

Pictures in the Early Modern Gentlewoman's Closet

First of all, one needs to state that, astoundingly enough, in Q1 there is no "closet scene", in the sense that the queen's closet is never mentioned: the locale is never specified. The Second Quarto and the Folio are extremely careful in denoting the place of the action: Rosencrantz tells the prince that his mother is waiting for him "in her closet" (III.ii 322-23); Polonius tells Claudius that Hamlet is "going to his mother's closet" (III.iii 27), and the King in turn communicates to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that Hamlet has dragged Polonius' body somewhere "from his mother's closet" (IV.i 35). In a recent article[46], Lena Cowen Orlin posits the intriguing hypothesis that in the First Quarto there is a "gallery scene", rather than a closet scene. Hamlet reveals that the corpse can be smelt in "the lobby" (XI.143): Orlin notices that this was a synonym for gallery and she suggests that the setting may refer to the then usual architectural arrangement of "gallery-and-closet plan". The First Quarto does not feature the other closet scene that takes place off stage either: the encounter with

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[45] David L. Frost, quoted in Carol A. Morley (ed.), *The Plays and Poems of William Heminge* (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006): 22.

[46] Lena Cowen Orlin, "Gertrude's Gallery", in Russ McDonald, Nicholas D. Nace, and Travis D. Williams (eds), *Shakespeare Up Close*: *Reading Early Modern Texts* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2012): 291-99.

Hamlet described by Ophelia is not set in her "closet" (Q2, II.i 74) but "in the gallery" (VI. 42). "The gallery" (VII.104) is also where the "To be or not be" soliloquy is recited.

A consequence of this, as Orlin points out, is that the pictures featured in the scene may not have been necessarily miniatures. She concludes:

> The most likely of the possible effects of this chain of associations is that the scene would have been thought to take place in rooms of state, not domestic and private ones, and that it may have opened with the queen genuflecting as if in prayer, matching her husband's pose in a matching space. Finally, if a credible reading emerges from this reading of *Hamlet*, it would go also to suggest an undiscovered coherence in Shakespeare's spatial imagination[47].

I do not think that, if this suggestion proved true, the locale would only be public: instead, this hypothesis is attractive precisely because it signals an interconnection between public and private in this scene, allowing both an intimate setting and the irruption of a public dimension into it. It also offers a way to visualise the progressive, muscular pace of the scene in Q1. An important element that Orlin does not mention is that Hamlet locks the door of the room: "I'll tell you, but first we'll make all safe" (11.7). Moreover, editors of Q1 generally emend the stage direction "*exit Cor.*" [Corambis, i.e. Polonius in Q1] because, according to Taylor and Thompson, it "could be misleading". However, as they note, this may "imply that the *arras* was a curtained stage door". This would allow the setting to regain its enclosed intimacy. The "culturally denser" logic of Orlin's reading is very interesting, and we have ample proof that both galleries *and* closets could be places to hang full- and half-length pictures.

Thanks to previous scholarship[48], we have come to know more about the nature of the early modern English closet. We now know, for instance, that a closet did indeed have certain traits of a bedchamber (Freudian readings have vastly profited from this association), but that it could also have hugely varied pragmatic functions: a prayer closet, a study, a jewel house, a parlour, or even a pharmaceutical closet, a counting

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[47] Ibid.: 299.
[48] See especially Lena Cowen Orlin, "Gertrude's Closet", *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, Vol. 134, 1998: 44-67; Alan Stewart, "The Early Modern Closet Discovered", *Representations*, no. 50, Spring 1995: 76-100; Zachary Lesser, *op. cit.* (2015): *passim*, but esp. 114-156.

house, a storehouse, a private pantry. "To enter the early modern closet is to enter a maze of multiple significations"[49]. What characterised a closet was basically its being "closed": as Angel Day put it, the closet was "the most secret place in the house appropriate unto our owne private studies"[50].

One essay that has challenged our views on the pictures in the closet scene is Jerry Brotton's "Ways of Seeing *Hamlet*". Although he strangely refers to the closet of Archduchess Margaret of Austria (d. 1530), he disputes Harold Jenkins' aforementioned critical note:

> Jenkins also refuses any possibility of reading for Gertrude's proactive attempt to signal her commemoration of one husband, and loyal obedience to another, however uneasy this scenario may have been. In the process Hamlet is seen as the dynamic active agent in the exchange, Gertrude as a passive, guilty figure. On the contrary, I would argue for providing Gertrude with a degree of agency in the artistic artifacts that line her walls[51].

Brotton's attempt is valuable, not because it tries at all costs to interpret Gertrude in a positive way, but because it takes into account Elizabethan attitudes towards (noble) widows, their remarriage, and their role as art patrons. What I propose is to apply this reading also to the queen of Q1, because I do not believe, as Kehler does, that: "Unlike Gertrard/Gertrude of Q2 and F1, Gertred could never be construed as a conscious site of resistance to social expectations. She is not self-willed; she makes no suggestions; and she is quick to fall in with the plans of others"[52]. If Orlin is right in saying that in Q1 we see a scene set in the queen's gallery, this could call the spectators' attention to her strategic display of the pictures of her husbands.

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[49] Lena Cowen Orlin, *op. cit.* (1988): 65.
[50] Angel Day, *English Secretary* (London: 1586): 103.
[51] Jerry Brotton, *op. cit.* (2002): 168.
[52] Dorothea Kehler, "The First Quarto of *Hamlet*: Reforming Widow Gertred", *SQ*, Vol. 46, no. 4, 1996: 405.

Illustration no. 3

I would like to begin my discussion of early modern widows' relation to the portraits of their husbands with an illustration (see no. 3) from Richard Brathwaite's *The Complete Gentlewoman* (London, 1631). In a lateral box of the frontispiece, we can see the picture of how a virtuous wife should behave in her judgement of her husband. The woman is seated and holds a miniature in one of her hands, while she draws the curtain to unveil a full-length portrait with the other. As one can read in a speech scroll, she is saying that "Fancy admits no change of Choice". This didactic illustration has been interpreted as follows: it "attempts to make clear that choice and opportunity, especially concerning another man, whether he be a second husband or a

new lover, are undesirable and are best avoided"[53]. This was a very popular point of view, especially as far as the remarriage of widows was concerned, that is, the fairly independent women who could disrupt the fixed roles of womanhood. In the Renaissance, Catholic authors had often emphasised the dangers of women remarrying. Vives, in an influential book dedicated to Catharine of Aragon, stated that "the pious widow should consider that her husband has not been altogether taken away from her, but that he is still alive with the life of the soul, which is the true and real life, and also in her constant remembrance of him"[54]. This necessity of remembrance stimulated widows to display the portrait of their deceased spouse, since:

> It prolongs for many years the life of one who dies, since his painted likeness remains; it consoles the widow, who sees the portrait of her dead husband daily before her and the orphan children, when they grow up, are glad to have the presence and likeness of their father and are afraid to shame him[55].

The attitude of the reformed Church towards widows' relations to their deceased husbands remained ambiguous. Companionate marriage had introduced a very moderate model of conjugal equality and Protestants generally perceived the desire of celibacy as Popish. Rich widows as independent women could disturb the social hierarchy, and it is small wonder that the stereotype of the "lusty widow" became a stock character in early modern English drama.

What particularly interests us is the policing and regulation of early modern widows' scopic field. Treatises repeated Bernardino of Siena's medieval *dictum*: "bury your eyes, too, with him; keep them modestly cast down"[56]. Vives also maintained that a widow should always remember her deceased husband and admonished: "Let her place him as an observer and guardian not only of her external

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[53] Allison Mary Levy, "Good Grief: Widow Portraiture and Masculine Anxiety in Early Modern England", in Laurel Amtower and Dorothea Kehler (eds), *The Single Woman in Medieval and Early Modern England* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003): 156. For a different, but very valuable interpretation, see Elizabeth Honig, "In Memory: Lady Dacre and Pairing by Hans Eworth", in Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (eds), *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660* (London: Reaktion Books, 1990): 60-85.
[54] Juan Luis Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman*, edited by Charles Fantazzi (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000): 309.
[55] Francisco de Holanda, *Dialogues on Painting / Quatro dialogos da pintura antiga* (London: Humphrey Milford, transl. by Aubrey F.G. Bell, 1928): 25.
[56] Allison Mary Levy, *Re-Membering Masculinity in Early Modern Florence. Widowed Bodies, Mourning and Portraiture* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2006): 67.

actions [...] he will become the guardian of her conscience as well"[57]. Thus, a widow should be doubly careful with her sight and imagination: modestly, she should not look around herself; prudently, she should always imagine her dead spouse watching her. Her face was constantly scrutinised, as a saying demonstrates: "the rich widow weeps with one eye and casts glances with the other"[58] (compare Claudius' "with one auspicious, and one dropping eye" I.ii 11). Jeremy Taylor warned widows that "God hath now [...] bound up their eyes": the virtuous widow "must restrain her memory and her fancy"[59].

On the contrary, Lady Dacre (see Illustration no. 4) gives us a defiant look in the portrait that Hans Eworth painted for her in 1558. Her seated posture is stern and confident, while she gazes in the same direction as her first husband, framed in a picture behind her chair, creating a fine *mise-en-abyme* effect. He had been executed in 1541 on Henry VIII's orders for the murder of a gamekeeper. On the accession of Elizabeth I, Lady Dacre's family was restored with the title of baron and she probably commissioned the portrait in view of this. Although she had married two other men in the meantime, she had these episodes in her life erased from the picture for the sake of political vindication.

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[57] Juan Luis Vives, *op. cit*. (2000): 310.
[58] Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950): 722a, W340.
[59] Jeremy Taylor, "Rules", in *The Whole Works* (12 vols., London: 1848), Vol. 3: 62.

Illustration no. 4

Whereas widow portraiture is a recognised genre in art history, its counterpart, that is, pictures commissioned by widows of their deceased husbands, has only recently received critical attention. We do not know if and how women who remarried kept the portraits of their deceased spouses in early modern England and continental Europe. We possess very scant information. For example, we know of one case in the Netherlands:

> When Lamsins remarried after his [her husband's] death in 1529, the portrait of her first husband, his patron saint St John the Baptist and *blason* were painted over with those of her second husband Christiaens, city councillor and orator of the deanery in Bruges, including his patron saint Joachim […] This is all the more unusual because

contemporary triptychs represented re-marriages for men by depicting both female partners[60].

Much later, in 1646, Lady Anne Clifford also commissioned a magnificent triptych (see Illustration no. 5) which shows her closet littered with blazons and small pictures of her family members, her two husbands (in the third panel on the right, "almost as trophies of her past"[61]), and of herself at different ages.

Illustration no. 5

[60] Susan Broomhall and Jennifer Spinks, *Early Modern Women in the Low Countries: Feminizing Sources and Interpretations of the Past* (Ashcroft and Burlington: Ashgate, 2013): 42.
[61] Elspeth Graham et al. (eds), *Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth-Century Women* (London: Routledge, 1989): 33.

Some pictures that sustained the memory of the dead "were small enough to carry on the person (in a bag or pocket); others were intended for intimate, domestic contemplation"[62]. We know, for instance, that the wife of the dramatist John Marston bequeathed in her will her "dear husband's picture"[63] to Master Henry Wally of Stationers' Hall. These pictures had indeed a transactional performativity which we have perhaps forgotten.

A woman looking at a picture of her dead husband is featured in Middleton's *The Puritan Widow* (1606). Coming from the funeral, she takes out the miniature and exclaims: "Dear copy of my husband, O let me kiss thee. / How like him is this model. This brief picture / Quickens my tears. My sorrows are renewed / At this fresh sight" (I.i 112-15). She vows never to remarry and also forces her daughters to do the same, but the city comedy thwarts this plan. In 1604, Middleton and Dekker had parodied *Hamlet*'s closet scene in *The Patient Man and the Honest Whore*. Hippolito believes that his betrothed, Infelice, has died and swears that every week on the day of her death, "I'll glue / Mine eyelids down, because they shall not gaze / On any female check. And being locked up / In my close chamber, there I'll meditate / On nothing but my Infelice's end, / Or on a dead man's skull draw out mine own" (I, 126-131). In Scene 10, we see him first studying Infelice's picture, and later preferring a skull, because "Death's the best painter" (87) since "This fellow draws life too" (90) and "The pictures which he makes are without colour" (91).

All these instances amount to precious clues to the interpretation of the queen's possession of the pictures. This contrasts with the traditional view, which denies her "any space of commemoration, however silent and discreet it may be, hanging on the walls of her closet"[64]. The examples that I have considered show that it was comprehensible for a woman to perform commemorative rites of her late and present husband, although this would mark the disturbance of Brathwaite's didactic picture. If

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[62] Nigel Llewellyn, *Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual C. 1500 – C. 1800* (London: Reaktion Books, 1991): 96.
[63] Arthur Henry Bullen (ed.) *The Works of John Marston* (London: J.C. Nimmo, 1887): Vol. 1: xvii. For Venetia Stanley's portrait, which had a similar function, see previous section (1.4.3).
[64] Jerry Brotton, *op. cit.* (2002): 168.

she had both portraits in her gallery / closet, this would emphasise "Hamlet's deeply partisan piece of art criticism"[65], and give his mother greater autonomy.

The problem that then arises is whether the queen in Q1 can be granted such social agency. Kehler's seminal article has warned critics who find Gertred more "sympathetic" because of her alleged innocence and her promise to help Hamlet in his revenge. Kehler tries to show that the queen's portrayal "validates the deeply rooted, lingering prejudice against remarrying widows"[66]. She finds Gertred as characterised "almost exclusively by meekness and silence" and "piety"[67]. However, a closer reading of Q1 shows us that her character is actually more prominent in Q1 than in Q2 and F. Not only is there a scene unique to Q1 where she conspires with Horatio to aid Hamlet in his revenge, but in the closet scene, her "contributions change from about 28 percent in Q1 to 22 percent in Q2"[68]. Jolly has pointed out that her role "is fractionally diminished, quite consistently, in Q2"[69]. Kehler herself had conceded that "the plot allows her repentance but denies her full integrity. The fact that, despite her passivity and blandness, Gertred contains traces of the ambiguity associated with Gertrard/Gertrude demonstrates that the reformed lusty widow is a slippery role"[70].

To recapitulate, in *Hamlet*'s First Quarto we see a more confident and assertive queen who may be performing her dual commemorative rites by juxtaposing the portraits of her two husbands. These two pictures acquire increased significance through the web of cultural interconnections which relate the strategic display of pictures in the private closet of early modern gentlewomen to the public policing of their gaze.

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Dorothea Kehler, *op. cit.* (1996): 399.

[67] Ibid., 404 and 405.

[68] Margrethe Jolly, *op. cit.,* 2014: 69.

[69] Ibid. Concerning a similar authorial alteration of female characters between "good" and "bad" quartos, Steven Urkowitz has recently discussed a consistent change in attitude of Lady Capulet, Juliet, and the Nurse from Q1, where they seem to behave supportively and cordially to one another, to Q2, where their relationship is more strained. See id., "Shakespeare's Consistent Revision of the Capulet Ladies in Q1 and Q2: 'Thats well said Nurse' into 'Hold take these keies'", presented at the international conference "'All Things changed to the contrary': Comic-Tragic Contiguities in the Verona Plays" in Verona, 22-24 June 2016, organised by Silvia Bigliazzi. In her own intervention, "Juliet's Comic-Tragic Soliloquies in Q1 and Q2", Bigliazzi also considers the different quality of Juliet's self-awareness in her relationship with Romeo in the two quartos.

[70] Dorothea Kehler, *op. cit.* (1996): 409.

Close Reading of the Speech

The scene opens with lines quite close to Q2 and F. There are two main differences: Corambis (Polonius) says he will "shroud [him]self behind the arras" (XI.2), a verb with a much stronger visual tone than to "silence" oneself[71] as in Q2/F, while Hamlet, as consistently throughout the First Quarto, is clearly a youngster of about eighteen years of age ("I hear young Hamlet coming", 1; "How now, boy?", 10). The verb Corambis uses, to shroud, introduces the semantic field of covering and screening one's identity, but is also an example of dramatic irony: the arras will become the shroud for his body.

After the murder (which only occupies 7 lines), Hamlet addresses his mother, who has repeated his sentence "How, kill a king?" (18):

> Ay, a king! Nay, sit you down and, ere you part,
> If you be made of penetrable stuff,
> I'll make your eyes look down into your heart,
> And see how horrid there and black it shows. (19-22)

Taylor and Thompson gloss "if you are capable of being penetrated (moved) by my appeal", but in this interpretation we lose the element of ocular assault. It is not Hamlet's words which penetrate, but Gertred's own eyes which are forced into this act of introspection, while in Q2/F it is the nature of her heart which is supposed to be still "made of penetrable stuff" (III.iv 34). Careful attention is to be given to the last line with its pounding rhythm: "And see how horrid there and black it shows". The impersonality of "it shows" is a masterstroke of Hamlet's rhetoric. It is not he who shows and exhibits the queen's guilt: he wants her to see that sin is a self-evident attribute of her heart.

On the other hand, in the same scene, there is another entity who is invoked and who is said to have the same power of absolute introspection. After Hamlet's plea to her that she assist him in his revenge, Gertred (so shockingly different from the ambiguous queen of Q2/F) consents:

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[71] Philip Edwards, a staunch believer in Q1 being a "much-debased version of Shakespeare's play", comments: "Is it conceivable that this is the one place where an authoritative change, occurring to Shakespeare when the play was in production, is preserved only in the corrupt first quarto?" (quoted in Taylor and Thompson's note).

>   Hamlet, I vow by that Majesty
> That knows our thoughts and *looks into our hearts*
> I will conceal, consent, and do my best –
> What stratagem soe'er thou shalt devise. (97-100, emphasis mine)

In 1 Samuel 16:7, we read that: "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord beholdeth the heart." The act of introspection which Hamlet requires of his mother cunningly appropriates exactly this divine perspective.

The queen asks: "Hamlet, what mean'st thou by these killing words?" (23). She calls for explanation, and her son gives it to her, but in a seemingly non-verbal way, even as he begins the speech: "Why, this I mean. See here behold this picture" (24). "This" can refer both to his comparison of the two pictures and to the first picture itself. The indexicality is reinforced by the torrent of demonstrative adverbs and adjectives, and verbs of perception: "see", "behold", "this", "here", "look", "now", "this same", "thus". The first line is indeed a catalogue of deictic gestures. In the Q2/F version, this overflow of indicators by which Hamlet directs his mother's (and, let us not forget, the spectators') gaze, is strengthened even more by the queen's initial question: "Ay me, what act / That roars so loud and thunders in the index?" (49-50). What follows is the prince's attempt at, literally, showing something which he perceives and wants the others to perceive as natural and manifest. Ejner J. Jensen has noted that the closet scene[72] is replete with adjectival and pronominal "this": "we witness a simple monosyllabic word acquiring resonance and power. By repeating the word so frequently and with such emphasis, Shakespeare generates maximum energy, reinforcing its pointing function with an aggressive sibilance"[73].

Hamlet's exorbitant ekphrasis in Q1 is quite different from the more "canonical" version. Let me quote it in full (the Q2 text follows):

>   Why this I mean. See here, behold this picture.
> It is the portraiture of your deceased husband.
> See here, a face to outface Mars himself;
> An eye at which his foes did tremble at;
> A front wherein all virtues are set down,
> For to adorn a king and gild his crown,
> Whose heart went hand in hand even with that vow,

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[72] Jensen is referring to the Q2/F version, but I think that the scene in Q1 also reflects this description.

[73] Ejner J. Jensen, "'This' and 'This' in Gertrude's Closet: An Issue in Annotation", *Hamlet Studies*, no. 19, 1997:100.

He made to you in marriage. And he is dead:
Murdered, damnably murdered. This was your
      husband.
Look you now,
Here is your husband with a face like Vulcan,
A look fit for a murder and a rape,
A dull dead hanging look, and a hell-bred eye,
To affright children and amaze the world.
And this same have you left to change with this!
What devil thus hath cozened you at hob-man blind?
Ah, have you eyes, and can you look on him
That slew my father and your dear husband,
To live in the incestuous pleasure of his bed? (24-42)

    Look here upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers:
See what a grace was seated on this brow,
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars to threaten and command,
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill,
A combination and a form indeed
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man;
This was your husband. Look you now what follows:
Here is your husband like a mildewed ear
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed
And batten on this moor? Ha, have you eyes?
You cannot call it love, for at your age
The heyday in the blood is tame, it's humble
And waits upon the judgement: and what judgment
Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have –
Else could you not have motion. But sure, that sense
Is apoplexed, for madness would not err
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thralled
But it reserved some quantity of choice
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't
That thus hath cozened you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope. (51-79)

Those who are familiar with the Q2/F "Look here upon this picture, and on this"
speech will have noticed a major divergence. In that version, old Hamlet's likeness is
equalled with half Olympus ("Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself, / An eye like
Mars to threaten and command, / A station like the herald Mercury" (54-56)) while

Claudius is not associated with any deity in particular, but is compared to a "mildewed ear" (62) and a "moor" (65)[74]. The pattern is the one evoked earlier of "Hyperion to a satyr" (I.ii. 140). In the First Quarto, Hamlet only refers to two gods: Mars and Vulcan. I would argue that this comparison is not simply the practical result of cutting an overlong speech, but that it can reveal some traits of Hamlet's character, a cue left us by the author.

Vulcan is not mentioned elsewhere in Q1, but he is referred to earlier in Q2/F, when Hamlet shares with Horatio his plan of catching the conscience of the king with *The Mousetrap*. He says that if Claudius is not moved by what he sees: "It is a damned ghost that we have seen / And my imaginations are as foul / As Vulcan's stithy" (III.ii 78-80). This speech is not included in Q1 and, importantly, neither is the line "Hyperion to a satyr" (Q2 I.ii 140). This, I would argue, is intriguing because it has a dual bearing on the speech. Firstly, the subjects of the two pictures are described on even terms, that is, the father as a completely positive figure, the uncle as a completely negative one, but each is equally distributed with the same amount of attributes. The two kings are shown to be the exact opposite of each other. Secondly, Hyperion and the other deities are absent throughout the play (except for Hamlet's identification with Hercules). Only Mars and Vulcan make their entrance through Hamlet's words: may there be a reason behind this?

In *Troilus and Cressida*, Ulysses describes to the Achaean princes the dramatic performances of Patroclus in front of Achilles. Patroclus also plays Nestor and Ulysses archly states: "That's done, as near as the extremest ends, / Of parallels, as like as Vulcan and his wife" (I.iii 166-67). Vulcan has always been considered as the ugliest of the gods who, however, married the most beautiful goddess, Venus. In this respect, Hamlet is sure to make his point in the comparison between the two kings, one is as handsome as Mars, the other as ugly as Vulcan. What this juxtaposition entails, however, is an inverted distribution of the roles of husband and lover. Vulcan and Mars are indeed brothers as Old Hamlet and Claudius, but Vulcan was the lawful husband of Venus, while Mars was her lover. This of course may be a further arrow in the quiver for those interpreters who see Q1 as an irremediably corrupt text. Alternatively, and more compellingly, this may signal an important aspect of

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[74] For the view that this may be a racial pun, see Patricia Parker, "Black Hamlet*: Battening on the Moor*", *Shakespeare Studies*, Vol. 31, 2003: 127-64.

Hamlet's personality: however much he wishes to vilify Claudius and prepare to revenge his own father, his feelings towards his "uncle-father" (II.ii 324) are more complex. Hamlet pours "hypercathexis"[75] on his father but, all the same, the "questionable" (I.iv 43) Ghost needs now to come and remind him of his oath to avenge him. Hamlet, like the player queen, "doth protest too much" (III.ii 224) in his father's praise. In the words of Frank Kermode:

> the true father was the substance of his shadow, and the defeat of his 'property' left Hamlet not with that substance but with its evil replacement, the shadow-king, shadow-husband, and shadow-father, Claudius. His mother splits in two; wife to both 'this' and 'this', her self is no longer the same, and Hamlet is appalled in the name of Property[76].

The myth of Mars and Venus was common knowledge in Renaissance England. Henry VIII's writing desk (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum) is decorated with the personal coats of arms of the king himself and of Catherine of Aragon and is painted with the figures of Mars and Venus – a slightly ill-suited gift for a king who had actually married his brother's wife. On the other hand, a tapestry named "Vulcanus, Mars, and Venus"[77] was also in the king's possession.

A faint trace left in the other versions of this association might be the very name of the new king: Claudius. Hamlet's uncle is never named in Q1, but the "claudicant", limping Roman emperor might have influenced this choice that connects him with Vulcan, the lame god.

The second aspect of this version of the speech that I wish to emphasise is its visuality. The speech is, as we have seen, replete with orders to direct the mother's and our gaze. These illocutionary acts are given strength by Hamlet's focus on the outward features of his father's and uncle's faces. We are treated with descriptions of Old Hamlet's face, eyes, and forehead. Only lastly is his heart mentioned. "A face to outface Mars himself" is an interesting phrase; it can recall the following passage from the deposition scene in *Richard II*, when the "unkinged" sovereign asks to see himself in a mirror (with a cunning parody of the most famous line of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*):

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[75] Frank Kermode, *Forms of Attention: Botticelli and Hamlet* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985): 61. In psychoanalytical terms, hypercathexis is one's excessive investment of libido in a person.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Albert Charles Hamilton, *The Spenser Encyclopedia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990): 723.

Was this face the face
That every day under his household roof
Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face
That, like the sun, did make beholders wink?
Was this the face that faced so many follies,
And was at last out-faced by Bolingbroke?
A brittle glory shineth in this face:
As brittle as the glory is the face;
[Dashes the glass against the ground]
For there it is, crack'd in a hundred shivers.
Mark, silent king, the moral of this sport,
How soon my sorrow hath destroy'd my face. (IV.i 280-90)

While this "outfacing" once again explores the game of surfaces that pervades the play[78], the virtues of Old Hamlet's front, which "adorn a king and gild his crown", again focus our attention of the outward, visible attributes of social representation. One should notice that Puttenham called paradoxical encomium "the wondrer" since paradoxes have "the ability to dazzle and cause wonderment"[79]. This is exactly what Hamlet is trying to achieve. Let us briefly note the use of rhyme: after "down", "crown", and "vow", abruptly, comes "dead"; "This was your husband".

In a parallelism unique to Q1, we now listen to the description of the face, look, and eye of Claudius. "Look" as a verb and noun recurs three times within five lines. This look "fit for a murder and a rape" is "a dull, dead hanging look". "Hanging" has generally been explained as a pun by comparing this line with a passage in *Measure for Measure*, where Abhorson, soon to be hanged, is said to have a "hanging look" (IV.ii 33), that is, "having a downward cast of countenance; gloomy-looking" (4, OED). I suggest that, in this instance, there may be a further pun on the fact that Claudius' portrait could indeed be seen hanging on a wall. Q1's powerful "hell-bred eye" is a neologism: Edmund Spenser had used it non-figuratively, referring to a "hell-bred beast" (*FQ*, I,11 42). This eye and these looks "affright children and amaze the world". It is to be noted, too, that if Vulcan's eye is "hell-bred", this eerily connects Claudius with Hamlet's father, come demonstrably from Purgatory[80], "all the day confined in flaming fire" (V.4).

Gertred has been blindfolded and deceived by a devil playing "at hob-man blind". Then Hamlet asks: "Have you eyes?" Very interestingly, he does not proceed in the

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[78] For theatricality in *Hamlet*, see Ingo Berensmeyer, *Hamlet* (Stuttgart: Klett, 2000): 75-101.
[79] Stuart Clark, *op. cit.* (2007): 107.
[80] See Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

synaesthesic interrogation of his mother's senses which follows in Q2/F ("Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight / Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all" III.iv 77). It is sight which is exclusively referred to in his speech. In the following section I will try to provide an explanation for this choice.

For the moment, let us note that the picture, through Hamlet's words, becomes the man: "Ah, have you eyes, and can you look on him / That slew my father and your dear husband" (40-41). The dual pattern established by Q1's symmetric comparison serves as a powerful device for this merging of painted object and physical person. Both portraits are metatheatrical props in Hamlet's hands: he stages this ostension and he thinks he can manipulate them and their own models, as well.

The speech ends with a juxtaposition of life and death: he who "slew my father and your dear husband" now "live[s] in the incestuous pleasure of his bed". The pictures Hamlet verbally paints are indeed "lively": the portrait of his dead father, too, gains more and more life, creating a keen sense of unease, as if his mother's condition were of death-in-life, and life-in-death.

Let me conclude by remarking that all these ocularcentric elements and Hamlet's *enargeia*-packed passion seem to invoke the Ghost: only in the first scene of the first act we had heard so many "lo, behold, see" directed to that ghostly "sight" (16), "apparition" (19), and "illusion" (87). Now enters the Ghost in a night-gown, as is specified in the stage direction of Q1, "with looks so pitiful" (62) that only Hamlet can see. He cries: "Why, *see*, the king my father" (78), "*Look* you how pale he *looks*" (80), "*See* how he steals away out of the portal! / *Look*, *there* he goes" (81-82) [emphasis mine]. The act of hearing is mentioned only twice. Gertred, "amazed" (70), asks her son: "Nay, how is't with you / That thus bend your eyes on vacancy / And hold discourse with nothing but with air?" (73-75), to which Hamlet replies "Why, do you nothing hear?" (76). Gertred initially thinks that her son's is what Honzl calls "fantastic oriented deixis", and thus she explains it: "Alas, it is the weakness of thy brain, / Which makes thy tongue to blazon thy heart's grief" (83-84); it is merely "fantasy" (87). We should recall that fantasy was "granted the power to conjure false images and to transform the nature of vision"[81] besides being able to "apprehend and retain the

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[81] Marguerite A. Tassi, *The Scandal of Images: Iconoclasm, Eroticism, and Painting in Early Modern English Drama* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2005): 52.

likenesses of present objects"[82], hence Hamlet could verbally paint a blazon of what his imagination made him see.

Interestingly, Hamlet is described as being mad exactly at the same time when he is trying to affirm his mother's own distemper. In Richard Brathwaite's treatise, we hear that "wanton fancy" is "a wandering phrenzy"[83] and "an affection privily received in by the *Eye*, and speedily conveyed to the *Heart*"[84]. Here, spectators do not see so much a stereotypical "womanish" madness: instead, Hamlet has "distracted looks" (69) and his actions are frantic ("as raging as the sea" 106, "he throws and tosses [...] about" 108). However, Gertred is finally convinced of his sanity: she swears that she "never knew of this most horrid murder" (86), and, as shown previously, she commends her conscience to the all-seeing God.

Visuality in Q1

Hamlet is a master of oratory. He dominates, questions, and plays with "words, words, words". He, like the chameleon he refers to, exploits every register and style he individuates in the speech of others and transforms it by appropriating it to his ends. Feminist readings[85] have, however, shown how much Hamlet despises "matter", the sheer physicality of things ("things rank and gross in nature" I.ii 136) and bodies ("the quintessence of dust" II.ii 274), the epitome of which – he finds – is the female body. The way he treats Ophelia, and how he humiliates his mother and generalises about women's frailty (or Fortune being a "strumpet" II.ii 231), are clear examples of this attitude.

I would argue that, in the play, the status of material pictures and metaphorical images (which are inextricably interrelated)[86] fluctuates between these two poles. Both are associated with insubstantiality as well as corruption. On the one hand, we hear that Ophelia is "[d]ivided from herself and her fair judgment, / Without the which we are

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[82] Pico della Mirandola, *On the Imagination*, edited by Harry Caplan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930): 29.

[83] Richard Brathwaite, *The English Gentleman and the English Gentlewoman* (London: John Dawson, 1641): 343.

[84] Ibid

[85] See the classic essay of Janet Adelman, "'Man and Wife is One Flesh': Hamlet and the Confrontation with the Maternal Body", in *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays: Hamlet to The Tempest* (New York: Routledge, 1992): 11-37.

[86] On the complex relations and blending of diegesis and mimesis in *Hamlet*, see Silvia Bigliazzi, *Oltre il Genere. Amleto tra Scena e Racconto* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2001).

pictures, or mere beasts" (IV.v85-86), while Laertes' passion might be nothing but "the painting of a sorrow" (IV.vii 106). Very interestingly, the incorporeal Ghost is also described as Old Hamlet's "image even but now appear'd to us" (I.i 80). More positively, Hamlet reflects that "by the image of my cause, I see / The portraiture of his" [Laertes] (F V.ii 77-78), and that *The Mousetrap* is "the image of a murder" (III.ii 232). On the other hand, painting alters nature and truth, and is seen as a cause of infection. Claudius, in an aside, says that "The harlot's check, beautied with plastering art / Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it / Than is my deed to my most painted word" (III.i 50-52). Most emblematically, in the nunnery scene, Hamlet accuses Ophelia and her whole sex: "I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another" (III.i 141-143, Q2 emended). He is revolted by the idea of having "a mother stained" (IV.iv 56).

"Hamlet seems obsessed by pictures"[87]. In Q2, he is vividly associated to a painter by Ophelia: "He took me by the wrist and held me hard, / Then goes he to the length of all his arm / And with his other hand thus o'er his brow / He falls to such perusal of my face / As 'a would draw it" (II.i 84-88). Living and ghostly pictures abound in the play: from the pictures in the closet scene, to the miniatures of Old Hamlet avidly bought by sycophantic courtiers, to the spectacular Ghost.

The visual is indeed regarded as a source of ambiguity in the play. Whereas the message of revenge entails an aural "unfolding", images as dumb shows are literally "inexplicable" (III.ii 12), and Hamlet tries to harness and exploit them. Bill Readings puts it like this:

> Why then does Hamlet hesitate? Because he cannot reconcile the heard command with visual representation. He has heard a tale which cannot be told, as the Ghost says, as his secrecy proves, and he seeks to reduce it to a visible representation, in his own hair style, in dumb show, in pictures. Caught between the ear, impelling to kinesis, and the eye, impelling to stasis, he hesitates[88].

Without pocking one's stick into the hornet's nest of "why Hamlet delays", it can be stated that he becomes an enactment of the *tableau vivant* expressed by the comparison with Pyrrhus:

[87] Bill Readings, "Hamlet's Thing", in Mark Thornton Burnett and John Manning (eds) *New Essays on Hamlet* (New York: Palgrave, 1994): 56.
[88] Ibid.: 60.

For, lo, his sword,
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seemed I' th' air to stick.
So as a painted tyrant Pyrrhus stood
Like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing. (II.ii 415-20)

As concerns Q1, I would suggest that the visual dimension is granted a stronger role than in Q2 and F. To an extent, one can perceive here greater confidence in the power and veracity of sight. The other two *Hamlets* seem to interrogate more strongly the reliability and authority of vision. This is emblematised by Hamlet's fist speech, where he famously declares that he has "that within which passes show / This but the trappings and the suits of woe" (I.ii 85-86). It is this version which has prompted scholars to see in it either the clearest expression of inwardness[89] and individuality of Renaissance drama, or a bold statement of deconstructive nihilism[90]. The First Quarto has a very different distich, which is almost trivial in comparison: "Him have I lost I must of force forgo, / These but the ornaments and the suits of woe" (II.39-39). Here Hamlet states that he has resolved to let go: it is not his sable suit, his tears, his "distracted haviour" (II.35), "Nor all together mixed with outward semblance, / Is equal to the sorrow of my heart" (36-37): mere superficial expressions and accoutrements cannot match his sorrow.

The palimpsest formed by the three *Hamlet* versions is notoriously difficult to follow or disambiguate. What can be said is that Q1 − seen as a working text − provides a simpler interpretation of the visual, which becomes more complex in Q2. For instance, Hamlet in the First Quarto does not affirm: "I know not 'seems'" (Q2, I.ii. 76), one of his most distinguishing statements. The mirror imagery so structural in Q2/F is entirely absent in Q1: the purpose of playing is not "to hold as t'were the mirror up to nature" (III.ii 21-23), nor in the closet scene does Hamlet say to his mother, "You go not till I set you up a glass, / Where you may see the inmost part of you" (III.iv 18-19). Ophelia does notice change in him: "The courtier, scholar, soldier, all in him, / All dashed and splintered thence" (VII.196-97). In Q2/F, it is not Hamlet's roles that are fragmented,

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[89] See Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
[90] In Terry Eagleton's words: "Hamlet has no 'essence' of being whatsoever, no inner sanctum to be safeguarded […] How could it be otherwise, when he rejects the signifiers by which alone the self, as signified comes into its determinacy?" (Terry Eagleton, *William Shakespeare*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986: 72).

but his very faculties which are destroyed: "the courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword" (III.i 150). In the First Quarto, Hamlet's social agency is more simply disjointed. As we have seen, senses do not collapse into one another as he questions his mother's sight. Ocular elements unique to Q1 are also introduced. For instance, Gertred understands that Claudius is lying by his outward appearance: "Then I perceive there's treason *in his looks* / That seemed to sugar o'er his villainy" (XIV.10-11, emphasis mine). Moreover, Hamlet highlights the effects of sight when he states: "Why, she would hang on him, as if increase / Of appetite had grown by what it looked on" (II.67-68) (whereas in Q2 we read "by what it fed on", I.ii 145).

What can be gleaned from these instances is that the effects and functions of vision are more prominent in Q1, whereas Q2 and F often introduce other senses or interrogate different channels of sensorial cognition.

This does not mean in any way that in Q1 eyes cannot deceive: for instance, the king warns that "There's more in him [Hamlet] than shallow eyes can see" (XI.165), and the corrupting, immoral paintings of women are still infective. Here I disagree with Barker's evocative interpretation, according to which in Elsinore "there is apparently nothing that cannot be seen […] where sight transfixes or is stolen, but is never doubted as the dominant mode of a (sometimes fraudulent) access"[91]. Both in Q1 and the later texts, sight is and can be questioned. Marcellus and Barnardus need Horatio's knowledge to "approve [their] eyes" (I.i 28) witnessing the Ghost's apparition. The dumb show is not enough to catch the conscience of the king. In Q2, Claudius complains that the prince is loved by the common people "Who like not in their judgement but their eyes" (IV.iii 5).

In Q1, Hamlet's final words before dying are not "The rest is silence" (V.ii 342), but "O my heart sinks, Horatio. / Mine eyes have lost their sight, my tongue his use. / Farewell, Horatio. Heaven receive my soul" (17.109-11)[92]. Images and words, together, have escaped his control, and he must die. This goes beyond simple *ut pictura poësis*. It is reminiscent of a common view in the Renaissance expressed, among others, by Ben Jonson (who borrowed this sentence from John Hoskins): "the conceits of the mind are

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[91] Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995): 23.
[92] Strangely, Taylor and Thompson do not gloss these lines which, I would argue, are reminiscent of Psalm 38.10: "My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me".

Pictures of things, and the tongue is the interpreter of those pictures"[93]. It has been said that "[p]ictures are the age's way of conceptualising abstractions […] we know through images"[94]. Pictures are then related both to reality ("things") and thoughts ("conceits of the mind"): Hamlet tries to find in eloquence the instrument to grasp this connection. This is an element which I regard as essential in Q1 *Hamlet*, but which is explored and interrogated in the later texts. Very interestingly, Jonathan Baldo has found exactly this development in Shakespeare's tragic output:

> The practice of Shakespeare's earlier tragedies seems consistent with the notion that the tireless interpreter the tongue continually translates from the visual […] to the verbal, a notion that will be subjected repeatedly to skeptical treatment in Shakespeare's mature tragedies, where the tongue has lost much of its ability to interpret 'those pictures', whether the mind's or the eye's[95].

If the First Quarto was written before Q2, then this early version may reflect the playwright's initial attitude towards vision. Let us examine the treatment of vision in *Sonnet 46*:

> Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war
> How to divide the conquest of thy sight.
> Mine eye my heart thy picture's sight would bar,
> My heart mine eye the freedom of that right.
> My heart doth plead that thou in him dost lie,
> A closet never pierc'd with crystal eyes;
> But the defendant doth that plea deny,
> And says in him thy fair appearance lies.
> To side this title is impannellèd
> A quest of thoughts, all tenants to the heart,
> And by their verdict is determinèd
> The clear eye's moiety, and the dear heart's part,
>   As thus; mine eye's due is thy outward part,
>   And my heart's right, thy inward love of heart.

This sonnet elaborates the conventional theme of the conflict between eye and heart, outer and inner beauty. The heart promises that it will hide the picture of the beloved[96], since it is a "closet never pierc'd with crystal eyes". "Crystal" as an adjective is apt,

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[93] Quoted in Stephen Orgel, *The Authentic Shakespeare and Other Problems of the Early Modern Stage* (New York: Routledge, 2002):52.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Jonathan Baldo, *The Unmasking of Drama: Contested Representation in Shakespeare's Tragedies* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996): 162.
[96] This was a particularly interesting topos in Renaissance literature. See Lina Bolzoni, *Il Cuore di Cristallo. Ragionamenti d'amore, poesia e ritratto nel Rinascimento* (Turin: Einaudi Editore, 2010).

since it refers both to the clarity of the eyes and to the adamantly piercing gaze of the viewer. The conflict is resolved with a draw: the eye is given power over the "outward part", and the heart receives the "inward love of heart". Note that this rhyme (also repeated twice in the poem) is also present in the Q1 closet scene. There is less philosophical enquiry in this sonnet, in comparison with many other poems in the collection. We could say that Q1 reflects the dualistic position expressed in the sonnet towards inner and outer visuality and that the playwright seems to be more confident in the cognitive power of sight. The closet scene in *Hamlet* stages the same desire to visually pierce the closet of Gertred's heart. This matches the theatregoers' and critics' longing to peer into the significance of this scene.

Tanya Pollard is perhaps the critic who recently has most stressed the aural dimension of *Hamlet*:

> When the ghost – a role reportedly acted by Shakespeare himself – impresses upon Hamlet and the audience the risks of open ears, perhaps he is trying to persuade himself, as much as his listeners, of the terrifying, transformative, and unavoidable effects of hearing a passionate speech. Perhaps he is instructing us on how to be audiences: how to be transformed, for better of for worse, by the plays that we hear[97].

This scholar's insights are particularly profound, but I would argue that, by overstating the aural character of playacting, she reduces the effects and the importance of the visual. As we have seen in the previous sections, if we could ask an inhabitant of Elizabethan England which sense they would regard as the most treacherous and transformative, the answer would certainly be sight: "Though I gaze till mine eye be dazzled, yet is the desire of mine eye never satisfied: as the eye of all other senses is most needful, so of all others it is most hurtful […] Passions of the mind receive their greatest impression by the eye of the body"[98]. Antitheatricalist pamphlets profusely exploited these negative effects of sight, stigmatising: "impressions of mind are secretly conveyed ouer to the gazers, which the players do counterfeit on stage"[99]. While it is well known that Ben Jonson wished to please theatregoers as auditors rather than as spectators, he also showed a keen interest in what we call the fine arts, and

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[97] Tanya Pollard, *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 143.
[98] Richard Brathwaite, *Essays Upon the Five Senses […]* (London: Griffin, 1625): 8.
[99] Gosson quoted in Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002): 447.

painting in particular: "Picture is the invention of heaven, the most ancient and most akin to Nature. It is itself a silent work […] yet it doth enter and penetrate the inmost affection … as sometimes to o'ercome the power of speech and oratory"[100]. Whether this attitude is sincere or not in Jonson, it all the same elucidates some of the effects of painting according to early modern visual culture. Pictures can "enter and penetrate", and theatre is built on the collaboration of sight and hearing: as William Webbe put it in 1586, playwrights need to "have special respect to the motions of the mind, that they may stir both the eyes and ears of their beholders"[101]. Hamlet's story would "amaze indeed / the very faculties of eyes and ears" (II.ii 500-01), and he entreats Claudius and his mother "To hear and see the matter" (III.i 23) of the play-within-the-play.

It has also been noted[102] that Shakespeare stopped using the word "auditors" to refer to the playgoers exactly after *Hamlet*, switching instead to "spectators". According to Pollard, the Ghost alias Shakespeare gives us a message in the play. I argue that this message cannot be that one should only pay attention to aural effects. Taylor and Thompson remark that among the features that have been generally found in performances of Q1, there are its "theatricality" and "its lack of introspection"[103]. I hope to have demonstrated in my reading of the "See here, behold this picture" speech that the linguistic choices in the Q1 version are not at all sketchy or "corrupt", but that their foregrounded visuality tells us a lot about this "different" *Hamlet*. The impression of an "abundance of theatrical energy"[104] in the First Quarto may also derive from this different perspective on the visual.

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[100] Quoted in Roy C. Strong, *The English Icon: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969): 53.

[101] Quoted in G. K. Hunter, *English Drama 1586-1642: The Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997): 80 n. 1.

[102] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 110.

[103] Neil Taylor and Ann Thompson, *op. cit.* (2006): 36.

[104] Leah Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (London: Routledge, 1996): 145.

II.2 Tragic Limning in John Webster's *The White Devil* (1612)

> *Oculos tuos ad nos converte*: convert
> your eyes, *Vergine bella*, you gave us
> a bit of a turn there.
> – Geoffrey Hill, *The Triumph of Love*, CIX, 1998

The finale of Alex Cox's *Revengers Tragedy* (2002), a punk, dystopian film adaptation of Thomas Middleton's *The Revenger's Tragedy*, is quite shocking. Vindice (played by Ralph Fiennes) has finally accomplished his mission: he has avenged the murder of his bride. With his associates, he rushes off, but meets a battalion of caricatural policemen and beefeaters. They shoot Vindice, and afterwards, the camera pans up the staircase and zooms in on a state portrait of Elizabeth II. All of a sudden, the portrait is converted into its photographic negative, and the image transforms itself into a nuclear mushroom destroying everything, while a voice cries: "Revenge! Revenge!" This device can be interpreted as a flashback. In the movie, we are to understand that during the reign of Elizabeth II, an unspecified catastrophe has annihilated southern Britain and the capital has been moved to Liverpool. This portrait is then a way to recall the end of the queen's reign. At the same time, it presents corrupting, infectious vice as lurking at the roots of the monarchical institution[1]. I would argue that Alex Cox is also evoking the poisoned and poisoning picture in John Webster's *The White Devil*. While studying in Oxford, Cox was deeply struck by the Jacobean tragedies and published a screenplay adaptation of *The White Devil* online[2]. We will see that Cox has not been the only one to understand the power of the staged picture in Webster's play.

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[1] Some critics have detected a satiric connection with the cover of the iconoclastic anthem *God Save the Queen* (1977) by the Sex Pistols. See Gordon McMullan, "'Plenty of blood. That's the only writing': (Mis)Representing Jacobean Tragedy in Turn-of-the-Century Cinema", *Shakespeare en devenir - Les Cahiers de La Licorne - Shakespeare en devenir,* no. 2, 2008. See also Pascale Aebischer, *Screening Early Modern Drama: Beyond Shakespeare*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013 (esp. 104-142), and id., "Renaissance Tragedy on Film: Defying Mainstream Shakespeare", in Emma Smith and Garret A. Sullivan Jr (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 116-131.

[2] Accessible at http://www.alexcox.com/pdfs/WD3.pdf. Cox prepared it for the Jacobeans.net project, which unfortunately seems to have attracted neither the BBC's nor the Film Council's interest so far.

The imagery of painting in *The White Devil* is extremely interesting, and it gains particular significance in II.ii, as it coagulates into a "figure in action"[3], to use H. T. Price's justly celebrated notion. In a highly-wrought dumb show, Isabella, the sister of the Duke of Florence, Francisco, is killed by kissing a poisoned portrait of her husband, Duke Brachiano. Brachiano murders her because he has fallen in love with the beautiful Vittoria, who in turn is married to Camillo (who gets killed in the second pantomime). The two dumb shows, however, are part of an ingenious dramatic strategy which is constructed on a multisensorial and multiperspectival mechanism of rare design, with the poisoned portrait serving as both a focus and a focaliser in the dramatic economy of the play.

The aim of this chapter is to closely analyse the semiotic importance and the transactional uses of the portrait in the dumb show. I attempt to demonstrate that the picture works to shape the dynamics of immediacy and hypermediation at work in the scene, to use Katherine M. Carey's terms[4]. However, the effects of the portrait are also to be appreciated by grounding it in the discourses of early modern poisonous spectacle (which is such a complex topic that only a brief contextualisation can be put forward here). Moreover, we shall see that Webster's special interest in the materiality of portraiture and painting, evident in his works, can be structurally detected in *The White Devil*, which I would call his night-piece with many foci.

Murder They Showed: Poisonous Spectacle

In October 1601, the Elizabethan court was shaken by the news that another attack had been made on the queen's life. On other occasions, dissidents had tried to shoot, stab, and poison her: a scrivener, Edward Squire, had poisoned the queen's saddle, and it was rumoured that her food, drinks, and medicines had been similarly targeted. This time, however, the attempt had been made on the queen's picture. Nicholas Hilliard, the master of courtly limning, had been asked eight years earlier to supply designs for the third Great Seal. This model came in the hands of one Thomas Harrison, who worked in the royal mint. When Harrison's luggage was inspected, the

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[3] See Hereward T. Price, "The Function of Imagery in Webster", *PMLA*, Vol. 70, no. 4, Sep., 1955: 717-739.
[4] Katherine M. Carey, "The Aesthetics of Immediacy and Hypermediation: The Dumb Shows in Webster's *The White Devil*", *New Theatre Quarterly*, Vol. 23, no. 1, Feb. 2007: 73-80.

guards found a little box. Sir William Waad, the Secretary to the Privy Council, had it opened and, as he declared to Sir Robert Cecil (3 Oct. 1601): "holding it afar off, […] I found Her Majesty's picture in metal, and a kind of mercury sublimate which had eaten in the metal"[5]. A very strong poison had been applied to the queen's picture. Sir Waad wrote: "I cannot conceive he can have a good meaning that will place the picture of her Majesty's sacred person with such poison as hath endangered the apothecary's man that did but put it to his tongue"[6].

This was not the only instance in which Elizabeth's pictures had been damaged purportedly in order to harm her:

> Throughout the reign efforts were made to dispose of the Queen by stabbing, burning, or otherwise destroying her image. […] In 1591, a religious maniac called Hacket expressed his hatred of Elizabeth by defacing the royal arms and stabbing a panel portrait of her through the breast. Two years later O'Rourke, the Irish rebel, caused a wooden image of her to be trailed daily through the streets while boys hurled stones at it. In France under the Catholic League Elizabeth's portrait was publicly consigned to the flames and even, it was reported in 1590 to Lord Burghley, hung up upon a gallows from which it was rescued by some patriotic Englishman[7].

This was the negative side of Elizabeth's strategic promotion of the worship of her iconography. Pictures were thought to have a magical bond with the persons portrayed and their possession could result in gaining power over their model. I would argue that this was reinforced by the semantic plurivalence of the word "picture". A picture could indicate any visual representation, from a painting to effigies in clay or wax (such as those used by witches), to coins and *imprese*. Nowadays, we may wish to understand to which artefact John Donne refers in his beautiful short lyric "Witchcraft by a Picture", that is, whether to a wax image or a portrait, but this may not have occurred to the poet's contemporaries.

John Webster probably knew about the incident of the queen's poisoned picture. In *The White Devil*, he refers to that other attempt on Elizabeth's life by means of the infected pommel ("T'have poison'd his prayer book, or a pair of beads / The pommel

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[5] "Cecil Papers: October 1601, 1-10", in R A. Roberts (ed.), *Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House*, Volume 11, 1601, (London: 1906): 401-420 (http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-cecil-papers/vol11/pp401-420), last accessed 23 November 2015.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Roy C. Strong, *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963): 40.

of his saddle" V.i 69-70[8]). In the play, however, the most striking poisoned object, besides a helmet, is a picture. In the following sections, I discuss how and why Webster chose a portrait as a vehicle for Isabella's murder, but as a premise, it is useufl to take into account the topicality of poisoning in early modern culture. We generally consider poisoning as a sensationalistic, grotesque staple of Elizabethan and Jacobean revenge tragedy. But we need to remember that the fear of poisoning was far from imaginary in those times: poison was often used and could be applied in the most varied ways. For Renaissance writers, "poisoning constitute[d] a complex, pressing threat"[9], which, in many cases, was ideologically tinged by prejudice (typical poisoners would include women, Catholics, Jews, and homosexuals).

Poisoning, moreover, can be spectacular. The English dramatists delighted in presenting Italianate courts steeped in poisonous corruption. One may think of Barnabe Barnes' *The Devil's Charter* (1607), in which Lucrezia Borgia's face is destroyed by toxic make-up. Pageants in Renaissance Italy could literally be poisonous. Vasari tells us that on Giovanni de' Medici's accession to the papal throne as Leo X, poets and painters (first and foremost, Jacopo Pontormo) organised a magnificent triumphal parade through the streets of Florence. A baker's boy was chosen to personify the Golden Age and his skin was painted with gilded varnish. His performance was greatly admired but, few days later, he died in unspeakable pain, poisoned by the gilding[10].

The art of drama and the art of painting were equally criticised for their corrupting adulteration of reality and society alike. Dramatists explored these connections and appropriated the discourse of aesthetic poisoning. In *The White Devil*, pictures are as

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[8] The edition of this play (as well as those of *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Devil's Law-Case*) I will refer to throughout the chapter is D. C. Gunby (ed.), *John Webster: Three Plays* (London […]: Penguin Books, 1972). I have also chosen this edition because of its modernised spelling; for the notes, and the critical introduction, however, I have relied as well on the Cambridge edition of Webster's works (Vol.1, 1995), which was also edited by Gunby. F. L. Lucas' edition, *The Complete Works of John Webster* (London: Chatto and Windus, four volumes, 1927-1966) still provides valuable insights.

[9] Miranda Wilson, *Poison's Dark Works in Renaissance England* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2013): xxvi. For a study of the theme of poison and poisoned kisses in *The White Devil*, see Tanya Pollard, *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 101-122. For the imagery of (poisonous) painting in the play, see Anders Dallby, *The Anatomy of Evil: A Study of John Webster's* The White Devil (Lund: Gleerup, 1974): 108-111.

[10] Thomas A. Pallen, *Vasari on Theatre* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999): 73. For a cinematic example of a youth poisoned by gilding, perhaps derived from this episode, see the movie *Bedlam* (directed by Mark Robson, 1946).

lethal as the society which they represent. We shall now see, however, that Webster's interest often lies in the material aspect of painting as well as in its symbolism.

Websterio Pinxit: Pictures in John Webster

In his poem *Notes from Blackfriars* (1618)[11], Henry Fitzjeffrey of Lincoln's Inn mocked John Webster's writing style and social background, calling him "Crabbed Websterio, the playwright-cartwright" (he was the son of a coach-maker), and stating that what he wrote was so "obscure" that "none shall understand him". But Fitzjeffrey also says something noteworthy about Webster's character, as he invites the reader to: "Look as you'd be looked into, / Sit as you would be read", in Webster's presence. The figure of Webster, although maligned, emerges as an author deeply interested in the act of scrutinising and interpreting, who wants to "look into" human character and society. His most famous plays are proof of this. The instruments Webster used included the whole gamut of sensorial modes offered by drama: aural and visual rhetoric, and the players' bodies.

Webster's preference for the aural rather than the visual has been much discussed in previous scholarship. As Gunby points out, Webster's intention is to create "a dramaturgy that relies on speech more than spectacle, and on an auditory rather than spectators"[12]. In the note "To the Reader" that he added to the text of *The White Devil* (1612), Webster complained that the play had been a failure when acted at the Red Bull because the performance lacked "that which is the onely grace and setting out of a Tragedy": "a full and understanding Auditory"(5-7). By using the term "auditory", the playwright seems to favour the idea of a play to be heard, rather than seen. Yet, Webster constructed scenes which have an overwhelming visual appeal, with spectacular pageant and amazing illusory power, and there have been studies on "Webster's achievement as an essentially *visual* artist"[13].

It is not true that Webster did not understand the power of the visual and privileged the aural aspect only. As an appendix to *The White Devil*, he wrote a note thanking the

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[11] Quoted in Muriel C. Bradbrook, *John Webster, Citizen and Dramatist* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980): 169.
[12] D.C. Gunby, *op. cit.* (1995): 98.
[13] Samuel Schuman, *'The Theatre of Fine Devices': The Visual Drama of John Webster* (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1982): 1.

actor Richard Perkins (for whom Webster had most probably written the part of Flamineo, Vittoria's villainous brother and Brachiano's secretary) for his "well approved industry" (307), acknowledging "the worth of his action" (302) that "crown[ed] both the beginning and the end" (309) of the play. It is sufficient to link this assertion with what Webster wrote as a preface to *The Devil's Law Case* (c. 1617-9) to fully appreciate his notion of playacting as a multimodal, many-layered system: "A great part of the grace of this (I confess) lay in action; yet can no action ever be gracious, where the decency of the language, and ingenious structure of the scene, arrive not to make up a perfect harmony" (13-16).

At the conclusion of *The White Devil*, the injured Lodovico is still proud of having revenged Isabella's murder and exclaims:

> I do glory yet,
> That I can call this act mine owne: For my part,
> The racke, the gallowes, and the torturing wheele
> Shall bee but sound sleepes to me; here's my rest:
> „I limb'd this night-peece and it was my best.
>
> (V.vi 291-95)

As Gabriele Baldini well explained in his *John Webster e il Linguaggio della Tragedia*[14], it is important to note the typographical markings in the last line as presented in the first quarto, indicating the sententious quality of the verse. I will subsequently investigate what a "night-piece" actually meant in this Jacobean context, but what I would like to point out now is that, reasonably enough, this line has been universally interpreted in metatheatrical terms. "[I]t is spoken by Lodovico, but if one chooses, one may hear a different voice behind his – Webster's […] It is the artist regarding his finished canvas and adding his signature to it"[15]. Alternatively: "If Lodovico's delight in destruction marks him as the villain of the piece, nevertheless his equal delight in a quasi-artistic *construction* of the scene reveals him to be, on one level, a mouthpiece for Webster himself"[16]. We shall presently proceed to explore

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[14] Gabriele Baldini, *John Webster e il Linguaggio della Tragedia* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1953): 69.
[15] Anders Dallby, *op. cit.* (1974): 110.
[16] David Coleman, *John Webster: Renaissance Dramatist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010): 54.

Webster's attitude towards painting and test how authorially referential Lodovico's line can prove.

Webster grew up in St Sepulchre's Parish in London, an area which "fostered something like a colony of painters and related 'artificers'"[17]. Among the most famous artists residing there, one can list John de Critz, Robert Peake, and William Larkin. "Given the number of painters in his immediate neighborhood, it is not difficult to explain Webster's interest in the motif of portraiture"[18]. It is at least likely that Webster frequented these painters. Thus, in *Monuments of Honor* (1624), the triumph he wrote for the Lord Mayor's Pageant, he states that he does not have space enough to adequately describe the triumph "with rough lines, and a faint shadow (as the Painters phrase is)"[19]. I will discuss the motif of painting and portraiture in *The White Devil* in due course, but let us now first consider three examples gleaned from Webster's other works in which this topic comes to the fore.

Webster was a close associate of Richard Burbage, the leading actor of the King's Men, who was also a painter (thus begins an anonymous funeral elegy on his death: "Some skilful limner help me; if not so, / Some sad tragedian help t'express my woe. / But O he's gone, that could both best; both limn / and act my grief"[20]). It has been suggested that he is the model of Webster's Overburian character of "an excellent actor" (1615): "He is much affected to painting, and 'tis a question whether that make him an excellent Player, or his playing and exquisite Painter"[21].

In *The Devil's Law Case*[22], the art of painting is an essential element in various passages. In I.i, characters quip on the uses of portraiture. Leonora understands that Contarino, asking for her picture, actually means her daughter (a child is described as

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[17] Charles R. Forker, *Skull Beneath the Skin: The Achievement of John Webster* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press, 1986): 19.
[18] Ibid.
[19] In F. L. Lucas (ed.), *op. cit.* (1966): Vol. III, 317, ll. 10-11.
[20] Quoted in Herbert Berry, William Ingram, and Glynne Wickham, *English Professional Theatre, 1530-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 181-182.
[21] John Webster, "An Excellent Actor" in F. L. Lucas (ed.), *op. cit.* (1966): Vol. IV, 42. On facial painting in early modern drama, see the book by Farah Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006) and its antecedent, Annette Drew-Bear, *Painted Faces on the Renaissance Stage* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1994).
[22] Contarino is in love with Jolenta, the sister of a wealthy merchant, Romelio. He appeals to Leonora, Romelio and Jolenta's mother, who favours the suit of another man, Ercole. Ercole and Contarino get heavily injured in a duel. Romelio then stabs Contarino but unwittingly heals the wound. At a trial, a vindictive Leonora claims that Romelio was born out of wedlock but it turns out that the judge himself is the man by whom she has had the child, Crispiano.

someone's copy), but all the same she proves to be keenly interested in painting: "If ever I would have mine drawn to'th'life, / I would have a painter steal it, at such a time / I were devoutly kneeling at my prayers; / There is then a heavenly beauty in't, the soul / Moves in the superficies" (159-63). Later, a portrait is brought onstage twice (III.iii and IV.ii) and plays a central role on both occasions. It is the picture of a man with whom Leonora has had a child. It usually "hangs in [her] inner closet" (III.iii 347) and when her servant brings it to her, the portrait inspires her to revenge:

> I was enjoin'd by the party ought [i.e. who owned] that picture,
> Forty years since, ever when I was vex'd,
> To look upon that. What was his meaning in't,
> I know not, but methinks upon the sudden
> It has furnish'd me with mischief, such a plot,
> As never mother dream'd of. (353-58)

At the trial scene (IV.iii), the judge Crispiano metatheatrically appeals to the other characters and spectators alike "that the eyes of all / Here present, may be fixed upon this" (474-75). He astounds every one by proclaiming: "Behold, I am the shadow of this shadow, / Age has made me so" (479-480); "Paintings and epitaphs are both alike, / They flatter us, and say we have been thus" (483-84)[23].

Finally, in *The Duchess of Malfi* (c. 1612-13), the imagery of painting is less sustained, but it is relevant all the same. The Duchess jokingly explains why ugly women always choose uglier servants, since "Did you ever in your life know an ill painter / Desire to have his dwelling next door to the shop / Of an excellent picture-maker? 'Twould disgrace / His face-making, and undo him" (III.ii 49-52). The Cardinal tells Bosola a method to find the whereabouts of Antonio, the Duchess' lover: "go to th' picture-makers, and learn / Who brought her picture lately" (V.ii 139-140). Most emblematically, when the Duchess asks how she looks after witnessing the more than cruel show of "*the artificial figures of* ANTONIO *and his children;*

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[23] It is unlikely that the portrait staged in *The White Devil* was the same picture used in *The Devil's Law Case* approximately five years later, although both are plays by Webster, acted by Queen Anne's Men. One could conjecture that if the same actor played Brachiano and Crispiano, his portrait was staged in both plays, when it was moved from the tiring house of the Red Bull to the new Cockpit theatre. However, we know that many of the company's costumes, scripts, and props were destroyed in 1617 when apprentices attacked the Red Bull. See Mark Bayer, "The Red Bull Playhouse" in Richard Dutton (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009): 225-39.

appearing as if they were dead" (S.D. IV.i), her servant answers: "Like to your picture in the gallery, / A deal of life in show, but none in practice" (IV.ii. 31-32).

What can be garnered from this account is that Webster distinguishes himself in the use of portraits as props and the imagery of painting because he is keenly interested in the material dimension of pictures and their social performativity. He often uses the motif of painting in the conventional sense, as a device to reveal artificiality and hypocrisy, but he generally explores these themes by grounding them in the pragmatic uses and negotiations of physical pictures. Moreover, it seems clear that "Webster's view of painting would be based on traditional styles, rather than on Italian baroque"[24]. He considers the art of painting more in terms of an artisanal craft following the British tradition, rather than as the liberal art of continental humanism.

Limning and Dislimning the Night-Piece

Webster laments that *The White Devil* was staged "in so dull a time of winter, presented in so open and black a theatre" (To the Reader, 4-5) that it was unlikely to prove a success. Such adverse weather conditions were normally detrimental to the performances at the Elizabethan and Jacobean public playhouses. In the case of *The White Devil*, however, this was even more unfavourable because a dark stage would not enable the audience to fully appreciate the game of perspectives and the design of stage pictures the playing company strove to create. Webster regretted having chosen the Red Bull to put on his first solo-authored play, a theatre lacking one of the most significant aspects of indoor theatres: "the detailed use of light and darkness to create states that not only enhance the atmosphere of scenes but also reflect the shifting emotional moods of the play"[25].

As we have seen, Lodovico calls his act a "night-piece" (V.vi 295), a pictorial term that I argue has also a metatheatrical meaning. Nowadays, we are unfamiliar with the precise meaning of "night-piece", often jumping directly to its metaphorical connotation of murkiness and evil in our interpretations. However, Webster chose a word that denoted a particular pictorial genre. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines

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[24] M.C. Bradbrook, *op. cit.* (1980): 193, n. 8.
[25] Martin White, "'When torchlight made an artificial night': Light and Darkness in the Indoor Jacobean Theatre", in Andrew Gurr and Farah Karim-Cooper (eds), *Moving Shakespeare Indoors*: *Performance and Repertoire in the Jacobean Playhouse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 132.

it as "a painting or picture representing a scene or landscape at night". More exactly, it was a type of painting which depicted a scene set in darkness, with flashes of light coming from the moon, torches, or bonfires. It is not true that, as has often been alleged, Ben Jonson coined this term in 1608 to translate the Dutch expression "*nachtstuk*" to describe the setting Inigo Jones had created for *The Masque of Blackness*:

> These [i.e. the masquers] thus presented, the scene behind seemed a vast sea, and united with this that flowed forth, from the termination, or horizon of which (being the level of the state, which was placed in the upper end of the hall) was drawn by the lines of prospective, the whole work shooting downwards from the eye; which decorum made it more conspicuous, and caught the eye afar off with a wandering beauty: to which was added *an obscure and cloudy night-piece*, that made the whole set off (emphasis mine)[26].

Back in 1600-01, Thomas Dekker, who was an intimate friend of Webster, had a character in his *Satiromastix* ask: "*Wat Terrill*, th'art ill suited, ill made vp, / In Sable collours, like a night peece dyed, / Com'st thou the Prologue of a Maske in blacke"?[27] It seems that at the turn of the century, this type of painting was an easily recognisable and popular artefact. Webster himself used this expression twice in 1613, when he wrote his elegy on the death of Prince Henry. First, he addresses the dedicatee, the notorious Robert Carr, as follows: "Neither do I […] present you with this night-peece, to make his death-bed still floate in those compassionate rivers of your eyes"[28]. Then, in the poem proper, he exclaims: "What a dark night-piece of tempestious weather / Have the inraged clouds summon'd together!"[29]

All these literary examples indicate stormy, convulsed, or infernal scenes. This is quite interesting because the pictorial "night-pieces" which circulated in England in those decades seem to have been quite different:

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[26] Quoted in Enid Welsford, *The Court Masque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015 [1927]): 178.

[27] Fredson Bowers ed., *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953): Vol. I, V.ii 40-2. Consider also Dekker's use of the expression in *Lanthorne and Candle-Light* (1609): "*Another Night-peece drawne in sundry collours*" (Alexander B. Grosart ed., *The Non-Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, New York: Russell and Russell, 1963: Vol. III, 300). Se also John Freehafer, "*The Italian Night Piece* and Suckling's *Aglaura*", *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 67 (1968): 249-65.

[28] In F. L. Lucas (ed.), *op. cit.* (1966): 273, ll. 10-12.

[29] Ibid.: 282, ll. 295-96.

H.V.S. Ogden, the foremost authority on English landscape paintings of the period, suggests that they probably resembled those of Aert van der Neer (1603-73) who was famed as the Dutch moonlight specialist, and whose work displayed lunar light on calm river scenes, and variously lit sky and cloud. Two nocturnes that we do know of in the seventeenth-century collections, copies of pictures by Rubens and Elsheimer, are likewise images of serenity and repose[30].

An atmosphere of quaint nocturnal tranquillity is also expressed in Robert Herrick's poem *The Night-piece, to Julia* (published in 1648), of which it is sufficient to quote the first stanza:

Her Eyes the Glow-Worme lend thee,
The Shooting Starres attend thee;
And the Elves also,
Whose little eyes glow,
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee[31].

It is possible to conclude that the dramatists appropriated the pictorial genre of the "night-piece" and exploited its horrific potential. Indeed, it seems that a "night-piece" or a "nocturnal" was a formal term to denote a special kind of dramatic genre. Thomas Dekker, again, in *The Seven Deadly Sinnes of London* (1606), describes a city in terms of "a private playhouse, […] as if some *Nocturnal*, or dismal *Tragedy*, were presently to be acted"[32]. Webster managed to join this theatrical usage to the pictorial genre in a new way. Later, his example was imitated; consider, for instance, these lines: "Then, for an excellent night-piece, to shew / My glory to my loves and minions, I will have some great castle burnt"[33] (Massinger and Fletcher, *The Double Marriage*, c. 1619-22, V.i. 56-58).

Another aspect that a dramatist like Webster, so interested in painting, could have taken from this genre is the following, as annotated by no one less than Leonardo da Vinci, on "how to paint a night-piece":

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[30] Chris Fitter, "The Poetic Nocturne: From Ancient Motif to Renaissance Genre", *Early Modern Literary Studies*, Vol. 3, no. 2, Sept., 1997: http://purl.oclc.org/emls/03-2/fittnoct.html, last accessed 30 November 2015.

[31] L. C. Martin (ed.), *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963): 217, ll. 1-5.

[32] Alexander B. Grosart (ed.), *op. cit.*, 1963: vol. II, 41.

[33] Fredson Bowers (ed.), *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), Vol. IX.

thus if you wish to paint a story in that style you must suppose a large fire, and those objects that are near it to be tinged with its colour, since the nearer an object, the more it partakes of the other's nature[34].

Webster might have had something similar in mind when constructing his play. Not only does he provide the spectators with one focus (da Vinci's "large fire") – that is, a perspective into which they should invest their belief and attention – but he also consistently contrasts this focus with multiple others. By doing so, the spectatorship is moved in many different directions, partaking of the different standpoints of each character and assimilating each perspective. It is not so much, then, that *The White Devil* "is a play that leaves its audience 'directionless'"[35]; rather, this is a play that constantly provides too many directions to be fully assimilated. *The White Devil*, as it has often been said, is a "tragedy without a hero"[36]: we witness the incidents and fall of a group of characters. The audience is thus furnished with that type of multiplying glasses described by Flamineo: "I have seen a pair of spectacles fashioned with such perspective art, that lay down but one twelve pence a' th' board, 'twill appear as if there were twenty" (I.ii 101-04). Webster's mixing of forms and theatrical conventions has been labelled "aesthetic relativism"[37]. I argue that his art, to borrow a line from the attack by Cardinal Monticelso (Camillo's uncle) on Vittoria's showy magnificence, "[o]utbrav'd the stars with several kind of lights" (III.ii 74).

Webster's use of multiperspectivism is not a facile act of dramaturgical bravura. He employs it to anatomise society, so that one could say that he limns it as much as he "(dis)limns" it (in the sense of "pulling limb from limb", "dismembering"). Indeed, the stage at the end of *The White Devil* is littered with blood-stained limbs and dead bodies. Alternatively, one could say that by dislimning (i.e. "striking the image out of something", a Shakespearean coinage in *Antony and Cleopatra* IV.xiv 10), he exposes the nexus of counterfeit and theatricality inherent to self-fashioning.

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[34] Guglielmo Manzi (ed.) *Trattato della Pittura di Lionardo* [sic] *Da Vinci* (Rome: 1817): Vol. 1, 93-4 (translation mine): "se tu vi vogli figurar un'istoria, farai, che essendovi un gran fuoco, quella cosa che è più propinqua a detto fuoco più si tinga nel suo colore, perché quella che è più vicina all'obietto, più partecipa della sua natura".
[35] Alexander Leggatt, *Jacobean Public Theatre* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992): 128.
[36] Dympna Callaghan, *Woman and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy* (Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989): 64.
[37] David Coleman, *op. cit.*, (2010): passim.

Before considering the best example of Webster's treatment of multiperspectivism, that is, the dumb shows in II.ii, it is important to discuss the role of Doctor Julio, the character who poisons the picture in the first pantomime. His figure is a very ambiguous one. It is Flamineo who portrays him in a characterisation that verges on the grotesque: the doctor is described as "a poor quack-salving knave" (II.i 292), so sunk in "lechery" (293) that he will do anything now for a reward: he is their "property" (290). Flamineo lists his abilities, but juxtaposes "high" and "low" instances in which he deployed them. For example, he says that Doctor Julio can "poison a kiss" (300), which importantly foreshadows the use of the toxic picture in the following scene (Brachiano had also been warned that he would "Judas-like, betray in kissing" I.ii 296), but continues recounting an anecdote of his preparation of "a deadly vapour in a Spaniard's fart that should have poison'd all Dublin" (302-03). He is ugly, and Flamineo salutes him: "O thou cursed antipathy to nature!" (306) This indicates his repulsiveness, but may also show that his art is contrary to the rules of order and nature. Flamineo informs Brachiano that Doctor Julio had been sentenced to whipping for immoral behaviour, but escaped the punishment by claiming that he had already been convicted for debt. The doctor adds that he was, however, cozened by the man who pretended to be his creditor and had to pay "all the colourable execution" (297). "Colourable" is an extremely interesting adjective here, meaning both "having an appearance of truth […], plausible, reasonable", and "fraudulent, feigned, pretended" (OED). It is indeed a "colourable execution" that awaits the play's actors and spectators in the next scene.

Close Reading of the First Dumb Show I: Multimodality and the Portrait as a Focus

> *Enter, suspiciously* JULIO *and* CHRISTOPHERO; *they draw a curtain where* BRACHIANO's *picture is, they put on spectacles of glass which cover their eyes and noses, and then burn perfumes afore the picture, and wash the lips of the picture; that done, quenching the fire, and putting off their spectacles they depart laughing. Enter* ISABELLA *in her night-gown, as to bedward, with lights after her, Count* LODOVICO, GIOVANNI, GUIDANTONIO *and others waiting on her; she kneels down as to prayers, then draws the curtain of the picture, does three reverences to it, and kisses it thrice, she faints and will not suffer them to come near it, dies; sorrow express'd in* GIOVANNI, *and in Count* LODOVICO; *she's convey'd out solemnly.*

BRACHIANO. Excellent, then she's dead –

CONJUROR.   She's poisoned,
By the fum'd picture: 'twas her custom nightly,
Before she went to bed, to go and visit
Your picture, and to feed her eyes and lips
On the dead shadow; Doctor Julio,
Observing this, infects it with an oil
And other poison'd stuff, which presently
Did suffocate her spirits. (II.ii 24-31)

The scene opens in the dead of night. The spectators see Brachiano enter with a conjuror telling him: "'tis dead midnight, / The time prefix'd to show me by your art / How the intended murder of Camillo, / And our loathed Duchess grow to action" (1-4). This statement gives us information about the time, and we may suppose that candles were used onstage to emphasise night-time. This is the only scene in which the conjuror appears, and we may note the slightly oxymoronic quality of a "showing" at midnight. This unnatural act will be performed through the conjuror's magic "art". The polysemy of the word "art" often surfaces in the play: we observe not only the portrait and the imagery of painting[38], but also art in the sense of rhetoric and mendacity[39] ("O the art, / The modest form of greatness!" IV.iii 142-43; "the famous politician; / whose art was poison" V.iii 157-58), and as the power of dramatic art.

The temporal dimension also needs to be taken into account, because it is a key component that guides the spectators' attention towards the portrait. The first dumb show is not a flashback: the murder is carried out in (theatrical) real time. Occasionally, this has been misunderstood. For example, the great director Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein signalled this scene in the play, which he deemed "remarkable", as an example of a Renaissance playwright's use of "such a dubious film-maker's device as the purely cinematic technique of the flashback"[40]. A closer look, however, proves that the action in the first dumb show happens in real time: Brachiano, the conjuror, and we, the spectators, see the murder "*grow* to action"

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[38] See Laura Tosi, "Painting, Deception and Illusion in Elizabethan-Jacobean Theatre", *Textus*, vol. XII, 1999: 37-56. See also her *La Memoria del Testo. Un'Analisi Macrotestuale delle Tragedie di John Webster* (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 2001).

[39] See Ingo Berensmeyer and Andrew Hadfield, "Mendacity in Early Modern Literature and Culture: An Introduction", *European Journal of English Studies*, Vol. 19, no. 2 (2015): 131-147.

[40] Michael Glenny and Richard Taylor (eds), *Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein: Selected Works* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2010): Vol. 2 (*Towards a Theory of Montage*), 186.

(emphasis mine), in the "very now" of the performance[41]. In some productions, videos have been used to show that Isabella's murder is a recording, and in some cases (as, for example, in Cox's screenplay), the same actor plays both Doctor Julio and the conjuror. While this is, of course, attractive since it connects the roles of poisoner, magician, and painter, it prevents the audience from being fully engaged. The way in which the conjuror introduces the first dumb show is incantatory with its rhymes, but it also draws our attention to its immediacy:

> Pray, sit down;
> Put on this nightcap, sir, 'tis charmed; and now
> I'll show you, by my strong commanding art,
> The circumstance that *breaks* your duchess' heart. (20-23, emphasis mine)

The present tense is an element that forces the spectatorship to view the show offered to satisfy Brachiano's dreadfully voyeuristic desire in real time. It manages to give the spectators a sense of passivity, but, at the same time, keeps us in a state of suspense. We watch someone watch a sequence of events unfold, which astoundingly mixes immediacy and hypermediacy. This aspect has been beautifully analysed by Katherine M. Carey. She notes that, on the one hand, spectators can watch the direct, visual projection of Brachiano's desires and orders (immediacy), but that, on the other, "the audience watches Bracciano watching the murders – two frames competing for the audience's attention"[42], and points out that the second frame, that of the intradramatic spectatorship, is "not seeking to efface itself"[43].

Before considering how the portrait, an element ignored by Carey, can affect this dynamics, I would argue that the present tense is one of the keys for this perception of

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[41] As concerns the second dumb show, its nature as flashback rather than as an event in real time can also be contested, although less assuredly. II.ii is set in Camillo's house in Rome. Thanks to the conjuror's art, the Duke has been able to see what was happening simultaneously in his own palace in Padua, where Isabella is killed. In the second dumb show, we see how Camillo is murdered (drunk, he dances and while exercising on a vaulting horse, Flamineo breaks his neck) and Francisco arrests Flamineo, Marcello, and has some guards "*go as 'twere to apprehend* VITTORIA" (S.D.) The conjuror comments: "Yes, you saw them guarded, / And *now* they are come with purpose to apprehend / Your mistress, fair Vittoria; we are *now* / Beneath her roof: 'twere fit we *instantly* / Make out by some back postern" (48-52, emphasis mine). I would argue that the second dumb show could be a partial flashback, since Camillo's murder takes place not in his house but somewhere else, and the arrival of the guards is too quick had it happened in real time, even considering the necessity of dramatic economy. The sequence of temporal adverbs I have emphasised serves to give a sense of momentum to the end of the scene.
[42] Katherine M. Carey, *op. cit.* (2007): 74.
[43] Ibid: 77.

the paradoxical immediacy of this carefully constructed moment. I do not agree with some scholars who argue that the conjuring of the dumb shows "for Brachiano's exclusive viewing […] has the effect like the mime of distancing the horror"[44]. It is true that we can study Brachiano "as the deviser and director of these 'shows'"[45], but all the same, this does not prevent us from being moved by their action. Dena Goldberg's comment is revelatory (although Isabella's characterisation may be interpreted in a different light, as I will show):

> What I see in the scene is a well-conceived variation on the pattern of audience-watching-actor-observing-actor. I find the scene painful, not primarily because Isabella dies, or even because she dies sentimentally, but because Brachiano is watching. That Brachiano should be afforded this glimpse of Isabella's pathetic vulnerability is insufferable[46].

Originally, the murders that Flamineo had plotted with Brachiano should have been carried out with "silence or invisible cunning" (II.i 286-87). Instead, the multimodal nature of their enactment is intriguing. It is centred on the visual, of course, being a dumb show[47] (as the conjuror says, "your eye saw the rest, and can inform you / the engine of all" 45-46), but all the sensorial channels are included. Both pantomimes are accompanied by music (we infer that instruments were also played during the first dumb show from the conjuror's lines introducing the second one: "Strike *louder* music from this charmed ground / To yield, as fits the act, a tragic sound" 36-37, emphasis mine). The sense of touch is emblematised by Isabella's kissing of the portrait, while it is by smelling the poisonous vapours that she dies. Taste is also present through rhetorical imagery: the conjuror mentions Isabella's habit of "feed[ing] her eyes and lips" (27) on the portrait, while few lines later, Brachiano asks the conjuror to interpret the second dumb show for him, since he cannot "taste [it] fully" (39).

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[44] Richard Allen Cave, The White Devil *and* The Duchess of Malfi: *Text and Performance* (London: Macmillan, 1988): 35.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Dena Goldberg, "'By Report': The Spectator as Voyeur in Webster's *The White Devil*", *ELR*, Vol. 17, no. 1, 1987: 74.

[47] This multisensorial dimension should caution us from paying attention only to the visual. However, for an interesting parallel between this dumb show and the fantastic poisoned picture evoked by the painter in *Arden of Faversham*, see Tosi (1999) and Wassersug (2015): 238-243.

The way this multi-sensorial convergence is constructed in such a concentrated scene, along with the *mise-en-abyme* spectatorial structure, challenges the judgement of those critics who see it as "a notable opportunity for thrills and pathos [that yet] fad[es] into 'staged' unreality"[48], or as an episode "crudely managed by Webster, with Brachiano acting almost as a Dr. Watson to evoke by his questions a full account of the Conjuror's skill"[49]. By means of the simultaneous presence of all the five senses, Webster strives to fully engage his audience by appealing to their own sensorial capacity.

It is time now to focus on the poisoned picture. We should ask ourselves why Webster wanted to stage a poisoned picture, since toxic kissing had been used as a powerful dramatic device in some previous revenge tragedies against whose influence Webster arguably competed then on the stage. In Thomas Kyd's *Soliman and Perseda* (1592), Perseda dies, but only after she has poisoned with a kiss the emperor of the Turks, Soliman ("*Tyrant, my lips were sawst with deadly poison, / To plague thy hart that is so full of poyson*" (V.iv 117-18)[50]. Middleton resorted to this device twice, first in *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1606), when Vindice tricks the Duke into kissing the painted and poisoned skull of Gloriana, his bride who had been murdered by the despot. It may not be a coincidence that, at this point, Vindice calls the Duke "Royal villain! White devil!" (III.v 145)[51] Middleton used this device for the second time in 1611 in *The Lady's Tragedy* (traditionally known as *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*), just one year before the completion of *The White Devil*. Here, it is the lady's painted corpse that causes the death of the necrophiliac Tyrant. In this case, the revenger, Govianus, actually comes on stage playing the painter, and, soon enough, the Lady's ghost also appears.

It is clear that Webster tapped into this tradition, but he differentiated his scene in two ways: he inserted the device of the poisoned kiss in a dumb show and used a portrait. On the one hand, we have seen that the structure of this dumb show exploits the potentiality of hypermediacy along with immediacy. I would like to discuss now

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[48] Lee Bliss, *The World's Perspective: John Webster and the Jacobean Drama* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983): 110.
[49] Clifford Leech, *John Webster: A Critical Study* (New York: Haskell House, 1970): 45.
[50] Frederick S. Boas (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Kyd* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901): 227.
[51] Janet Clare (ed.), *Four Revenge Tragedies* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen, 2014): 214.

how the presence of a picture can contribute to this dynamics, since Carey does not consider at all the shaping agency of the portrait in her discussion.

An emblematic character was paramount in the pictures produced in the early years of the seventeenth century, when the native tradition of English portraiture was slowly moving from its schematic, medievalistic style to a more mimetic, naturalistic quality. At the same time, pictures were considered "traps for the gaze", many years before Lacan[52] came up with this definition. For example, on 11 June 1574, Languet wrote from Vienna to his friend, Sir Philip Sidney, telling him that he had been presented with the latter's portrait, painted by Paolo Veronese: "Master Corbett showed me your portrait, which I kept with me some hours to feast my eyes on it, but my appetite was rather increased than diminished by the sight"[53]. Staged portraits can thus be both a semiotically potent ocular focus, and objects steeped in cultural practices and interpersonal negotiations.

The role of the portrait as a primary focus in the dumb show is reinforced by its revelation, hanging, as was normal in real life, behind a curtain. This is an important element: dumb shows were often revealed to the audience by unveiling them as *tableaux vivants*. Now, as the classical study on Elizabethan dumb shows justly states, "only the back-stage was probably concealed by a curtain which could be drawn back. [...] Usually, however, only *tableaux* or smaller episodes are presented in such a way, not extensive scenes with dialogue"[54]. It is essential to consider the practical conditions of the staging of the dumb shows in *The White Devil*. I do not think that it is necessary to imagine that the conjuror and Brachiano view them from a gallery[55]. Their presence onstage can greatly contribute to the perspectival game triggered by the scene. A double unveiling to reveal the first dumb show and then the portrait would be a very interesting way to stage it. The first dumb show in its purported intimacy (which, as we shall see, is disrupted by the great number of onlookers

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[52] Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller (London: Penguin Books, transl. by Alan Sheridan, 1979): 89.

[53] Quoted in Malcolm William Wallace, *The Life of Philip Sidney* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915): 136.

[54] Dieter Mehl, *The Elizabethan Dumb Show* (London and New York: Methuen, 1965): 136, n.1.

[55] Thus I disagree with the intriguing view that Brachiano's "perspective in this scene is that of the parodying God looking down on his work of anti-Creation (it seems reasonable to suggest that Brachiano may at the Red Bull have been here in the Heavens of an upper stage)" (Frederick O. Waage, The White Devil *Discover'd: Backgrounds and Foregrounds to Webster's Tragedy*, Berne, Frankfurt am Main […]: Peter Lang, 1984): 48.

watching it), would benefit from such a choice. The second dumb show, with its more acrobatic movements, would perhaps require a bigger room, which could be achieved once the curtain has fallen again on Isabella's murder, leaving the centre stage free for the second pantomime. On the other hand, if the picture were not curtained again, it would hang throughout the duration of the second pantomime, standing out as a prominent prop. Alternatively, as Purcell and Wassersug suggest[56], both dumb shows could take place in the discovery space. However, I argue that the conjuror's instruction to Brachiano ("Now turn another way", 34) could indicate a change of locale onstage.

We know that Webster was fond of the curtain device: the characters in his plays often use the "traverse", the curtain or screen available both in public and private theatres. One may think of the aforementioned terrible ordeal to which the Duchess of Malfi is subjected. In *The White Devil*, there is another "traverse scene": Flamineo in V.iv draws the traverse to see Cornelia (the matriarch of the Accorombona clan), Vittoria's servant Zanche, and other three ladies mourning over Marcello's corpse. This is Cornelia's mad scene: it seems that the Red Bull had then sufficient space to enable frenzied action even in the back-stage area. The drawing of a curtain could then become a recurrent theme in *The White Devil*, linking scenes of discovery: unveiling pictures, the self, and death.

Webster knew how interesting a portrait can become when shown hanging on the stage partly owing to his friendship with Thomas Dekker. There are many clues that make it possible to suggest him as the author of the play *A Warning for Fair Women* (anonymously published in 1599)[57]. That play also features a dumb show, which is commented on by Tragedy herself. The allegorical personification of Lust instructs a murderer to strike down a tree, and Chastity shows the adulteress, Mistress Sanders, that this fallen tree symbolises the death of her husband: Chastity "*brings her to her husbands picture hanging on the wall, and pointing to the tree, seemes to tell her, that that is the tree so rashly cut downe*"[58]. We may note that *The White Devil* also has a striking passage concerning a tree: in I.ii, Vittoria describes a dream she has had, in

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[56] Stephen Purcell, *John Webster:* The White Devil (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012): 25, and Yolana Wassersug, *op. cit.* (2015): 82.

[57] I owe this information to Dr. Martin Wiggins (Shakespeare Institute, Birmingham University) in a private conversation Wiggins is working on a forthcoming publication on this subject.

[58] Charles D. Cannon (ed.), *A Warning for Fair Women* (Den Haag and Paris: Mouton, 1975): 134.

which Isabella and Camillo try to cut down a yew tree (with a clear pun on "you", as she is telling this dream to Brachiano). This passage can be regarded as Webster's tribute to Dekker; however, he makes both elements more complex. As regards the staged portrait, the prop becomes the actual vehicle for the murder, in the middle of a baroque[59] multisensorial display, while in Dekker's play, the staging portrait is a merely allegorical device foreshadowing the crime. The stageability of this portrait's presentation should be noted: it is a big picture of a man, and the similarity to the actor playing Brachiano must be ensured, which would be more problematic in the case of women characters played by boys.

To recapitulate, the picture acquires great salience in this scene, owing to its prominence in the action[60] and its structural significance. I would argue that it becomes a third frame in the spectatorial construction of II.ii. Not only does it provide a further window through which the scene can be seen (we watch Brachiano watching the characters watching it), but an active one, since it looks back. It looks back at Isabella and the other bystanders, at Brachiano himself, and at us. The picture, then, may be termed as a focaliser as well as a focus. In the next section, I consider its agency by grounding it in its cultural context. However, I would like to stress that the portrait, however essential, provides only *one* visually centripetal focus in II.ii, in a play built on multiperspectivism.

Close Reading of the First Dumb Show II: The Portrait as an Agent and its Socio-Cultural Associations

The picture in the first dumb show is not to be seen only as a primarily optical focus. It is also an agent, since, in the play, it is twice referred to as such from a grammatical point of view. The conjuror says that "She's poisoned, / By the fum'd picture" (24-

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[59] I do not capitalise "baroque" in order to signal my awareness that this category can only be problematically applied to Webster's (or indeed, any Jacobean dramatist's) works. For a study that tries to describe Webster's play and worldview in such terms, see Ralph Berry, *The Art of John Webster* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).

[60] Should one feel the need to talk ill of John Tatham's poor dramatic craftsmanship, one could discuss his late play *The Distracted State*, in which he also uses the device of a toxic picture, but absurdly has the poisoning take place offstage. For this play's interesting involvement in the politics of the Protectorate period, however, see Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 165-171.

25). Later, Zanche repeats this and her lines reinforce the sense that it was the portrait that killed Isabella. Zanche states that the picture killed her, just as Flamineo killed Camillo: "Isabella / The Duke of Florence's sister was empoison'd, / By a fum'd picture: and Camillo's neck / Was broke by damn'd Flamineo" (V.iii 245-48). The helmet used to poison Brachiano in V.iii is not given this sense of agency: "The helmet is poison'd", cries the Duke (5). Moreover, the portrait is described as if it really were a human *alter ego* of Brachiano: Isabella "visits" it (II.ii 26). This relevance can be assessed by considering the transactional uses of portraits and their social life as property in the Renaissance, especially in the case of gentlewomen.

We need to consider the way Isabella interacts with the portrait. The conjuror tells Brachiano that "it was her custom nightly, / Before she went to bed, to go and visit / Your picture" (25-27). We have no reason not to believe the conjuror, since he is the instrument used by Webster to communicate important information; for instance, he tells us that Lodovico has fallen in love with Isabella. When her son Giovanni communicates her death to his uncle, he states: "I have known her wake an hundred nights, / When all the pillow, where she laid her head, / Was brine-wet with her tears" (III.ii 327-29). We are invited to imagine that she waked and cried, possibly, upon looking at Brachiano's attractive portrait. Webster stresses this in the way he portrays the Duke's character. In the historical sources[61], Brachiano was an obese, unattractive man: he was so overweight that he was granted special permission not to kneel before the Pope[62]. We do not know how much of this Webster knew, but, in the play, Brachiano is consistently characterised as a handsome, athletic man. His looks need to impress the audience, and when his looks literally murder Isabella, the theme of hypocrisy, of deceit, of "the white devil", comes to the fore. Webster's very subtle treatment can also be traced in the use of a man's poisoned picture, since we would expect a stereotypical "painted woman" to be the vehicle of infection and corruption.

Isabella's gestures were bound to provoke concern as an instance of idolatry. Abraham Woodhead, whose treatise *Concerning Images and Idolatry* was published

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[61] For Webster's sources, see the classic R. W. Dent, *John Webster's Borrowing* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960), and Gunnar Boklund, *The Sources of* The White Devil (New York: Haskell House, 1966).

[62] Referred to in Mariangela Tempera, "Da *Dark Lady* a *White Devil*. Il Caso di Vittoria Accoramboni", in Maria Chiabò and Federico Doglio (eds), *Tragedie Popolari del Cinquecento Europeo* (Rome: Edizioni Torre D'Orfeo, 1997): 154.

late in the 1690s, testifies to the irony that Catholics found in Protestants who could not worship the effigies of God, but were still allowed to own "the picture of paramours in every house" and could "place in their closet, kiss or embrace, the picture or effigy of a person whom they dearly love[d]"[63]. In Isabella's case, it is admittedly the picture of her husband, not of some "paramour", but her attitude had to stir a slight *frisson*. She actively exploits the connotations of religious worshipping. Moreover, in the dumb show, she does not play the role of a divorcée (the inverted ritual[64] of marriage has just taken place in the previous scene), but that of a widow. In II.i, she refers to herself as such: "[…] I upon a woeful widowed bed / Shall pray for you, if not to turn your eyes / Upon your wretched wife, and hopeful son, / Yet that in time you'll fix them upon heaven" (210-13).

Widows' performative negotiations have already been discussed in the previous chapter on *Hamlet*'s closet scene. Webster indeed seems to refer us to Shakespeare's play when he has Flamineo exclaim: "Shroud you within this closet, good my lord" (I.ii 36), the phrasing used by Polonius in the closet scene of *Hamlet*'s First Quarto. One of the most famous women intellectuals of the Renaissance, Vittoria Colonna, referred to widows' memorial rites through portraiture: "the widow in her affliction finds solace in gazing every day upon her husband's picture"[65]. A classical example would be the myth of Protesilaus and Laodamia: after her husband's death, Laodamia had his effigies made and, as Robert Burton quotes, "*[i]lla domi sedens, Imaginem ejus fixis oculis assidué conspicata*"[66] ("she sat in her house with her eyes constantly fixed on his picture"). Isabella, in her display of devotion, stages exactly this practice.

One should not deny Isabella's true feelings towards Brachiano, but her characterisation is very ambiguous. Generally contrasted with Vittoria, Isabella is considered the character "who comes even close to being the moral centre in this

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[63] Quoted in Keith Thomas, "Art and Iconoclasm in Early Modern England", in Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (eds), *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006): 33.

[64] See James Hurt, "Inverted Rituals in Webster's *The White Devil*", *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Vol. LXI, Jan., 1962: 42-47; and Elizabeth Williamson, "The Domestication of Religious Objects in *The White Devil*", *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, Vol. 47, no. 2, 2007: 473-490.

[65] Quoted in Christopher Hare, *The Most Illustrious Ladies of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: Cosimo, 2008 [1907]): 300.

[66] Rhonda L. Blair, Thomas C. Faulkner and Nicolas K. Kiessling (eds), *Robert Burton's* The Anatomy of Melancholy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997): Vol. III, 177, n. "p".

play"[67]. However, "[t]here is a touch of the self-deceiver as well as of the manipulator" in her: "It would be an overstatement to insist that she should be played as a hypocrite, but Webster (as so often) deliberately blurs the distinction between the mask and the face behind it"[68]. It would be beyond the scope of this chapter to fully discuss the portrayal of femininity in the play, but we certainly can take into consideration her devotion to the picture in the dumb show.

Of course, married women, not only widows, knew how to show their devotion to their spouses through portraiture. An example can be a minor painting genre, that of wives holding a picture of their husband. Consider, for instance, the *Portrait of a Woman Holding the Portrait of a Man* (c. 1525-30) by the Bergamask painter Bernardino Licinio (see Illustration no. 6)[69]. The woman depicted probably commissioned this picture when her husband had to leave their family, perhaps for professional reasons. The wife here gazes sadly into the distance, lovingly holding her husband's picture. As Alberti stated (a view frequently repeated after him), painting can make "the absent present"[70] – moreover, her affection for her husband is rendered visible to all.

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[67] Marcus Nordlund, *The Dark Lantern. A Historical Study of Sight in Shakespeare, Webster, and Middleton* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1999): 375.

[68] Charles R. Forker, *op. cit.* (1986): 268. The most vivid interpretation of Isabella's behaviour is the one provided by Rowland Wymer, commenting on her revengeful speech in II.i 245-49: "To hear this stream of abuse issuing from Isabella's lips is shocking in the way that the guttural oaths which come from the possessed young girl in *The Exorcist* are shocking" (*Webster and Ford*, Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 1995: 44).

[69] It is discussed in Andrea Bayer (ed.), *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008): 270-71.

[70] Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, transl. by John R. Spencer, 1966): 63.

Illustration no. 6

However conventional in her attitude, Isabella's behaviour finds a startling correspondence with a passionate sonnet by an Italian woman poet, Francesca Turina Bufalini, Countess of Stupinigi, *On Her Lord Husband's Portrait* (1628):

> [...] Ben riconosco le sembianze e gli occhi
> del mio signore e la bell'aria umana:
> e l'ardente desio fa che ti tocchi.
> Lassa! Ma pasco il sen d'un'ombra vana
> e dico fra pensier' torbidi e sciocchi: –
> misera, di dolor vôi farti insana? – (9-14)

[I recognize very well the features and eyes of my lord and his kindly air, and my ardent desire makes me touch you. Alas! I am feeding my breast with a vain shadow and tell myself amid my troubled, foolish thoughts, "Poor wretch, will you let grief drive you mad?"][71]

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[71] Both text and translation are to be found in Virginia Cox, *Lyric Poetry by Women of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013): 156.

Here, the woman is addressing the picture of her husband, who does not come to rescue her from Fortune's slings and arrows. The final lines, however reminiscent of the typical traits of Petrarchism, are very dramatic and would make for a fitting caption to Isabella's pantomime.

It is also important to notice the crowd of people who watch Isabella kiss the picture: beside the two spectatorial frames (the first, Brachiano and the conjuror; the second, we as audience), her actions are viewed by her *innamorato* and revenger-to-be Lodovico, her son Giovanni, the ghost character Guidantonio, "and others waiting on her" (S.D.). Webster crowds this dumb show not only with spectators functional to the plot (the revenger, and her son), but with many general witnesses. The fact that she enters "in her night gown as to bedward" and yet is surrounded by so many people, as if she were a queen, should catch our attention. The scene is packed to saturation with viewers, and Isabella displays this devotion in front of them. Whereas the references to prayer and piety would prompt us to think about her standing in front of the picture in her bedchamber or in her closet, she keeps it in a public hall or a gallery. Among all these bystanders, she behaves like a would-be sovereign. Like Vittoria, she "reveal[s] a heightened awareness of the theatre"[72]. But while Vittoria confesses that she "could not pray" in her dream about the yew-tree (I.ii 248), Isabella flaunts her devotion. All the different gazes can thus concentrate on Isabella's performance and the gaze of the picture itself. At the same time, however, the spectators' own gazes seem to be invited to ricochet and reverberate around, owing to the optical saturation of the scene.

Directors have occasionally recognised the importance of the picture in the scene. For instance, in Gale Edwards' production for the RSC in 1996, the tragedy opened with Isabella kissing Brachiano's huge portrait propped on a balcony. The picture remained there, dominating the stage, until Isabella's murder, when it suddenly vanished to reveal a pile of skulls: a sudden manifestation of the vanity and deception of the world. More recently, Maria Aberg[73] directed another production in 2014, also for the RSC. It was a daring take on the play, which foregrounded the sexism and misogyny that still infect our society. As concerns the picture, it was a framed

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[72] Christina Luckyj, "Gender, Rhetoric and Performance in *The White Devil*", in Stevie Simkin (ed.), *Revenge Tragedy* (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave, 2001): 193.

[73] I would like to thank Maria Aberg for personally answering my questions and sending me a few useful photos of her production. I would also like to thank Christine Schwanecke (Mannheim University) for sharing her memories of this production with me.

photograph of Isabella's family: it portrayed not only Brachiano, but also their son Giovanni. It was a very intimate scene, with Isabella brushing her teeth, getting ready for bed. When she was poisoned by kissing the photo, a huge video projection was deployed to emphasise her death. Before Lodovico and little Giovanni rushed to her, it became evident that she had had a miscarriage by the bloodstains which appeared on her groin. By poisoning her and her baby, Brachiano's narcissism kills both his wife and his future.

Visibility and the Other Pictures in the Play

We have considered Isabella's performance of devotion as exemplary of Webster's treatment of public and private spaces. Another instance is this exchange between Flamineo and a lawyer, in a short scene ushering in Vittoria's arraignment:

> LAWYER: "My lord Duke and she have been very private."
> FLAMINEO: "You are a dull ass; 'tis threat'ned they have been / very public." (III.i 18-20)

Intimacy seems to be always denied, and the spectators themselves are often given the role of witnesses, gossips, and voyeurs in the claustrophobic locales of the play. "One distinguishing feature of the idiosyncratic world of Webster's *The White Devil* is the almost total absence of privacy"[74]. Everybody eavesdrops and spies, in the virtual awareness of being watched in turn. Visibility is a key feature of the life of these characters: the more one is watched, the greater importance one enjoys. Hence the spectacular pageantry of, for instance, the papal election in IV.iii, or of the barriers in V.ii (the jousting game organised to celebrate Brachiano and Vittoria's wedding). Hence the necessity of theatricality. Still, pictures and visibility can kill.

Alex Cox's screenplay acknowledges this theme and amplifies it. Cardinal Monticelso becomes a tychoon who owns TV studios. Vittoria's trial is turned into a talk show. Paparazzi lurk and haunt the nobility. Parties are held in houses full of TV monitors. The screenplay ends with the dizzying flash of cameras:

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[74] Dena Goldberg, *op. cit.* (1987): 67.

"More FLASH PHOTOS are taken – of FLAMINEO, of his dead sister, of his dead girlfriend.

   FLASH!

      FLASH!

         FLA --"

It has often been noted[75] that essays on *The White Devil* rely on the imagery of flashes of light in the darkness to describe it. Cox literalises this imagery. However, another related aspect that recurs in the play is the ghostly presence of pictures, which are sometimes conjured at crucial points in the action.

Until II.ii (the dumb show), references to pictures are sparse. In I.i, Lodovico is sick of hearing the false, "painted comforts" (50) the courtiers offer him. In the following scene, Flamineo tries to pacify Camillo by saying that a man infected with jealousy normally "makes his own shadow his cuckold-maker" (I.ii 112-13). In II.i, Monticelso shows an emblem to his nephew and interprets it. After Isabella's murder, however, pictures acquire greater significance. In the trial scene, Vittoria and Cardinal Monticelso launch their rhetorical attacks with great skill: Monticelso, in particular, employs the imagery of painting to vilify Vittoria. He intends to "paint out / [Her] follies in more natural red and white / Than that upon [her] cheek" (51-53). Her house "counterfeited a prince's court" (75). Monticelso wants to make her as passive as a work of art to be gazed at: "Observe this creature" (57), "And look upon this creature was his wife" (119). The woman, however, also masters oratory and is the first to refer directly to a picture: "These are but feigned shadows of my evils. / Terrify babes, my lord, with painted devils" (145-46). This leads Monticelso to characterise her explicitly as a counterfeit portrait: "If the devil / Did ever take good shape behold his picture" (215-16); "I yet but draw the curtain, now to your picture" (242).

The theme is also interestingly deployed in the scene (IV.i) where Isabella's ghost appears to her brother, Duke Francisco. He plans to revenge her and, in order to whet his purpose, he conjures her mental image through *ars memoriae*:

   To fashion my revenge more seriously,

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[75] Samuel Schuman, *op. cit.* (1982): 1 and ff.

Let me remember my dear sister's face:
Call for her picture: no; I'll close mine eyes,
And in a melancholic thought I'll frame
  Enter ISABEL[L]A*'s Ghost.*
Her figure 'fore me. Now I ha't – how strong
Imagination works! How she can frame
Things which are not! Methinks she stands afore me;
And by the quick idea of my mind,
Were my skill pregnant, I could draw her picture.
Thought, as a subtle juggler, makes us deem
Things supernatural, which have cause
Common as sickness. 'Tis my melancholy.
How cam'st thou by thy death? — How idle am I
To question mine own idleness — Did ever
Man dream awake till now? –Remove this object,
Out of my brain with't: what have I to do
With tombs, or death-beds, funerals, or tears,
That have to meditate upon revenge?
[*Exit Ghost.*]   (IV.i 98-115)

This remarkable speech comments on the entrance of Isabella's ghost: killed by a portrait, she has now become herself a picture in the mind of her brother. Francisco owns the picture of Isabella (100), but prefers to evoke her mnemonic, dynamic image. Imagination can "frame" it better than a painter, but again Webster's interest in portraiture re-emerges: "Were my skill pregnant, I could draw her picture" (106). The playwright is at pains to establish the fictional status of the ghost, who needs to be compared with the later "terrible vision" (V.iv 146) "beyond melancholy" (141) of the actual ghost of Brachiano that appears to Flamineo. The spectators do see Isabella's ghost, however, and this uncertainty is also bound up with the power of ekphrasis.

Cox, aware of the importance of pictures in the play, even adds two of them to his screenplay. Right at the beginning, we see Flamineo flipping through the pages of a magazine: "On the cover is DUKE BRACCIANO. FLAMINEO is in the photo, half-obscured, in sun-glasses". Overjoyed at this, he shows it to his mother and looks for further photos. When he finds one showing himself, Vittoria, and Brachiano, he kisses it. In Act Five, just after Brachiano's death, we find ourselves in his kitsch banqueting hall in the basement of his mansion, which is dominated by "a large, heroic portrait of BRACCIANO and his CARS". Flamineo admires it, while Vittoria, in mourning, speaks to it.

The references to pictures in the play constitute a thematic thread that begs to be taken into account. Pictures are copies of an original: the fact of owning them is

linked with the desire of exerting power over the person portrayed. Being a copy, however, they are inauthentic, and thus painting is connected both with mimetic theatricality and with hypocrisy, which are two of the crucial topics explored in the play. Looking and the degree of awareness of being looked at are the central tenets of subjectivity in *The White Devil*. In its multimodality, the play does not preclude the other senses from granting us access to reality: "Webster's sensationalism needs to be taken in its philosophical sense – that all we know is derived from the senses – and that for Webster's characters, does not amount to very much"[76].

Disorienting Perspectives and Converting Viewpoints

In *The White Devil*, internal and external spectators find themselves caught in a prismatic reality. There is no stable point of view, and characterisation poses more questions than the answers it provides[77]. Vittoria is a negative character, but her defence of herself and endurance manage to move us. Cardinal Monticelso is a hypocritical manipulator, but what of his conversion to non-violence in Act IV? Isabella is a woman passionately in love with her husband, but she also stages herself as such. Francisco as a political figure cannot be regarded as a disinterested man and his influence over young Giovanni hardly forebodes any good. Brachiano is unscrupulous and vain, but his terrible death also elicits a pathetic reaction from the audience. Lodovico revenges Isabella, but we know that he has been a wastrel, a pirate, and the perpetrator of "certain murders" in the capital (I.i 31). We can even identify with Flamineo, the Machiavellian character of the piece, and his individualistic rebellion. As unsettling as the use of stagecraft in the play is,

> The deliberate mixing of forms imparts to *The White Devil* a disorienting sense of fragmentation and uncertainty, a feeling that experience is puzzlingly discontinuous, its perspectives wrenched and shifting, its values unstable and self-canceling[78].

The spectators are offered too many such perspectives, and the viewpoints alternatively coalesce or clash against each other. We are invited to assimilate them

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[76] Marcus Nordlund, *op. cit.* (1999): 357.
[77] Alessandro Serpieri calls the characters in the play "personaggi prospettici" (in *John Webster*, Bari: Adriatica, 1966: 158).
[78] Charles R. Forker, *op. cit*. (1986): 254.

according to the prevalent angle of the moment: *The White Devil* is a night-piece with many foci.

When the lawyer begins his accusation of Vittoria in the trial scene, he asks Monticelso, acting as judge, to do as follows: "Domine Judex *converte oculos* in hanc pestem mulierum corruptissimam" (III.ii 10-11, emphasis mine). This literally means "Lord Judge, turn your eyes upon this most corrupt plague among women". However, in Latin, it would be more usual to say "*converte oculos ad*" rather than "*in*". There may be a pun here on the other sense of "*convertere*": to convert, that is, transform into something or convert oneself into something else. We could also translate the phrase, then, as, "convert your eyes in(to) this most corrupt plague among women". This may be metadramatically what the spectators are invited to do: assimilate the viewpoints and partake of their perspectival angle.

Drama can be seen as one of the most multi-voiced literary genres (though not polyphonic *sensu* Bakhtin). *The White Devil* is not only multi-voiced, but in its multimodality, it espouses multiperspectivism. The clearest instance of this is the multi-layered, plurisensorial construction of the dumb shows in II.ii. I hope to have shown how the portrait as a semiotic focus as well as a transactional agent acquires, through recurring imagery, more and more importance as the play develops, and contributes to this amalgamation and transformation of viewpoint, a mixing which does not result in an absolute "*dérive du regard*", but in a continuous cognitive displacement.

II.3 Philip Massinger's *The Picture* (1630): Impregnable Women and Pregnable Pictures

A beautiful and clever woman. Her worthy but jealous husband. An enchanted picture which changes colour if the wife should be tempted into adultery. These are the ingredients of Philip Massinger's tragicomedy *The Picture*, staged by the King's Men both at the Globe and at the Blackfriars in 1629, and published in 1630. It is a play of passion and magic that delves into the dynamics of jealousy, doubt, and honour. It is a text steeped in the early modern concoction of traditional views of the body and soul with the new perspectives of scepticism. It is also a lively discussion of theatricality in social life and it provides us with fascinating glimpses into the construction of gender in early Stuart culture. Philip Massinger manages to dramatise all these questions by profoundly exploiting the picture as a prop: its (in)visibility, its mimetic representation, and its performativity.

It is important to note that this story (of a beautiful wife, a jealous husband, and a magic object) has crossed entire continents, and has been retold and changed many times[1]. The main source of the play is a novella by Matteo Bandello (first published in 1554), via William Painter's translation in his *Palace of Pleasure* (1566), but Massinger also knew its adaptation in verse by George Whetstone (*The Rock of Regard*, 1576) and (presumably)[2] an oral version of Adam of Cobsam's *The Wright's Chaste Wife* (c. 1462). While Cobsam's poem has its source in a tale within the hugely successful *Gesta Romanorum*, Bandello's novella derives from an episode found in *Perceforest*, a courtly *roman-fleuve*. Both, however, find their formative nucleus in a Buddhist tale from third-century India which had migrated to Persia, Turkey, and, as we have seen, to medieval Europe. In turn, Bandello's version and the

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[1] For a succinct philological overview, see the splendid essay by Lorna Hutson, "Probable Infidelities from Bandello to Massinger" in Mary Ellen Lamb and Valerie Wayne (eds), *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2009): 219-35. On the episode in the *Perceforest*, see Gaston Paris, "Le Conte de la Rose dans le Roman de Perceforest", *Romania*, Vol. 23, 1894: 78-140. For the original nucleus in India, see N. M. Penzer *The Ocean of Story, Being C.H. Tawney's Translation of Somadeva's Katha sarit sagara (…)*, (London: Chas. J. Sawyer LTD, 1924): Vol. I, 153 and ff. Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richarson in their Catalogue postulate that the no-longer extant play *Lady Barbara* performed in the 1571-2 season would also have had Bandello's novella as its source, but unfortunately we only have the title as evidence.

[2] Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson (eds), *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976): Vol. III, 183. This is the edition of Massinger's play to which I will refer throughout the chapter and for all other plays by Massinger except *The Renegado*.

episode as recounted in *Perceforest* would spawn adaptations up to the second half of the nineteenth century. It was Bandello who importantly introduced a picture as the magical object: before him, it had been a flower which would wither, or a spotless shirt which would become dirty if the wife proved unchaste. The picture is not only a symbol, but an icon (it resembles the wife) and an index (standing in relation with her body and soul). Bandello makes the image turn yellow (although it soon regains its original colour): none of the antecedents changed their colour at all, since the wife always proved irreproachable. Massinger of course explored and made a central use of this mutability.

I am not particularly interested in these relations of filiation as such; what intrigues me is why such a story proved so popular in so many different contexts and cultures, and how Massinger changed and explored it. While the rest of the chapter addresses this second question, I immediately wish to argue that this story was so successful because it portrays masculine anxiety over the possession of a woman. Each cultural context has changed aspects of the plot, but what remains as the bedrock of the story is the patriarchal apprehension of male individuality (his being), which he sees as strongly linked with what he owns (his having a wife). In this sense, it is interesting to ponder over the engagement of this text with the early modern culture. Mark Breitenberg, in his study *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) has demonstrated that, whereas the very phrase "anxious masculinity" may be redundant *per se* and inherently volatile, the early modern period saw a particular insistence on an anxiety of masculine identity that simultaneously perpetuated and destabilised patriarchal economy. It was a system which "construct[ed] masculine identity as dependent on the coercive and symbolic regulation of women's sexuality"[3] and one that could not help "reveal[ing] the fissures and contradictions"[4] which underlay it. One could also add the more recent insights provided by Nancy Selleck on the interpersonal dimension of selfhood construal, signalling among early modern thinkers the prevalent "sense that one's identity

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[3] Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 175.
[4] Ibid.: 2.

inheres *first* in the other"[5]. What troubles this system is when "woman" ceases to be regarded simply as "the Other", when gender categories are interrogated and become blurred. This is exactly what happens in many dramatic texts that have at their core the investigation of mimetic representation itself.

As often stated in this dissertation, the theatre capitalises on the optical exchanges of "looking at someone looking at" something and somebody. The acts of looking and seeing intercept the aforementioned dynamics between "being" and "having", and the magic miniature in the play is endowed with rich and diverse schemes of reference. Massinger's *The Picture* deserves more attention than it has heretofore garnered[6] firstly, because here pictures and images do not necessarily re-present what is perceived as "reality"; secondly, because this play gives valuable information on gender and identity construction in the early modern period; and thirdly, because here women get to look back.

Synopsis of the Play

A married couple, the knight Mathias and his beautiful wife Sophia, have lived serenely in their small fief in Bohemia until Mathias decides he needs to improve their finances. Sophia is of nobler lineage but had agreed to marry him out of love. Now he feels they cannot go on with those modest means and wants to leave and serve the good king of Hungary, Ladislaus, who is waging war against the Turks. Sophia tries to dissuade him, but eventually she lets him go. As soon as Sophia exits accompanied by her faithful and spirited maid Corisca and the funny servant Hilario, Mathias reveals to the audience that he is consumed by jealousy. As long as he had been

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[5] Nancy Selleck, *The Interpersonal Idiom in Shakespeare, Donne, and Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 6. See also Brian Cummings and Freya Sierhuis (eds), *Passions and Subjectivity in Early Modern Culture* (Burlington and Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

[6] It must be said, however, that the value of *The Picture* has at last been acknowledged: it has been repeatedly presented at the "Read Not Dead" series of staged readings at Shakespeare's Globe and was performed in a unanimously acclaimed production at the Salisbury Playhouse in 2010, directed by Philip Wilson. Moreover, a number of essays have been published, making it probably the most scholarly appreciated tragicomedy by Massinger. See, beside Hutson's "Probable Infidelities", Erin Obermueller, "'On cheating Pictures': Gender and Portrait Miniatures in Philip Massinger's *The Picture*", *Early Theatre*, Vol. 10, no. 2, 2007; Joanne Rochester, *Staging Spectatorship in the Plays of Philip Massinger*, Burlington and Farnham: Ashgate, 2010: 95-124; Bradley D. Ryner, *Performing Economic Thought: English Drama and Mercantile Writing, 1600-1642* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014): 188-212. Obermueller also investigates gender in the play, but she does not consider the discourses of humouralism and magic, which I believe are very interesting.

beside her, Sophia had always been the ideal wife: wise, obedient, and virtuous. Now that he will be absent, who can give him proof that she will remain faithful? Thus he confesses that he has asked a friend, Julio Baptista, "[o]ne deepely read in natures hidden secrets" (I.i 119), for help. Baptista tries to make Mathias change his mind, but then gives him a magic miniature of Sophia which will turn yellow if she is tempted into adultery, and black should she yield completely. They leave together and Mathias saves the day at the battle against the Turks. Thanks to his military exploits, he gains the admiration of General Ferdinand, who takes him to the capital, Alba Regalis. The court is a place full of dangers and trouble. In spite of the old counsellor Eubulus' warnings, King Ladislaus is in utter thrall of his wife, Queen Honoria, who is treated like a goddess amid masques and festivities, while the war against the Turks is barely considered. On the arrival of the victorious troops, however, Mathias is generously welcomed by the royals and a couple of libertine courtiers, Ubaldo and Ricardo, who become envious of his fortune. Mathias catches the queen's attention when he rashly shows her and her attendants the picture of his wife, extolling Sophia's beauty and chastity. Honoria cannot brook the idea of being compared with such a paragon. She persuades Mathias to stay in the city, then kidnaps him (along with Baptista) and tries to seduce him, while sending Ubaldo and Ricardo to taint Sophia's faithfulness. The two libertines slander Mathias saying that he has become a prostitute at court and encouraging Sophia to take revenge by having sex with them. Sophia is furious and seems to agree with their plan and suddenly, the picture changes colour just as Mathias is showing it to Baptista to prove his wife's chastity. Enraged, Mathias says he will comply with the queen's desires out of spite. Fortunately, neither breach of fidelity takes place. Sophia understands that Ubaldo and Ricardo are corrupt defamers and imprisons them, making them reel and spin as women servants and almost starving them. Mathias manages to make Honoria acknowledge her faults, who accepts to be on the same level of the king, and all of them go to Bohemia. There, Sophia tricks Mathias: first, by behaving immodestly, kissing the attendants, as if she had indeed been unfaithful to her husband and then by submitting a separation petition to the king; she wants to spend the rest of her life in meditation. Hilario, however, brings onstage Ubaldo and Ricardo; the truth comes out, and Mathias swears he will never be jealous again: Baptista will abjure his art and Mathias will burn the picture.

Between Magic and Science, Following Della Porta

In his 1805 edition of Massinger's plays, William Gifford mentions "an ingenious conjecture"[7] of his friend Octavius Gilchrist: Massinger would have named his character Julio Baptista after the famous polymath Giovanni Battista Della Porta (Vico Equense, 1535- Naples, 1615). This suggestion was reiterated by the editors of the canonical edition of Massinger's collected plays in 1976. Bandello had not given a name to this character, saying that he was an old scholar from Poland, and William Painter in his translation had turned this geographical information into a name, Pollacco. A key figure straddling the traditional realm of magic and the new science, Della Porta wrote on physiognomy, the art of memory, optics, chiromancy, etymology, cryptography, agriculture, and engineering. A few facts concerning his reception[8] may give us an idea of his status: his experiments with the telescope were acknowledged by Johannes Kepler; he publicly disputed with Tommaso Campanella on the origin of the occult properties of nature; he co-founded the Accademia degli Oziosi in Naples and was a leading member of the Accademia dei Lincei in Rome. His most famous treatise was *Magiae Naturalis, sive de Miraculis rerum naturalium* which he published in four books in 1558, and expande into twenty books by 1589. This work was widely known throughout Europe: from Emperor Rudolf II in Prague, who read it avidly, to Ben Jonson who repeatedly used it and mentioned Della Porta in the glosses of his masques.

Massinger should also have been familiar with his name because Della Porta was a prolific dramatist whose plays are remarkable for their finely-plotted structure and lively dialogue. A few of his comedies were staged and adapted in early Stuart England, both in the universities and in the public theatres. What may have particularly struck Massinger was what Della Porta wrote of the *camera obscura*. He is considered one of its inventors and he was the first who associated it with both the

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[7] William Gifford (ed.), *The Plays of Philip Massinger* (London: G. and W. Nicol, 1805): Vol. III, 118, n. 5.

[8] See Paolo Piccari, *Giovan Battista Della Porta. Il filosofo, il retore, lo scienziato* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2007); Maurizio Torrini (ed.), *Giovan Battista Della Porta nell'Europa del suo tempo. Atti del Convegno di Vico Equense 29 settembre - 3 ottobre 1986* (Naples: Guida, 1990); George Louise Clubb, *Giambattista Della Porta Dramatist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965). For an introduction to Renaissance magic, see Giuseppe Fornari, *Mediazione, Magia, Desiderio in Leonardo e nel Rinascimento* (Poggio a Caiano: CB Edizioni, 2012).

art of painting and theatre. He advises: "one that is skilled in painting must lay on colours where they are in the Table, and shall describe the manner of the countenance so the image being removed, the picture will remain on the table"[9]. He also delighted in producing kaleidoscopic effects and projecting images which would float in the air, magnifying them and mixing them with other pictures:

> Once his audience's eyes adjusted to the darkness of the room, what they saw was truly cinematic. Projected before them was a drama acted out by miniature two-dimensional characters. They were in awe. Those who disbelieved Della Porta's explanation of the illusion even accused him of sorcery[10].

It is true that Massinger's knowledge of Della Porta can only be hypothesised. "Baptista", after all, was a common Italian name. But I hope to demonstrate that this reading of the play – as evidence of a transition between the traditional realm of natural philosophy and humouralism, and the new science with its empiricism –can highly enrich our understanding of the text.

There are many elements of Della Porta's work that could have interested Massinger. He lavishly discussed the effects of imagination and optics. Here are some headings to the sections of *Magia Naturalis*: "Of the wonderful force of imagination; and how to produce party-colored births"; "How rays are to be colored by a mixture of Metals"; "How characters may be made, that at set days shall vanish from the paper"; "How without a Glass or representation of any other thing, an image may seem to hang in the air"; "How we may see in a Chamber things that are not". All these topics would have made Della Porta's figure the ideal model for Massinger's Baptista. He even had something to say about colour change, though with reference to mirrors, in "How apparitions may seem to him that looks upon them, to be pale, yellow, or of divers colours":

> When the Glass is melted with heat in the furnace, with any little colour it will be tainted; if you cast in yellow, the face of him that looks into it, will seem to have the yellow Jaundies; if black, he will appear wan and deformed; if you add much of it, like to a blackamoore; if red, like a drunkard or furious fellow; and so will it represent Images of

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[9] Samuel Speed and Thomas Young (eds.), *Natural Magick by John Baptista Porta* (London: 1658): 364. This was the first translation into English but the Latin original was widely known and there were numerous translations into other languages.

[10] Lynne Warren (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Photography* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006): Vol. I, 224.

any colour. […] I have oft made sport with the most fair women, with these Glasses; when they looked, and saw not themselves as they were[11].

Della Porta's interest in optics is often directed to the marvellous, the spectacular, and indeed, the theatrical. His approach can confuse those who expect a scientific method, but Della Porta was working on the threshold of the new epistemological developments. He did not differentiate between what we now call science and all those strands which connected Neoplatonic natural philosophy with occultism, astrology, and alchemy. For him, everything in the universe is related to something else, presupposing hidden correspondences and codes. This is how he explains this cosmic interrelatedness:

> The parts and members of this huge creature the world, I mean all the bodies that are in it, do in good neighbourhood as it were, lend and borrow each others Nature; for by reason that they are linked in one common bond, therefore they have love in common; and by force of this common love, there is amongst them a common attraction, or tilling of one of them to the other. And this indeed is Magick[12].

I will show that this kind of "magic" is a key element in the play, although there is another kind that is more apparent – black magic. As far as the play is concerned, the insistence on sacrilegious necromancy appears to have been a particularly English obsession. Whereas Bandello's text is neutral in its treatment of the magic picture (there may only be a faint trace of alchemy: the Polish scholar is said to live near a place abounding in silver and other metals), Painter's and Whetstone's versions insist on the evil aspects of that magic: Pollacco is called "a cunning negromancer"[13] and his art is "a blacke and lying scyence"[14]. Massinger deploys both strands of magic: as a convention, sorcery was of course a thrilling and a much beloved staple of Renaissance drama, while Frances Yates' studies[15] have long shown the playwrights' fascination as well as qualms with occultism.

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[11] Samuel Speed and Thomas Young (eds.), *op. cit.* (1658): 356.

[12] Ibid.: 13.

[13] John Payne Collier (ed.), *Whetstone's Rock of Regard* (London: 1867): 147. This a quarto reprint of the 1576 book.

[14] Joseph Haslewood (ed.), *The Second Tome of the Palace of Pleasure* by William Painter (London: Harding and Wright, 1813): 464. Subsequent references to this edition will appear in the main text in brackets.

[15] See especially Frances Yates, *Theatre of the World* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969) and ead., *Shakespeare's Last Plays: A New Approach* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).

We can consider Massinger's *The Picture* as a romance and enjoy perfectly well its use of the enchanted miniature. This was not so in the eighteenth century. In 1783, when Rev. Henry Bate (who would later be named First Baronet of Sloane Street and Kilscoran House) wrote an adaptation of the play, *The Magic Picture*, he not only bowdlerised it, but also deleted all traces of magic, apart from the title. The knight (here called Eugenius) is so mad with jealousy that he is deluded into believing that the portrait has turned yellow. Baptista, in an aside, comments, recalling *Othello*: "Well may they say that Monster jealousy / Creates the food it feeds on!"[16] He has given his paranoid friend a normal picture as a placebo to cure him of his imaginary fits.

In Della Porta's thought, humouralism could easily coexist with the new discoveries. Thus Della Porta denies the extramission theory of sight when talking of the *camera obscura*[17], but here we have him describing the visual contagion of fascination and of the evil eye (VII, ch. 14):

> For they send forth spirits, which are presently conveyed to the heart of the *Bewitched*, and so infect him. Thus it comes to pass, that a young man, being full of thin clear, hot, and sweet blood, sends forth spirits of the same nature. For they are made of the purest blood, by the heat of the heart. And being light, get into the uppermost parts of the body, and fly out by the eyes. And wound those who are most porous, which are fair persons, and the most soft bodies. With the spirits there is sent out also a certain fiery quality, as red and blear eyes do, who make those that look on them, fall into the same disease. I suffered by such an accident myself. For the eye infects the air. Which being infected, infects another. Carrying along with itself the vapors of corrupted blood, by the contagion of which the eyes of the beholders are overcast with the like redness.

It is from such a perspective that we can best approach Massinger's play. We cannot be completely sure whether he knew Della Porta, but I suggest we can understand how *The Picture* thematises emotional transactions and the dynamics of desire by examining how the discourses of humouralism and of natural correspondences were thought to impinge on human perception and experience in early modern culture. We will see that Massinger makes use of such discourses by exploiting them in dramatic form, but also by opening them up for discussion.

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[16] Henry Bate, *The Magic Picture, A Play* (London: 1783): 60.
[17] See Franco Giudice, "The Visible World: Aspects of Optics in the Seventeenth Century" and Angela Locatelli, "Discursive Intersections on the Subject of 'Light' in English Renaissance Literature", in Elena Agazzi, Enrico Giannetto, and Franco Giudice (eds), *Representing Light across Arts and Sciences: Theories and Practices* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2010): 41-56 and 69-85, respectively.

"And in a small circle of paper […] you shall see as it were the Epitomy of the whole world, and you will much rejoyce to see it"[18]. This is how Della Porta describes the *camera obscura*. Obviously, Mathias does not have in his hand the image produced by such an instrument, but in a sense, he has his own world in the palm of his hand. His wife is all he has ever fought for and he loves her devotedly. But he cannot "rejoice". His jealousy produces an "envy scenario", in René Girard's terms:

> The proudest men want to possess the most desirable objects; they cannot be certain that they have done so, as long as empty flattery alone glorifies their choice; they need more tangible proof, the desire of other men, as numerous and prestigious as possible. They must recklessly expose their richest treasure to these desires[19].

Possessing something entails an engagement with temporality: once obtained, one wonders how long this will last, and moreover, one feels the need to know whether its value has remained the same. I say "something" because for Mathias as well as many characters in the play (and evidently for real people in early modern and, alas, contemporary societies), women are objects to be owned and exhibited. They are described as jewels and works of art, beautiful and rich ornaments for the husband's ego. As objects, they can be possessed and stolen; as works of art, they are susceptible to desire as well as taint. The knowledge that Mathias tries to wrest from the picture is not a mere desire to check Sophia's chastity: it should reassure him of his own identity and his own role in the world. We will see that the picture blends reality and representation, humouralism and doubt: it serves Mathias to all intents and purposes, it serves for Mathias as a litmus test, but one that necessitates hermeneutic enquiry and is susceptible to error and confusion.

I take issue with Ryner's stance, which builds on Lorna Hutson's essay on *The Picture*. He argues (quoting Hutson) that

> critics have failed to appreciate the emotional impact of *The Picture* because the play is less interested in the emotions modern critics habitually look for (sexual jealousy, sexual desire, and regret) and more interested in the 'hope and fear' that are '*aroused* by reasoning about probability and likelihood in relation to the future'[20].

Now, while mercantile discourse and the rhetorical representation of dilemmas of probability are certainly important themes in the play, one cannot simply reduce the

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[18] Samuel Speed and Thomas Young (eds.), *op. cit.* (1658): 364.
[19] René Girard, *A Theater of Envy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991): 22.
[20] Bradley D. Ryner, *op. cit.* (2014): 204.

importance of the dynamics of jealousy and love on which the whole plot is constructed. It is also incorrect to state that "the salient quality of the picture is that it is distinct from Mathias' mind"[21]. I hope to demonstrate that the prevalent doctrines of humouralism did not allow such a separation between thoughts and emotions, and between the humours of different individuals. The picture does not differentiate between jealousy, volition, and lust; it is affected by Sophia's jealousy, which is aroused by Mathias' own; and Mathias' investment in the picture may also alter it with his own desires and uncertainties. I will now proceed to a discussion of the material staging of the picture and what this involves in terms of performance.

Staging the Picture

Both theatrically and dramatically, the play focuses on the picture. It is therefore essential to consider how it can be staged effectively. Philip Wilson[22], the director of the sumptuous 2010 production of *The Picture* at the Salisbury Playhouse may not have known about the play's connection with Della Porta, but he perceived that the colour changes of Sophia's miniature prefigure photography. He was struck by the similarity of the magic picture and the chemical instability of daguerreotypes. Not only did he set the play in the nineteenth century, but also used a stage set of video walls conceived as developing tanks: Sophia's magnified photo was thus rendered highly visible to the spectators who gasped when it did turn yellow and black. Because of the non-Elizabethan stage of the Salisbury Playhouse, there was so much distance between the actors and the spectators that the latter could not catch even a glimpse of the picture, and thus the video projection supplied a creative solution to this problem.

There are strong hints that the picture used in the original productions was a miniature. We have direct allusions to the art of limning:

> *Baptista.* Take then this little modell of *Sophia*
> With more then humane skill limde to the life
> Each line, and linament of it in the drawing
> Soe punctually obserued that had it motion
> In so much 'twere her selfe. (I.ii 166-70)

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[21] Ibid.

[22] I would like to thank Philip Wilson for his amazing generosity and availability: via e-mail, he answered all my questions with great care and also provided me with many photos of his production.

Let us compare these lines with this passage from Hilliard's *Arte of Limning*: working with precious stones "so enricheth and ennobleth the work that it seemeth to be the thing itself, the work of God and not of man"[23]. Moreover, in the source, William Painter's translation of Bandello, we can read that the knight carried it around in "a lyttle Boxe" (471). The picture is treated like a precious jewel, it is also textualised as miniatures clearly were: "an Elizabethan portrait miniature, with its likeness, emblematic attributes and motto, is meant to be read as a single statement expressing the ideals and aspirations of one particular person at a moment in time"[24]. The OED ascribes to Massinger a particular meaning of "miniature" (sense I, 2): "a lineament or feature". Thus, in *The Grand Duke of Florence*, Duke Cozimo admires Lidia and says: "There's no miniature / In her faire face, but is a copious theme / Which would […] make a volume. / What cleare arch'd browes? what sparkling eyes?" (etc.) (II.ii 82-5). In *The Picture*, Mathias sees "lines / Of a darke colour, that disperse themselues / Ore euery miniature of her face" (IV.i 33-5). Sophia's face is scrutinised and interpreted in the minutest detail.

The stage direction of the 1630 edition reads, "*The picture altred*". This can indicate that the nearest spectators would be able to at least glimpse a yellowing of the profile of the miniature's subject. What cannot be fully ascertained is whether this stage direction, to use Richard Hosley's terms, is "fictional" or "theatrical". A theatrical stage direction refers to the actual structure or equipment available to the players. Usual examples are "*within, at another door, a scaffold thrust out*" or when the presence of a prop is signalled. Instead, fictional stage directions are related to the dramatic uses of these elements. Thus, we can read that certain scenes take place "*on shipboard*, *within the prison*", etc. Now, the stage directions in the 1630 playtext are not few. They are all very concrete, considering the brevity required. For instance, we can read: "*Kisses the picture*"; "SOPHIA *hauing in the interime redd the letter and opend the Casket*"; "RICARDO *entring with a great noyse aboue, as fallen*". Why

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[23] Nicholas Hilliard, *The Arte of Limning*, edited by T.G.S. Cain and R.K.R. Thornton (Edinburgh: Carcanet Press, 1992): 43.

[24] Roy C. Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: University of California Press, 1977): 77.

would the annotator[25] have felt the need to insert such a pleonastic indication if the colour change were not visible, even to a small degree? This alteration would not have been impossible to stage. It can be surmised that Mathias is shown entering the stage with the back of the picture turned to the audience (or, more probably, in the "lyttle boxe" referred to in William Painter's translation) and that he would show it to Baptista and the spectators later, while it had always been yellow since his first entrance a mere 25 lines earlier. Moreover, the picture is no longer displayed after this scene; it is only referred to.

We have said that there may not have been any colour change proper onstage, but there is another play from the English Renaissance that features a similar phenomenon, the staging of which would have been much more complex: the anonymous *A Warning for Fair Women* (published in 1599). In one of the final scenes of this domestic play (which also presents a staged portrait), the adulteress Anne Sanders is brought to trial. Here again, we have a stage direction: she "*hath a white Rose in her bosome*"[26]. She wears it in token of her "spotless innocence" (p. 165). However, as soon as she declares herself innocent of her husband's murder, a prodigy occurs. A lord exclaims: "It should not be seeme so by the rose you weare, / His colour now is of another hue" (p. 166). We do not know what colour the rose has turned (red? black?), but this has happened before the spectators' very eyes. Anne tries to minimise it: "So you wil have it: but my soule is stil, / As free from murther as it was at first". Yet, this act of divine providence contradicts her. This was an element introduced by the playing company, since it is absent in the play's source, Arthur Golding's pamphlet *A Brief Discourse*. It seems that players had to dabble also in the art of prestidigitation – and were frequently and obnoxiously accused of doing so.

Again, it is not clear whether the original audience of Massinger's *The Picture* would see the miniature change colour. What is clear, however, is that they would strain their eyes to see if it did. Spectators are called upon to participate in this exchange of looks and gazes. The show of jealousy multiplies and alters the visual field. By moving the story from the page to the stage, Massinger plays with these

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[25] Edwards and Gibson, the editors of the canonical edition of Massinger's plays, assume that the stage directions were written by Massinger himself who probably gave the printers his fair copy of the text, but they strangely argue that it was then "a copy without annotations for use in the theatre" (188).

[26] Charles D. Cannon (ed.), *A Warning for Fair Women* (Den Haag and Paris: Mouton, 1975): 164.

games of distortion and perspective and engages the spectators who are often invoked metatheatrically, for instance, when Mathias asks for testimony in the last scene: "heere before the king, / The Queene, these Lords, and all the lookers on / I do renounce my error" (V. iii 161-63).

Limning Subjectivity

A very important detail that has generally not been observed is that Massinger introduces a real portrait of Sophia, whereas in the sources the subject of the picture was normally left vague. In Bandello (in William Painter's translation), the sorcerer tells the Bohemian knight: "I can by mine Arte in smal time, by certaine compositions, frame *a woman's image* [compare Bandello's "una picciola imagine di donna"[27]], which you continually in a lyttle boxe may carry about you, and so ofte as you list behold the same" (471, emphasis mine). The narrator goes on: "When the pryce was paied for this precious iewel, hee [i.e. the knight] receiued the image" (472). Painter never uses the word "picture", he always calls the likeness an "image". It is as if the artefact, while obviously connected with the wife's chastity, represented, or better, symbolised, any woman, in the spirit of *così fan tutte*[28]. It is true that, in the conclusion, we can read "the image and likenes of his wife" (489), but this occurs only in the end: throughout the novella, the fact that the subject of the image is the knight's wife is never insisted upon. It is revealing to read the following quotation: "the knyght Vlrico [i.e. Massinger's Mathias] ceased not continually to viewe and reuewe the state of his image" (485): here it is *his*, not *her* image. The original Italian ("la sua imagine") would leave it open for interpretation. The image is "hers" because it depicts the wife, and it is "his" since it belongs to him. However, William Painter forthrightly opted for "his". The knight owns the image as he is convinced of owning his wife, and this possessive relation is markedly more important than the one existing between the picture and its subject.

As we have seen, Bandello and William Painter leave the matter of the picture's subject rather vague. Still, Massinger could read the dull fourteeners of George

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[27] The edition I used for my reading is Matteo Bandello, *Novelle* edited by Ettore Mazzali (Milan: BUR, 1990 [2007]): 138-58.
[28] It is true that, in the novella, the misogyny of the husband and of the other men finds a corrective in the wife's irreprehensible behaviour and the arbitration of Queen Beatrice (whom Bandello personally knew).

Whetstone's version where the necromancer retires and: "Anon he comes, with a picture framde *much like* Ulrico's wife" (p. 158, emphasis mine). Massinger enormously expanded and elaborated on this hint. While it may be only accidental that the picture in the play is never called an "image", its being unambiguously a likeness of Sophia is repeatedly stressed. As already quoted,

> *Baptista.* Take then this little modell of *Sophia*
> With more then humane skill limde to the life
> Each line, and linament of it in the drawing
> Soe punctually obserued that had it motion
> In so much 'twere her selfe. (I.ii 166-70)

And:

> *Honoria.*   What's that?
> *Mathias.*   Her faire figure.
> *Ladislaus.* As I liue an excellent face! (II.ii 328-29)

This is how Mathias rants when he sees the colour change:

> […] and this the figure of
> My Idoll few howers since, while she continued
> In her perfection, that was late a mirror
> In which I saw miracles, shapes of duty,
> Stayd manners, with all excellency a husband
> Could wish in a chast wife, is on the suddaine
> Turnd to a magicall glasse, and does present
> Nothing but hornes, and horror. (Iv.i 58-65)

Interestingly, the picture is always called "her picture", not "his". Mathias says that Honoria was envious of "one she never / Had seene but in her picture" (IV.iv 42-3). Here is Sophia's expression of shock on hearing of Baptista's piece of work:

> And my picture
> Made by your diuelish art, a spie vpon
> My actions? I neuer sate to be drawne,
> Nor had you sir comision for't. (V.ii 2-5)

There is only one, important, exception. In the last scene, Sophia pointedly teases her husband by asking:

Whie? you know
How to resolue your selfe what my intents are,
By the helpe of *Mephostophiles*, and your picture,
Pray you looke vpon't againe. (V.iii 76-9)

With this rhetorical masterstroke, Sophia utterly detaches herself from the picture, it does not have any relation to her: it does not represent *her* person, it is only an object *he* owns.

As I have said, Mathias's character can fruitfully be examined from the perspective of early modern anxious masculinity as elaborated by Mark Breitenberg. In order to reassure himself of his (masculine) identity, he needs other men to acknowledge the worth of his dearest possession, Sophia. Hence the necessity of jealousy and the ominous desirability of other people's envy. What distresses Mathias in particular is the impossibility of completely owning his wife. He thinks he can use the picture in order to verify, monitor, and control his wife's body and soul. He is disconcerted that her subjectivity remains extraneous to him. The spectators are bound to remember Othello's horrified exclamation in the temptation scene: "O curse of marriage! / That we can call these delicate creatures ours / And not their appetites!" (III.iii 284-86)

This is the drama that goes on in Mathias' mind. The wedding ritual asserts that of two bodies, we have one (compare Mark 10:8: "and the two shall become one flesh"); of two souls, one. One is reminded of Donne's epithalamions, or of Shakespeare's fantasy of "Two distincts, division none" in *Let the Bird of Loudest Lay* (l. 27). Corisca in the play sees the couple in this very same light: "in two bodies / One will, and Soule like to the rod of concord, / Kissing each other" (II.i 53-55). Yet, the new "companionate marriage" model that was established in those decades, which would grant a moderately equal partnership between the spouses, has been rightly questioned. It is true that women acquired more rights, but, as Catherine Belsey sagaciously put it, if one soul of two was to be obtained, that would be the man's:

> while the new meaning of marriage offers women a position as subjects, it does not fundamentally challenge patriarchy. Indeed it reinforces it to the extent that true love becomes the solvent of inequality, the source of women's pliability and the guarantee of marital concord[29].

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[29] Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London and New York: Methuen, 1985): 214. See also her beautiful *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999).

Mathias wants to overrule his wife and at the same time attain complete symbiosis with her. Both Mathias and Sophia use the same trope of the body without soul to express their condition. First, Sophia tells him at the beginning of the play:

<div style="text-align:center">My soule</div>

shall goe along with you, and when you are
Circl'd with death and horrour seeke and finde you:
And then I will not leaue a Saint vnsu'd to
For your protection. (I.i 77-81)

In Alba Regalis, Mathias conceives of his condition in symmetrical terms. Just as Sophia has sent her soul to him, he says to the queen and the other attendants:

<div style="text-align:center">I am heere</div>

But a body without a soule, and till I finde it
In the embraces of my constant wife,
And, to set of that constancy, in her beauty
and matchlesse excellencies without a riuall,
I am but halfe my selfe. (II.ii 307-12)

I argue that with the picture, Mathias has literally in his hands the paradox of a soul made up of two souls, the marriage union which distresses him so much.

Grootenboer has discussed the functions of the fashionable eye miniature in Georgian Britain: it was a particular form of picture which represented the miniature of a lover's eye. These works of art "result[ed] in a reversal of the traditional subject-object opposition"[30] generally implied by pictures because the eye, as an "I", looked back. I would argue that Mathias' picture becomes itself something of a supplementary "I/eye portrait", since it interrogates his and his wife's subjectivity and, metatheatrically, the spectators'. Significantly, Mathias, on first meeting Baptista, says: "Instruct me what I am" (I.i 126). In order to understand this, one has to consider the widespread discourses of humouralism in the early modern era.

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[30] Hanneke Grootenboer, *Treasuring the Gaze: Intimate Vision in Late Eighteenth-Century Eye Miniatures* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012): 44.

Humouring the Body and the Picture

It would be wrong to consider the picture as a fetish. This would not, properly speaking, be *ante litteram*, since the OED records the first usage of "fetish" (which for us is inescapably loaded with Marx's and Freud's elaborations) in 1613. However, Mathias does not worship the picture itself, instead he reveres it for what it stands for: it is an idol. It is much more revealing to situate the agency of the picture in the traditional epistemic framework of humouralism[31] and the nexus between macro- and microcosm. While E. M. W. Tillyard's formulation of the Elizabethan World Picture has its problems (is there such a thing as a world picture regardless of class, gender, etc.?), what remains firm is the awareness that ideas on the sympathetic relations in the universe connecting nature, human body, soul, politics and divinity kept circulating, not only until the late seventeenth century, but on into the Enlightenment, as well. To name a thinker mentioned before, Della Porta is a figure that swings exactly between a world of hidden correspondences and a mechanistic one whose laws await discovery by science. While it is true that the categories of soul and body never completely collapsed into each other[32], the materialistic phenomenology of passions, due to the changeable balance between the four humours (melancholy, yellow bile, blood, and phlegm) remained by far the most habitual way of understanding how humans feel. A proof that this was not the domain of physicians and of the elite only, but that it was also how ordinary people conceived the workings

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[31] Studies on early modern emotions and humouralism constitute an ever-growing field of research. I have found particularly useful the following: David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (eds), *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 1997); Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe and Mary Floyd-Wilson (eds), *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004); Bruce R. Smith, *The Key of Green: Passion and Perception in Renaissance Culture* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009); Bruce R. Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2010); Brian Cummings and Freya Sierhuis (eds), *op. cit.* (2013); Katharine A. Craik and Tanya Pollard (eds), *Shakespearean Sensations: Experiencing Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Allison P. Hobgood, *Passionate Playgoing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Laurie Johnson, John Sutton, and Evelyn Tribble (eds), *Embodied Cognition and Shakespeare's Theatre: The Early Modern Body-Mind* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2014). On jealousy in Shakespearean theatre, see the classic Stanley Cavell, *Disowning Knowledge in Six Plays of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and Katharine Eisaman Maus, "Horns of Dilemma: Jealousy, Gender, and Spectatorship in English Renaissance Drama", *ELH*, Vol. 54, 1987: 561-83.
[32] See Angus Gouland, "Melancholy, Passions and Identity in the Renaissance", in Brian Cummings and Freya Sierhuis (eds), *op. cit* (2013): 75-93.

of the passions and perceptions, is to consider how many related expressions have seeped through into everyday language: we say that people are quick-tempered, hot-headed, or bilious; we can do something in cold blood, and feel sanguine about the future, etc. The porosity and permeability of the body were such that the environment had multiple ways to affect one's temperament (the climate, the influences of the planets, etc.)

In literature, this would provide ingenious ways to construct corporeality. The temperament of women was said to be moister and colder than men, which was why they were understood to be more passive as well as (paradoxically) more prone to alteration and weaknesses. Authors delighted in enumerating the ways in which the feminine body was vulnerable to attack; in Painter's version, for instance, we read that the suitors tried to assail Penelope (a paragon for the Bohemian lady) "within the Bowels of hir royall Pallace" (463).

It is Painter who introduces a new level in Bandello's novella: the curative qualities of the picture: "hee [the knight] consulted wyth a Pollaco, for a compounded drugge, to ease his suspect mind, whych medicine so eased his maladie, as it not onely preserued hym from the infected humour, but also made hir happy for euer" (463). (We shall see in the last section that Massinger's Sophia is certainly not made happy because of the picture.) Massinger investigates this aspect: the picture which should heal Mathias reveals itself (in the best tradition of the treacherous *pharmakon* motif) a poison for his moral conduct.

What I find particularly interesting are the colours into which the picture in the play changes: yellow and black. These two colours were symbols of jealousy. Thus, in Richard Brome's *Antipodes*, the character who has to personify jealousy is dressed "in the black-and-yellow jaundied suit" (Act V, 1091[33]). While yellow is often associated with jealousy even today (as in the Italian expression *giallo di gelosia*), possibly through folk etymology linking it with jaundice, one may also think of the Swedish word for jealous, *svartsjuk* (literally, "black-sick"). People infected by jaundice were believed to see everything yellow. As Flamineo says in *The White Devil*, "they that have the yellow jaundice, think all objects they look on to be yellow" (I.ii 109-110). I would suggest that the union of yellow and black is related to one of the ways in

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[33] Richard Brome, *The Antipodes*, edited by Richard Cave for the *Richard Brome Online* project, 2010 (http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/brome/viewTranscripts.jsp?type=MOD&play=AN&act=5&speech=1099).

which early modern thinkers explained the physical effects of jealousy. Choleric men, that is, those whose temperament was dominated by yellow bile (or choler), were said to be very passionate and easily irritated. When subjected to the great humoural perturbation of jealousy, their temperature would increase so much that the choler would burn (it would become "adust") and turn into a form of black bile worse than melancholy. This dreadful alteration would not allow them to reason any more.

This says something of the picture in the play. It is, of course, a magical object which can be regarded as a supplement of and in synecdochic relation to Sophia's body. But it can also serve as a humoural mirror of both her and Mathias: "Not only does a part of the miniature stand for the whole of the female, the portrait itself is the part that represents the male"[34]. The phantasmatic image of Sophia can be coloured both by her and his humours. Jealousy, like love, was sometimes characterised as an ocular disease. Massinger capitalised on this; for instance, we have Mathias who, on perceiving the colour change, says: "I will cleare / My eiesight, perhaps melancholly makes me / See that which is not" (IV.i 29-31). Similarly, it is not amiss that Honoria should use an optical metaphor to talk of jealousy:

> […] weare these
> As studded stars in your armour, and make the Sun
> Looke dimme with iealousie of a greater light
> Then his beames guild the day with (II.ii 250-53)

And Sophia voices her concern that, paying attention to Ubaldo and Ricardo's slanders, "a curious iealousie [… c]unningly steales into" her (III.vi 20, 23).

With the colour changes of the picture, Massinger also highlights a phenomenological process that has often amazed Western thought. Here it is well expounded by Bruce R. Smith:

> Color makes it impossible to separate subject from object. Is color a property of the object? (Aristotle thought so.) A quality in the subject's perception? (Kepler, Descartes and Newton demonstrated as much). Or a function of both? (That seems to be the case in Marvell's garden).[35]

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[34] Erin Obermueller, *op. cit.* (2007): 96.
[35] Bruce R. Smith, *op. cit.* (2009): 24.

(Im)pregnability and Interpersonal Identity Construal

Without having to recur to psychoanalytical literary criticism, it is possible to detect in the play a thematisation of male impotence. Mathias is generally described as a handsome, sexually attractive man and as an able warrior. General Ferdinand, himself flattered by Ubaldo and Ricardo as "bulwarke of *Bellona*" (II.ii 64) and "the sole mignion of mighty *Mars*" (65-66), calls him "[T]his man of men" (156). Mathias says this of his relationship with his wife:

> We haue *long* inioyd the sweets of loue, and though
> Not to satisfie, or lothing, yet
> We must not liue such dotardes on our pleasures
> As still to hugge them to the certaine losse
> Of profit, and preferment. (I.i 30-34, emphasis mine)

My emphasis on "long" is not arbitrary. In spite of this romance, the couple has no children. This is an element that is present in Bandello and greatly strengthened in Painter's translation. Bandello simply writes that Ulrico and Barbara (the equivalents to Mathias and Sophia) have no issue and has her suggest that, should they have children ("If God doe send vs any children" 468), they would send them to richer neighbours for their education. William Painter introduces the following outburst on the part of the knight: "For althoughe fortune hitherto hath not fauored that state of parentage, whereof we be, I doubt not wyth noble courage to win that in despyte of fortune's teeth, which obstinately hitherto she hath denyed" (466). Notice the violence of this sentence. Interestingly, the knight feminises and demonises the cause why they have no children yet: obstinate Fortune. (Incidentally, note that Painter does the same with jealousy which is called "mother iealousie that cancred wytch", 463.) At stake here is the man's honour: he thinks he can beget children in the same way in which he can beat the Turks, through sheer strength and martial skill. I argue that in the play one can uncover a semantic fabric which is interwoven in the play emphasising such impotence anxiety.

It is notable that the royals do not have children either (while, for instance, Whetstone had granted them "three valliant sonnes, three vertuous daughters eake", p. 149). In this offspring-free kingdom, we have frequent allusions to eunuchs, castration, and barrenness. Eubulus wishes: "Would I were gelt, / So that would

disenchant" (I.ii 167-8) the uxorious Ladislaus. Ricardo says to Ubaldo "make me an Euenuche" (III.i 30) should he fail on the first assault on Sophia. The diet later imposed on them has the very same effect, as Ubaldo acknowledges: "hunger with her razor / Hath made me an euenuch" (V.i 101-02). Eubulus compares the king with Ninus, the monarch doting on Semiramis, and he calls him "an impotent louing King" (I.ii 192), that is, a king made impotent through too much loving. Now, "impotent" meant both sexually ineffective and economically resourceless, which is how Mathias describes his finances. The two semantic fields are interrelated; Mathias is the one to say: "competent meanes / Maintaines a quiet bed, want breeds dissention" (I.i 34-35). But let us hear how Honoria tries to seduce Mathias:

> [...] As I vrg'd
> In our last priuate conference, you haue
> A pretty promising presence, but there are
> Many in limbes, and feature who may take
> That way the right hand file of you; besides
> *Your May of youth is pas'd, and the blood spent*
> *By woundes, though brauely taken, render you*
> *Disabld for loues seruice*, and that valour
> Set off with better fortune, which it may be
> Swels you aboue your boundes, is not the hooke
> That hath caught me good sir. (III.v 125-35, emphasis mine)

It is a strange seduction. She points out martial efforts and aging as causes of weakness and explicit impotence. The former is a motif among jealous husbands, famously found in *Othello* ("for I am declined / Into the vale of years – yet that's not much" III.iii 269-70) and in derivative works, such as Ford's *The Lady's Trial* ("behold these hairs, / [...] yet they are not / By winter of old age quite hid in snow"[36]). One can add that the actor playing Mathias, Joseph Taylor (who had also been an acclaimed Iago, and whose versatility must have been deeply appreciated), was presumably 43 years old in 1629, whereas in Painter the knight is "a yong gentleman, lusty and vauliant" (466). Here, however, the motif is used by a woman, and the erotic imagery of these lines (swelling above his bounds), underlined by

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[36] William Gifford (ed.), *The Works of John Ford* (London: James Toovey, 1869): Vol. III, 90. See also Subha Mukherji, "False Trials in Shakespeare, Massinger, and Ford", *Essays in Criticism*, Vol. 56, no. 3, 2006, 219–40.

alliteration ("pretty promising presence") should be noticed. Honoria spotlights here Mathias' vulnerability.

How is this related to the picture? The key passage is the following, when Mathias shows everyone the miniature, kisses it, and effectively challenges suitors to Sophia:

>   Though in my absence she were now beseeg'd
> By a strong army of lasciuious wooers,
> And euery one more expert in his art,
> Then those that tempted chast *Penelope*,
> Though they raisd batteries by Prodigall guifts,
> By amorous letters, vowes made for her seruice
> With all the Engins wanton appetite
> Could mount to shake the fortresse of her honor,
> Heere, heere is my assurance she holdes out
> And is impregnable. (II.ii 319-28)

Here again we have sexual intercourse described as a battle and the woman as an assaulted fortress. William Painter's version is very rich in detail and almost ludicrous for it: the lady resists the barons "that canoned the walles, and well mured rampart of hir pudicity" (463). Woman's honesty can be "*wel forged and steeled* in the shamefast shoppe of loyaltie, which *armure* defendeth them against the fond skirmishes and vnconsidred conflicts of Venus' wanton band" (464, emphasis mine). The picture constitutes Mathias' "assurance" that his wife is "impregnable". I would argue that this adjective openly signals his trust in his wife's chastity, but also betrays his anxiety. In a way, she has maintained herself "impregnable" also to him: he has been unable to impregnate her. Instead he can "impregnate" her picture with his jealous humours, the miniature being her index and symbol. Just as sight was considered a transmission of atoms "impregnated with a tincture drawn from the superficies of the object it is reflected from"[37], Massinger reactivates the old extramission theory for dramatic purposes. As Rochester states: "The picture is the product of an irrational jealousy, and its protean depiction implies that the emotion produces and is a product of disordered vision"[38].

It is not by chance that the picture is called "a little model of *Sophia*" by Baptista. This word, model, recurs in the play in another meaning: that of child. Corisca wishes

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[37] Paul S. MacDonald (ed.), *Kenelm Digby's Two Treatises: Of Bodies and Of Man's Soul* (Old Woking: The Gresham Press, 2013): 358. See also note 17 above.

[38] Joanne Rochester, *op. cit.* (2010): 110.

that Sophia and Mathias produce in the future "models of yourselves" (II.i 62). In the conclusion, we have the characters' incitement for the couple to have children. Here are Eubulus' words to Sophia:

> Haue I liu'd to see
> But on good woman, and shall we for a trifle
> Haue her turne nun? I will first pull downe the cloyster!
> To the ould sport againe with a good lucke to you!
> 'Tis not alone enough that you are good,
> We must haue some of the breed of you; will you destroy
> The kind, and race of goodnesse? (V.iii 193-99)

It is as if Massinger had intercepted a phrase used by Bandello but not translated by Painter. The sorcerer tells the knight that the image would turn black if his wife "ven[isse] a l'atto che facesse ad altrui di sè copia" (p. 145), which literally translates "should she perform the act of making copy of herself to someone else". Here "fare di sè copia" means entertaining someone, offering oneself to somebody, but it also indicates sexual intercourse (as explained by Ettore Mazzali) and implies multiplication, having children. Mathias is indeed scared that Sophia will "make copy of herself" not to him, but to somebody else. Therefore he aptly acquires Sophia's "copy", the picture, with which he thinks he can finally completely possess and control by impregnating it (or her?) with his desires – but also with his fears.

The force of the imagination and the violence of the humoural interaction it produces are as powerful (and dangerous) as magic at producing images and pictures. Thus, Mathias exclaims: "I'll mould / My thoughts into another forme" (Iv.i 87-8). The pregnable force of imagination and the humoural changes it provoked are also interestingly expressed by Robert Burton when he writes of love melancholiacs: "They will lose themselves in her looks […] They cannot look off whom they love; they will *impregnare eam ipsis oculis*, deflowre her with their eys; be still gazing, staring, stealing faces, smiling, glancing at her […]"[39]

Mathias would like to be confident in the firmness of his body compared to the permeability of a woman's body, but his passions clearly indicate the falsehood of such claims. Sophia says that Mathias was a man "vow'd to temperance" (III.vi 136),

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[39] Rhonda L. Blair, Thomas C. Faulkner, and Nicolas K. Kiessling (eds), *Robert Burton's* The Anatomy of Melancholy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997): Vol. III, 145.

but in his jealousy he cannot moderate himself. Baptista has to restrain him: "Pray you temper / your passion" (IV.i 51-2), but Mathias exclaims "that hath vndone me / For now I hold my temperance a sinne" (67-8). When Honoria first tempts him, he feels his blood "rebel" (III.v 181), but he resists because as a man he cannot "yeeld first", which would give Sophia "an example / For her defence of fraylty" (185-6). When he becomes afflicted by distemper, he feels his very masculinity is in a crisis, which is ratified by Sophia's stern judgement: by availing himself of magic, he has shown "more then womans weaknes" (V.iii 178).

Finally, it is noteworthy that Massinger had employed an analogous magic device to avoid pregnability in another play. In *The Renegado*, a Jesuit gives a relic to Paulina, the virtuous sister of a Venetian gentleman. When she is enslaved by the Viceroy of Tunis, she can use its miraculous power. As the priest tells her brother:

> I oft have told you
> Of a relic that I gave her, which has power –
> If we may credit holy men's traditions –
> To keep the owner free from violence.
> This on her breast she wears, and does preserve
> The virtue of it by her daily prayers.
> So, if she fall not by her own consent –
> Which it were sin to think – I fear no force. (I.i 146-53)[40]

Massinger seems to distance himself here from the Catholic belief in the power attributed to the relic ("If we may credit holy men's traditions"), but revels in the dramatic possibility it offers; he treats the miniature in *The Picture* in the same way.

By emphasising these aspects related to humouralism, I do not wish to underplay the social dimension of identity-construction. As already seen, the private and the public were linked in the way the self was interpersonally understood in the Renaissance. When Mathias says to the queen: "I am a thing obscure" (III.v 75), he states something very important about how he perceives himself. We have seen that he tends to reify his wife and that he obtains an object, the picture, both to control her and to be joined with her symbiotically. When he describes himself as a "thing obscure", he is considering himself a subject (he is the "I" speaking, and the "eye" seeing), but one who is also an object because of the play's feudal social setting. He says he is "a thing

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[40] Philip Massinger, *The Renegado*, edited by Michael Neill (London: Methuen, 2010).

obscure", but this does not lead him to consider, as Hamlet does, the excruciating difference between inwardness and exteriority (or, for that matter, Prospero's attitude to Caliban: "This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine", *The Tempest* V.i 278-79); rather, he situates his ego interpersonally because of the social status he has to perform. Sophia, too, is confident at the beginning of the play that he "cannot live obscure" (I.i 85): he needs to be seen and acknowledged. His "obscurity" accords with the reason he had given for leaving home. He had feared she would "[p]asse vnregarded" (53) and this is how he addresses the problem:

> I should be censur'd
> Of ignorance possessing such a Iewell
> Aboue all price, if I forbeare to giue it
> The best of ornaments. (55-58)

As Sophia laments: "wast for this he left me? / And in a faind pretence for want of meanes / To giue me ornament?" (III.vi 138-40) His obscurity needs to be lit up by the ornaments he gives Sophia: since he considers Sophia a part of himself, this literal highlighting would transitively dissolve his own darkness. The counterpart of this is represented by the bright sheen of the picture itself.

Patricia Fumerton provides us with the best way to understand this. If wearing miniatures gave the sense of exhibiting privacy in public, this is because there was among the Renaissance aristocracy "a sense of self […] that was supported and, indeed, constituted by bric-a-brac worlds of decorations, gifts, foodstuffs, small entertainments, and other particles of cultural wealth and show"[41]. While in *Perceforest* the knight is extremely loath to show the king and his court the magic rose, in Massinger's play Matthias is happy enough to exhibit the miniature, since it helps to validate his position and identity. Moreover, the interconnection between personal and social performativity is well expressed in the play by the imagery they share. Just as cuckoldry is paramount among Mathias' fears, so a government which does not adequately rewards soldiers will "hatch [a] Cucckow peace" (II.ii 115); cities are besieged and attacked in war as often as women are; if the military gets spoiled,

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[41] Patricia Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1993): 1.

their nature will suffer a colour change like the picture: "their red blood" will turn "to buttermilke" (275).

The Wife as an Idol

The picture also acquires a sacred value to Mathias: he refers to it as an idol and he kisses it as if it were a relic. In Painter, one could read that the knight "beleeued [it] so true as the gospell" (476). While the religious or idolatrous aspect is of secondary importance in the economy of the play in comparison with the physical and the social dimension, its presence is nevertheless symptomatic of a culture that was deeply sensitive to these issues. Many women in Massinger's plays are objectified through idolatry by their doting lovers and husbands. For instance, Duke Sforza is the "Idolator" (*The Duke of Milan*, I.iii 338) of his wife and cannot understand that he has murdered her out of jealousy: he has invested in her so much that he has turned her "into a lifeless symbol"[42]. It is more problematic to say *of what* she is a symbol. Of a *deus absconditus*? Or rather of his own being? In *The Picture*, Massinger carefully utilises this aspect and materialises in the picture the Biblical theme of humanity created in God's image.

It has been said that pictures stir universal anxieties of identity. Gadamer calls this "picture magic" (*Bildzauber*)[43], i.e. the inability to differentiate between picture and person portrayed. In animistic thinking, portraits would retain somebody's soul and photographers could snatch it away with their cameras. This corpus of ideas needs to be analysed and historicised. Animism is no longer considered a universal or "the" primordial religion. The idea of indigenous populations all over the world feeling threatened by portraits and photos has started to be debunked as a Eurocentric nineteenth-century myth[44]. Still, pictures can have very powerful effects. Massinger's play employs it with its performative miniature, but I would underline that its powers can be best understood through early modern sympathetic thinking (such as Della

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[42] Tanya Pollard, *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): 110.

[43] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr / Paul Siebeck, 1965): 132.

[44] Z. S. Strother, "'A Photograph Steals the Soul': The History of an Idea" in John Peffer and Elisabeth L. Cameron (eds), *Portraiture and Photography in Africa* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013): 177-212.

Porta's) and especially through its use of the picture as an embodiment of the couple's body-soul in Mathias' fantasy.

Many writers exploited the theme of the soul or of the body as a material picture, instead of a symbolic likeness. Donne explicitly associated miniatures with God's image:

> and so farre is this image of God in the bodie above that in the creatures, that as you see some pictures, to which the very tables are jewels; some watches, to which the very cases are jewels; and therefore they have outward cases too; and so the picture and the watch are in that outward case, of what meaner stuff soever that be […] But yet the bodie is but the outward case, and God looks not for the gilding, or enamelling, or painting of that; but requires the labour and cost therein to be bestowed upon the table it self, in which this image is immediately, that is, the soul: and that is truely the *ubi*, the place where this image is.[45]

We can find this belief best thematised in a quaint poem called "On God's Image" in Francis Quarles's *Divine Fancies* (1632), a book which was hugely popular in the seventeenth century. It is rather lengthy, but I think one should quote it in full to best appreciate how the famous emblematist explored this idea:

> IT was a *dainty Piece*! In every part,
> Drawne to the Life, and full of curious Art:
> It was as like thee as a *shadow* could
> Be like a *substance*; There was none but would
> Have known thee by't: There needed then no name,
> No golden *Characters*, that might proclaime
> Whose *Picture* 'twas: The Art was so divine
> That very Beasts did reverence it, as thine:
> But now, alas, 'tis blurred: The best that we
> Or they can judge, is this, 'Twas made for thee:
> Alas 'tis faded, soyl'd with hourely dust,
> Sullyed, and shadow'd with the smoke of *Lust*;
> So swarthy as if that glorious face of thine
> Were tawnyed underneath the *torrid Line*:
> How is thy *Picture* altred! How ill us'd
> By our neglects! How slubberd! How abus'd!
> Her cedar *Frame*'s disioynted, warp'd and broke;
> Her curious *Tablet*'s tainted with the smoke:
> The Object's both offensive, and the savor;
> Retaining neither *Beauty*, nor thy *Favour*:
> Lord, let not thy displeased eye forsake
> Thy *handy-worke*; for the bad keeper's sake:
> Behold it still; and what thou seest amisse,

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[45] David Colclough (ed.), *The Oxford Edition of the Sermons of John Donne* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): Vol. III, 186.

Passe by; Think what it was, not what it is:
What though her beauty, and her colours fade?
Remember: O 'twas like thee when 'twas made.
There is a great *Apelles* that can lim
With thy owne *Pencill*; we have sought to *Him*:
His skilfull hand will wash off all the soyle,
And clense thy Picture with his sacred Oyle:
Hee'l mak 't more faire then 'twas; at least, the same;
Hee'l mend the *Tablet*, and renew the *Frame*:
Till then; be pleas'd to let thy Picture be
Acknowledg'd *thine*: 'Twas made for none but Thee[46].

Francis Quarles explores the basic idea that humankind was created in God's image, but gives to this tenet a physical dimension that makes it as realistic and palpable as any "ordinary" portrait. Not only does he toy with the motif of the relationship between a substance and its shadow, but he investigates the very materiality of a painting. At the moment of its creation, there was no need of interpretation: one could directly see God's own features in this "dainty piece". From this original purity and excellence, however, God's image has "faded", and Quarles gives no scant description of such corruption: the image has been "blurred", "soyled", "sullyed", "tawnied", "tainted", "slubbered", so "shadow'd with the smoke of *Lust*" that the frame is now "warped". Now the picture barely resembles its divine prototype. There is also an interesting pronominal confusion: the image is generally referred to as "it", but in l. 25, "it" is feminised: "What though her beauty, and her colours fade?" This is probably because the Latin *anima* influences its gender. This has a dual function: on the one hand, it personifies the image; on the other hand, this change of pronoun codes it as passive. The poet, however, is confident that humanity can call on an expert cleanser and painter, Christ, who "with his sacred Oyle" can restore the image to its prelapsarian beauty.

Quarles and Massinger conceive of the colour change in the same way. Massinger approaches from a secular perspective, but reaches a similar metaphysical view – although, it must be said, through an awkward mixed metaphor and, as Joanne Rochester well says, in a "somewhat anticlimactic"[47] move: human life is both like the

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[46] Francis Quarles, *Divine Fancies Digested into Epigrammes, Meditations, and Observations* (London: 1633), *EEBO* 21 March 2016 (http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A10251.0001.001/1:9.70?rgn=div2;view=fulltext).
[47] Joanne Rochester, *op. cit.* (2010): 119.

magic picture and like a journey. This is how Mathias tries to redeem himself and also to make Queen Honoria amend her conduct:

>   When we are growne vp to ripenesse, our life is
> Like to this picture. While we runne
> A constant race in goodnesse, it retaines
> The iust proportion. But the iourneyes being
> Tedious, and sweet temptations in the way,
> That may in some degree diuert vs from
> The rode that we put forth in, ere we end
> Our pilgrimage, it may like this turne yellow
> Or be with blacknesse clouded. But when we
> Finde we haue gone astray, and labour to
> Returne vnto our neuer fayling guide
> Vertue, contrition with vnfained teares,
> The spots of vice wash'd off will soone restore it
> To the first purenesse. (IV.iv 69-82)

Here we have again a picture which loses the "just proportion" and becomes sullied through sin and vice. The insistence on the possibility of redemption through repentance may resonate with Arminianism, which sees divine grace as resistible, since God does not override human free will. Massinger often engages in the debate over Catholicism, Arminianism, and Calvinism[48]. All in all, however, these are common Christian tenets and it is interesting to see that Massinger does not leave this scene as the play's concluding climax, but surprises his audience with Sophia's behaviour in the next three scenes. Still, the force of Mathias' words manages to change Honoria. She replies to his speech as a completely metamorphosed person: "I am disenchanted!" (82); she is now "a chang'd woman" (99). The transformative power of Mathias' rhetoric has employed the metaphor of an alterable picture to provoke yet another humoural change.

Lively Women and Spectacle

In the last scene of the play, Sophia complies with Honoria's request to kiss her and excuses herself, since "it may appear prepostrous in women / Soe to encounter" (V.iii 50). An equal amount of preposterousness may be imputed to my discussion of subjectivity in *The Picture*: until this very last section, I have focussed on the

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[48] See the insightful essay by Adrian Streete, "Passions, Politics and Subjectivity in Philip Massinger's *The Emperor of the East*", in Brian Cummings and Freya Sierhuis (eds), *op. cit*. (2013): 217-35.

character of Mathias and other male dramatis personae, instead of the powerful women in the play. I will try to redress this now but I would like to explain why I have proceeded like this. In the Renaissance, to talk of human identity was to talk of masculine identity. "Man" was created in God's image and society was markedly patriarchal. This is not to say that there were no fluctuations. Women were very gradually gaining authority and voice (which sometimes caused recrudescent upsurges of patriarchal control); the gender spectrum was being articulated in extremely complex ways. The stage dramatised these socio-cultural clashes and performed categorical blurring. Women were often held as a differential Other, but the crises and anxieties that were rife in many societal spheres showed the ideological quality of these positions. It is true that the picture says much more about the anxious masculinity of Mathias, showcasing his personal and social predicaments, than it does about Sophia's selfhood. Yet, Massinger's tragicomedy is notable for the effervescent, vibrant role of its women characters who refuse to be mere "lively pictures", but react and interrogate masculine dominance. The play is no reiteration of John Berger's dictum "Men act and women appear"[49] in Western culture.

The most remarkable change made by Massinger to the play's source material is exactly the agency he grants to women (as in so many of his other plays[50]): the playwright completely invents the powerful character of Honoria and the symmetrical plot of Mathias' seduction, and his Sophia, compared to her antecedents, is absolutely original. All the other wives, paragons of obedience and subjection, fool and mock the libertine courtiers and are quite happy to wait for their husbands to return when they like best. In Bandello, the husband actually bets on his wife's chastity (compare Posthumus Leonatus in *Cymbeline*, which has a novella by Boccaccio as its source), simply swearing that he would not hurt his wife should she fail the test. Not only does Sophia foil the courtiers' attempts, but she also outwits and mocks her husband: she feels insulted and humiliated that her husband has exploited magic to control her. Moreover, her jealousy is just as sincere and profound as her devotion to Mathias. In the last act (wholly of Massinger's creation), she goes as far as to ask for separation

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[49] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (New York: Penguin Books, 1972): 47.
[50] On Massinger's women, see Philip Edwards, "Massinger's men and Women", in Douglas Howard (ed.), *Philip Massinger. A Critical Reassessment* (Cambridge University Press, 1985): 39-50, and also the more recent and valuable Laura Tosi, "After Elizabeth: Representations of Female Rule in Massinger's Tragicomedies", *Renaissance Studies*, Vol. 25, no. 3, 2010: 433-46.

and plan a nun's life for herself [51]. Sophia refuses to be contained and overruled. At the end of the play, we have two couples who are, and are aware of being, partners on the same level.

As far as the queen is concerned, it is true that Honoria's character may be rather flat, but she is not a stereotypical Semiramis given to lust. She says: "How I burst / With enuie that there liues besides my selfe / One faire, and loyall woman" (II.ii 398-400). One could suggest that Ladislaus' uxorious relation to Honoria was Massinger's comment on King Charles' doting relationship to Henrietta Maria. However, the devoted bond between the royals had just started to be established: until his assassination in 1628, Buckingham seems to have been Charles' main interest. The play engages in an energetic contrast between male (martial, feudal) honour and female honour (chastity), but Sophia cannot be reduced to a model of sexual fidelity. She is much fiercer than her model in Bandello in disputing her husband's misogyny when he tells her that: "when a Woman hath lost hir honor, shee hath forgone the chiefest Iewel she hath in this Life, and deserueth no longer to be called woman" (470). Massinger changes her name from Barbara (or Barbera) to Sophia to signal her intelligence. She manages to convert the libertines as well as her husband, who is shown to be as dangerously alterable as the picture[52].

When it comes to Sophia's treatment of the libertines, we are to understand that they have lost the dignity of being called men (and their virility is eliminated also by simply taking away their clothes). We perceive that the diet imposed on them is aimed at purging them of their wild humours. This is part and parcel of Massinger's moral intention in the play: reason is constantly assailed by powerful emotions and it is arduous to resist and transform them. Mathias' case has already been discussed; Ladislaus is represented as enslaved "to th'imperious humor / Of a proud beauty" (I.ii 49-50); Honoria's lust has taken "Sure footing in the kingdome of her heart" (Iv.iv 49); Sophia, when tainted with jealousy, invokes a humoural alteration: "have I no spleene / Nor anger of a woman?" (III.vi 150). It is important, however, to note that the humours play the same role for Massinger they did for Jonson: they provide great dramatic material and their doctrines (as expounded by the likes of Della Porta) can be

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[51] This surprising prospect is the solution Massinger had resorted to in order to have a happy ending for his first singly authored tragicomedy, *The Maid of Honour*.

[52] For gynocentrism and pseudogynocentrism in Caroline court culture, see chapter 6.

exploited as a strategy for narrative pleasure. This can be seen when one considers how spectacle is inserted in the play. Joanne Rochester has very well illustrated this point. The courtly masques and Honoria's apparitions freeze the action, but are of great theatrical power. Massinger stages intra- as well as extradramatic spectatorships, engaging the audience. Their value, however, is generally connoted ambiguously: they risk overwhelming the spectator with their sensuality. Nevertheless, the playwright does not simply show their danger. He indicates the uses that characters such as Honoria make of them. She is worshipped like a divinity: she is a "wonder" (I.ii 127), "an astonishment" (129). Ladislaus explains:

> And though she know one glance from her faire eyes
> Must make all gazers her idolaters,
> Shee is so sparing of their influence
> That to shun superstition in others,
> Shee shootes her powerfull beames onely at me. (110-14)

Honoria exploits the discourse of humoralism to her advantage. For her part, however, she vainly believes that Mathias' "false gloweworme fire of constancie" to Sophia has been "extinguished by a greater light / Shot from our eyes" (IV.iv 22, 23-24). She is a consummate actress and she often performs her part in explicit metadramatic terms:

> I doe but act the Part you put vpon me,
> And though you make me personate a Queene,
> And you my subiect, when the play your pleasure
> Is at a period, I am what I was
> Before I enter'd, still your humble wife,
> And you my royall Soueraigne. (I.ii 246-51)

Sophia also tells Mathias, at the beginning of the play, that if she should weep when he leaves her, "'twere / to personate deuotion" (I.i 76-77). It is well known that sophistication, be it pictorial or theatrical, was very often associated with adulteration and vice.

The many metadramatic occurrences throughout the play, however, point towards another direction: *totus mundus agit histrionem*, both on and off the stage, and the value of truth is as rare and pregnable as the magic picture.

As the playtext progresses, the picture acquires multiple qualities. It is treated as a synecdoche of Sophia's body and soul, but also as the embodiment of the married couple. It is read as a text and it is also a jewel to be exhibited. It is an idolised proof of the wife's chastity and a frightening reminder of her impregnability to the husband. It is both poison and medicine; a specimen of art and of devilish superstition. It becomes a powerful instrument that shows the complex ways in which body, gender identity, and social representation were aesthetically and ideologically constructed in early modern culture.

II.4 Shadow Vision in William Sampson's *The Vow Breaker*

William Sampson's *The Vow Breaker* (published in 1636) has received scant attention from academic researchers. It has been considered derivative[1] and viewed as a minor piece of workmanship. When it has been studied, the play has been mainly examined to elucidate the legal cruxes involved in the distinction between *sponsalia per verba de praesenti* and *per verba de futuro*[2]; or it has been interpreted following the now obsolete view of domestic tragedies as purely didactic "homiletic" plays[3]. However, *The Vow Breaker* deserves further consideration since it raises many interesting issues in the history of drama, especially now that a new critical edition by Patricia A. Griffin has appeared[4].

The Vow Breaker's genre is elusive: it is a curious blend of domestic tragedy and history play. Its regional topicality and the conditions of its original staging require further study. Recent critical contributions have cast light on its portrayal of communal negotiations in relation to suicide[5], as well as its intriguing connections with the cultural patronage of the Willoughbys of Risley Hall[6]. I would like to devote this chapter to a specific aspect of the play: its negotiation of fears and desires related to early modern conceptions of vision. In the two "portrait scenes" (III.iii and IV.iii), which are of particular interest for this work, William Sampson interweaves with dramatic proficiency *Hamlet*'s closet scene and some key scenes of Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, setting them in a plot that repeatedly introduces socially-charged

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[1] David L. Frost, *The School of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968): 237.

[2] Antonella Piazza, *Quarto: 'Onora il Padre' - Tragedie Domestiche sulla Scena Elisabettiana* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2000): 192-197.

[3] Henry Hitch Adams, *English Domestic or, Homiletic Tragedy 1575 to 1642* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1971): 173-77.

[4] All quotations of the play refer to this edition: Patricia A. Griffin (ed.), *A Critical Edition of William Sampson's* The Vow Breaker *(1636)* (PhD diss., Sheffield Hallam University, 2009).

[5] Emanuel Stelzer, "Social Implications of Love Suicide in Early Modern English Drama", *Critical Survey*, Vol. 28, issue 1, 2016: 67–77. See also Fiona Martin, "'Mong'st the furies finde just recompence': Suicide and the Supernatural in William Sampson's *The Vow Breaker* (1636)", in Victoria Bladen and Marcus Harmes (eds), *Supernatural and Secular Power in Early Modern England* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2016): 117-40.

[6] Emanuel Stelzer, "*The Vow Breaker* and William Sampson's Role in 'the Anne Willoughby Affaire'", *Early Theatre*, 2017 (forthcoming). In this article, I demonstrate that Sampson in *The Vow Breaker*'s dedication directly refers to the failed courtship of Anne Willoughby by John Suckling (with King Charles' approval). Suckling apparently forced the girl to sign a document stating that she would marry him, but her subsequent refusal produced a scandal, episodes of which included Digby's cudgelling of Suckling, a riot in front of the Blackfriars playhouse, and the poet's ruined reputation. Sampson named the heroine of *The Vow Breaker* after Anne Willoughby, a decision that still waits to be completely accounted for.

concerns of early modern English visual culture. Whereas in the second "portrait scene" we see characters trying to make sense of human mortality through commemorative painting, in III.iii, indexicality and mimetic representation are problematised in much more complex ways. I claim that this first "portrait scene" amounts to a "theatregram", to use Louise George Clubb's term for a movable structural unit in drama. This scene adapts and explores the hermeneutical complexities of the comparison of the two pictures in *Hamlet*.

Moreover, I hope to demonstrate that *The Vow Breaker* is not simply "a deficient rewriting of *Romeo and Juliet* reversed"[7], but a play that mediates attitudes of iconophilia and iconophobia in relation to the construction of the self and of the "spectacular body". Through metadrama, modes of perception and sources of knowledge are investigated and juxtaposed with the pleasures and fears of sensationalism.

Contextualising William Sampson's Play and its Woodcut Illustration

The Vow Breaker is the third and last play attributed to William Sampson, a Nottinghamshire poet and dramatist (born c. 1600, died after 1655). The other plays are *The True Tragedy of Herod and Antipater* (published in 1622), written with another Nottinghamshire playwright, Gervase Markham (c. 1568-1637), which was produced at the Red Bull, and the no longer extant comedy *The Widow's Prize*, licensed for performance in 1625 for the Prince's Company, probably among the plays which were destroyed by John Warburton's cook while baking[8]. *The Vow Breaker* was printed in 1636, the same year of the publication of Sampson's collection of eulogies, *Virtus Post Funera*. A member of the local gentry[9], Sampson undertook a

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[7] Antonella Piazza, *op. cit.* (2000): 192, n. 3 (translation mine)

[8] Patricia A. Griffin (ed.), *op. cit.* (2009): 6.

[9] The frontispiece of *Herod and Antipater* states that this play is by "Gervase Markham, and William Sampson. Gentlemen", and he signed himself "William Sampson, gent." (f. 1 r.) in *Roomes Hic Este Ille Cicero, Or Ciceroes Loyall Epistles*, a manuscript collection of invented letters between ancient Romans, dedicated to Lucy Hastings. I wish to thank Melanie Leung at the Folger Library in Washington, D. C. for answering my queries and for sending me a copy of this work.

life-long quest for recognition and patronage among many noble households in the Midlands[10].

He was in the employment of Sir Henry Willoughby, first baronet of Risley in Derbyshire, at least from 1628 until well after his patron's death in 1649. To Anne Willoughby, one of the baronet's daughters, he dedicated *The Vow Breaker*, the frontispiece of which reads: "THE VOW BREAKER. OR, THE FAIR MAID of Clifton *In* Nottinghamshire *as it hath been diverse times acted by several Companies with great applause*". The punctuation leaves it ambiguous whether "*In* Nottinghamshire" means that it was acted in that region or, more likely, that it specifies which Clifton (note that Risley is less than 10 km from Clifton). There is no further information about its staging, and thus we do not know where and under what circumstances it was played, whether in guildhalls, town halls, nobles' houses, or inns. Bentley questions performances in the capital owing to the "irrelevancies", as he calls them, of the fifth act, which "surely would have little [appeal] or none in London"[11].

For this reason, we should consider this play as a unique opportunity to investigate the functions and effects of a portrait on stage in a provincial context[12]. It can be argued that provincial audiences had not been vastly exposed either to Dutch realistic portraiture, or to the aesthetics of courtly limning. Instead, they would be familiar with regional painting, such as, for example, the picture *Sir Thomas Aston at the Deathbed of His Wife* by John Souch (see Illustration no. 7). This family portrait bears relevance to Sampson's play because some scholars[13] argue that the seated woman is Sir Aston's second wife, Anne Willoughby, the dedicatee of *The Vow Breaker*. This

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[10] Apart from the evidence provided by the numerous eulogies of *Virtus post Funera*, suffice it to mention that Sampson tried to obtain the patronage of the nearby Cavendish circle, especially by dedicating a remarkable narrative poem, *Love's Metamorphosis, or Apollo and Daphne* (Harleian MS. 6947, no. 41, ff. 318–336) to Margaret Cavendish. I am currently working on a critical edition of this text.

[11] Patricia A. Griffin (ed.), *op. cit.* (2009): 21.

[12] It seems, however, that this play was more popular than we may assume: it was occasionally adapted in a droll form produced in the second half of the seventeenth century. See Philip J. Ayres, "Production and Adaptation of William Sampson's *The Vow Breaker* (1636) in the Restoration", *Theatre Notebook*, no. 27, 1973: 145-9.

[13] See Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics in Provincial England, 1540-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 123, n. 58: "An unresolved question remains about the assigned date of the painting, 1635, and the identity of the second woman, as Aston's second marriage did not take place until 1637. One version has both women identified as Aston's first wife shown before and after death". See Catherine Belsey's discussion of this portrait in *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London: Methuen, 1985): 149-152.

can be easily disputed, since Sir Aston married Anne only in 1639. However, this picture can be regarded as a typical specimen of regional painting. It represents "local […] portraiture at a more advanced stage of assimilation of the formal polite mode and with the techniques required by that mode"[14], but it preserves all the essential features of English regional portraits: flatness, the presence of heraldry marking the importance of genealogy, symbolic props (a cross-staff, a skull, a celestial globe, a lute), as well as the use of symbolic perspective.

Illustration no. 7

The Vow Breaker was printed with a striking woodcut illustration (see Illustration no. 2) showing four simultaneous scenes of the action. Of particular interest for my

[14] Ibid.

purposes is the bottom half. It depicts a mirroring pattern between Old Bateman, who is lamenting his son's suicide while looking at his portrait, and Anne's father, kneeling beside the girl who, in the distance, is about to drown in the river. Both are shown in the same position as they exclaim: "O how happy had I beene if shee had lived", "O how happy had I beene if hee had lived" (IV.iii.262-63). R. A. Foakes includes this woodcut among the other twenty-seven "illustrations relating to the stage in printed texts of plays" and affirms that

> The woodcut then is based closely on the action of the play, and cites lines of dialogue from it. The settings in the cut are largely fanciful, but the costumes, the bed and the picture of young Bateman may have some relevance to the staging of the play[15].

This is virtually the only illustration we possess of a staged portrait in early modern English drama.

The image shows a fairly large half-length portrait of Young Bateman. It is framed and hangs on a nail in mid-air. This is an important clue: the scene conflates two moments in the play. The setting of IV.iii (the second "portrait scene") is indoors, in Anne's house. Her dead body has just been recovered; in comes Old Bateman "*with his [son's] picture*", as the stage direction reads. It is obvious that he cannot hang it there in someone else's house: he must be holding it in his hands. Instead, in III.iii (the first "portrait scene"), Old Bateman is at home and cries over his son's portrait, and shouts to Anne: "Because I hang his picture near my bed / Com'st thou to laugh me?" (79-80). In the illustration, the two dramatic moments are merged. In III.iii, Anne "*takes the picture*" (S.D.) and, as shall be analysed, becomes distracted. This episode and Old Bateman's behaviour in IV.iii show that the portrait, however visibly large, is easily portable: it can be hanged as well as carried. It is difficult to assess the quality of the picture, but a minimum resemblance with the actor playing Bateman was necessary (for instance, the most salient features of the head, such as the colour of his hair and moustache, should have been the same). We may also hypothesise that the portrait might have displayed those heraldic and emblematic inserts which were an almost ubiquitous feature of the English painting tradition. Wassersug is sceptical of the idea that the illustration is "an accurate depiction of this play's performance conditions", and she writes that

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[15] R. A. Foakes, *Illustrations of the English Stage 1580-1642* (London: Scolar Press, 1985): 141-42.

there is no reason to presume that [the picture] would have been any larger than a cabinet miniature […] this illustration depicts the text and not the performance […] The portrait of Young Bateman is similarly inflated, depicted here as larger than it would have been on stage, in order to reveal its value within the story[16].

She notes that the woodcut depicts other elements, such as the river, and that the dimension of the ghost is bigger than the other characters in the top section due to its importance. This is of course true, but I disagree on the question of the size of the portrait. Bateman's picture is definitely realistic, and the detail of the nail perfectly corresponds with what we can glean from the play-text[17].

In the course of my dissertation, I have argued that sizable pictures *were* used and were no anomaly in the venues of performance of early modern English drama. The woodcut illustration proves this point, and also testifies to the centrality of the portrait in the plot of *The Vow Breaker*. Before proceeding with a closer analysis of the play, it is indispensable to provide a brief synopsis of its plot.

In Clifton, a village just outside Nottingham, the beautiful Anne promises that she will marry Young Bateman. They divide a coin as a token of their commitment to each other. Their parents strongly disapprove of this union; Anne's father (Boote), in particular, wants her to marry the wealthy but aged Jermane. In order to gain Boote's approval, Young Bateman goes to fight at the Siege of Leigh (1560), where the English and Scots ally to oppose the French-held port near Edinburgh under the regent queen Mary of Guise. Bateman joins the English troops, which also include the major comic butt of the play, a Puritan "painter-stainer by art and a limner by profession" (I.i. 192-93), Marmaduke Joshua. Another important character is Ursula, Anne's cousin, a shrewd and witty girl, loved by a miller, Miles, who also goes to war.

Young Bateman proves valiant in the battle, but he is determined to go back to Clifton. There he discovers that, ignoring Ursula's disapproval, Anne has just married Jermane. Bateman is incredulous, but is faced with Anne's scorn. He ominously

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[16] Yolana Wassersug, *'My Picture I Enjoin Thee to Keep': The Function of Portraits in English Drama, 1558-1642* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2015): 212.

[17] Other scholars have interpreted the illustration as a valuable historical document: see Sasha Roberts, "'Let me the curtains draw': The Dramatic and Symbolic Properties of the Bed in Shakespearean Tragedy" in Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (eds), *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 158, and Frederick Kiefer, "Curtains on the Shakespearean Stage", *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England,* no. 20, 2007: 152.

repeats the words he had pronounced at their engagement: "Alive or dead I shall enjoy thee" (II.ii.154). He then hangs himself in front of Anne's door. Old Bateman discovers the body but Boote and Anne's reaction is again derision. Soon enough, Young Bateman's ghost comes to haunt Anne who realises she is pregnant with Jermane's child. In a formidable scene (III.iii), she goes to Bateman's father's and finds him lamenting the death of his son and looking at Young Bateman's portrait. The ghost appears, but only Anne can see him. Ursula and Old Bateman try to comfort her, but the ghost reveals that he will take Anne as soon as is she is delivered of the baby. In the meantime, the English win the war.

Anne gives birth to a daughter. She is surrounded by women who discuss dream interpretation when Young Bateman's ghost comes to take her. She cries to the other women to stop him, but they fall into a deep sleep. Anne starts to walk out of the bedroom against her will, and assistance comes too late: they find her drowned in the river Trent. Old Bateman, carrying his son's picture, meets Boote, and they find a form of reconciliation, crying together for their children's death. They intend to write this tragic story together.

The last act concludes the play in an apparently incongruous atmosphere of mirth. Elizabeth I herself comes to Nottingham. The members of the community engage in traditional pastimes (a morris dance and a puppet play with Joshua) and there are playful references to Nottinghamshire's folk legends, such as the Robin Hood tales. Miles sings to Ursula parts of the new ballad of her cousin's fate in order to persuade her to love him, but she eludes him by making Boote believe that Miles is another ghost, and the old man strikes the miller. Elizabeth honours the soldiers, grants the charter for the navigation of the Trent to the city of Nottingham, and invites the mayor and the soldiers to dine with her.

Portraits in Tragedy: A "Theatregram"

The direct sources of the play are a ballad (entered in the Stationers' Register in 1603), *A Godly Warning for All Maidens*, and Holinshed's *Chronicles* of the historical incidents. The ballad was based on what has been described as "the most famous

ghost story about a suicide in early modern England"[18]. It is almost certain, then, that the audiences knew the plot in advance. The legendary fair maid of Clifton lived during the War of the Roses, but the ballad shares many features with other folkloric narratives, such as the "Demon Lover" ballad corpus[19]. Sampson was familiar with both the local legend and the places mentioned in the play. What I think should be emphasised is that the "portrait scenes" (III.iii and IV.iii) are purposefully introduced by Sampson, since there is no allusion to a portrait either in the ballad or in the legend. Their derivation is extremely interesting. In these scenes, William Sampson perfectly blends *Hamlet*'s closet scene with some other scenes (III.xiii, IV.iv) along with the "painter addition"[20] of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*.

Whereas some critics may want to accuse Sampson of plagiarism, we know that, in early modern England, questions of authorship and copyright differed hugely from our own. By 1635, Shakespeare's works had already been printed in the Second Folio and, according to Wallrath, Sampson admired and read Shakespeare "assiduously"[21]: in *The Vow Breaker*, we can discern not only the influence of *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and the history plays, but also precise echoes of the poems (for instance, see "thy [Death's] ebon dart" II.iv 15, and *Venus and Adonis*, l. 948, "Death's ebon dart"). Wallrath, however, claims that Shakespeare's influence on Sampson was merely "superficial"[22]. Now, if the construction of the plot and the quality of Sampson's verse can only barely be compared with Shakespeare's style, Sampson does seem to be very familiar with the great tradition of earlier drama. Apart from Shakespeare and Kyd, in the fifth act (V.ii), Sampson even makes direct reference to Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (performed in 1614, but not printed until 1631).

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[18] Michael MacDonald and Terence R. Murphy, *Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990): 47.

[19] See Katharine M. Briggs, *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales in the English Language* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul): Vol. 1 ("Part B, Folk Legends"), 449-50; 577-78; 586-587; also Diane Purkiss, "Shakespeare, Ghosts and Popular Folklore", in Stuart Gillespie and Neil Rhodes (eds), *Shakespeare and Elizabethan Popular Culture* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006): 136-154.

[20] The author of these additions is unknown. It may have been Ben Jonson, but the parody of the "Painter Addition" in Marston's *Antonio and Mellida* casts some doubt on this attribution. Recently, Douglas Bruster ("Shakespearean Spellings and Handwriting in the Additional Passages Printed in the 1602 *Spanish Tragedy*", *Notes and Queries*, no. 60, 2013: 420-4) has tried to demonstrate that Shakespeare wrote the painter scene in Kyd's play, but the question remains open. For a study of this scene, see Marguerite A. Tassi, *The Scandal of Images. Iconoclasm, Eroticism and Painting in Early Modern English Drama* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2005): 152-177.

[21] Hans Wallrath (ed.), *William Sampson's* Vow Breaker (Löwen: Materialen zur Kunde des älteren Englishen Dramas, 1914): 35.

[22] Ibid, 50.

Before closely analysing the "portrait scenes", I would like to suggest that we should interpret them from a specific standpoint, and that there is an association between early modern English tragedy and portraits. In a previous chapter, I discussed *Hamlet*'s closet scene. The comparison of King Hamlet's picture with Claudius' prompts a questioning of the rhetoric of representation both in the discourse of subjectivity and in metadramatic terms. As we have seen, an analogue of this scene is a moment (III.ii) in the early anonymous domestic tragedy, *A Warning for Fair Women*, in which a dumb show represents an allegory of murder, also by employing a portrait:

> [S]uddenly riseth up a great tree betweene them, whereat amazedly they step backe, wherupon Lust brings an axe to mistres Sanders, shewing signes, that she should cut it downe, which she refuseth […] The Lust brings the Axe to Browne, and shews the like signes as before, wherupon he roughlie and suddenly hews down the tree, and then they run togither and embrace. With that enters Chastitie, with her hair dishevelled, and taking mistres Sanders by the hand, brings her to her husbands picture hanging on the wall, and pointing to the tree, seemes to tell her, that that is the tree so rashly cut downe. Whereupon she, wringing her hands in tears, departs[23].

Hieronimo in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* sees in another character's plight "the lively portrait of [his] dying self"[24] (III.xiii.85) and, most emphatically, in the "painter addition", Hieronimo wants a painter to draw a fantastic picture of his destroyed family, the scene of his son's murder, and his ravings. Let us also recall the murderous dumb show of Webster's *The White Devil* which, as I have already said, is strongly connected to the dumb show in *A Warning for Fair Women.*

It is obvious that each portrait in these plays has different connotations. However, the sheer number of these scenes must attract our attention. Pictures are a rather elaborate type of prop and similar tragic scenes are hardly to be found in continental drama[25]. I would argue that this situation comes very close to being a "theatregram", as originally defined by Louise George Clubb:

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[23] Charles D. Cannon (ed.), *A Warning for Fair Women* (Den Haag and Paris: Mouton, 1975): 134 (to facilitate legibility, I have normalised the italics).

[24] All quotations from Kyd's play refer to the *New Mermaids* edition, edited by J. R. Mulryne and Andrew Gurr (London: Methuen, 2009).

[25] I can only think of isolated cases such as Calderón de la Barca's *El Pintor de su Deshonra* (c. 1645-50). See the discussion in Laura R. Bass, *The Drama of the Portrait*: *Theatre and Visual Culture in Early Modern Spain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008): 67-77.

> […I]n addition to the mere fusion of borrowed plots, it [construction by contamination] demanded the interchange and transformation of units, figures, relationships, actions, topoi and framing patterns, gradually building a combinatory of theatregrams which were at once streamlined structures of svelte playmaking and elements of high specific density, weighty with significance from previous incarnations[26].

Theatregrams are not to be understood as general motifs. They represent combinatory, compositional units which fit into a dramatic narrative and morph depending on the situation, but without ever completely shedding the traces of their earlier apparitions. Theatregrams have been very fruitfully studied in relation to *commedia dell'arte*[27], which gradually inventoried them to form a universal dramatic repertoire: typical examples are the bed-trick, the *innamorata* in drag looking for her beloved, the separated twins, etc. I contend, however, that in order to have a proficient adaptation of a theatregram, the insertion needs to have an organic significance within the structure of the plot. It is not enough to insert a vague intertextual link; the episode needs to be engrafted into the narrative, forming relevant connections to the dramatic action on the whole. This is the reason why, for example, I consider the pictures featured in William Heminge's *The Fatal Contract* (c. 1639) much more derivative than Sampson's appropriation, and an inferior example of theatregram. In *The Fatal Contract*, we have both large portraits and miniatures, with a proliferation of ghosts and other sensational elements, but the plot does not reach any satisfactory unity of theme or action, sprawling instead through intricate narratives.

I interpret the "portrait scenes" in William Sampson's *The Vow Breaker* as, by contrast, a skilled treatment of the theatregram of the commemorative portrait in tragedy. By blending Kyd's and Shakespeare's works, Sampson exploits the picture as an element fraught with reminiscences and expands its features in an original way. In his play, Sampson does not treat the staging of a picture as a mere domino piece, but, as will be demonstrated, the first "portrait scene" coalesces around itself the theme of anxiogenic vision, which is so deeply ingrained in the whole play.

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[26] Louise George Clubb, "Theatregrams", in Donald Beecher and Massimo Ciavolella (eds), *Comparative Critical Approaches to Renaissance Comedy* (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 1986): 18. It seems that the term was first suggested to Clubb by Mario Baratto.
[27] See, in particular, Michele Marrapodi (ed.), *Italian Culture in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: Rewriting, Remaking, Refashioning* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

We do not know who the original spectators were[28]. I posit that *The Vow Breaker* had multiple audiences, since it could cater both to popular and to more élite communities. Those that belonged to the lower ranks of society could enjoy the playwright's treatment of a local legend[29] and come into contact with scenes familiar to London's playgoers, perhaps not yet known to them. I say "perhaps" because, as Julie Sanders notes in her landmark study, it is possible to "affirm an interest in *Hamlet* as a specific theatrical intertext in a number of the Nottinghamshire-connected playtexts from the period"[30], and *The Spanish Tragedy* had been adapted in various ballads. Those who were literate and had the possibility to read Shakespeare's and Kyd's texts (the numerous early editions of *The Spanish Tragedy* were literally "read to pieces"[31]) would have recognised and appreciated Sampson's manipulation of the two most influential tragedies of their time. I do not wish to downplay the political significance of such an operation: the story would also offer glimpses into a shared past, and the play's use of Elizabethan nostalgia allied with regional topicality and anti-Puritan satire would have had particular effects on a society which was facing the prodromes of civil war.

Threatening Vision and the Interrogation of One's Identity

The epigraph on the play's frontispiece is a quotation from the *Aeneid* which expresses Aeneas' reaction when faced with his wife's ghost: "*Obstipui, steteruntque*

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[28] We are not sure about the identity of the original actors, either. The frontispiece states that it was acted by "several companies". As Andrew Gurr indicates, "under Charles, the evidence of travelling [theatrical companies] fades away" (quoted in Siobhan Keenan, *Travelling Players in Shakespeare's England*, Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002: 165), and Julie Sanders points out that the Willoughbys of Wollaton, the Nottinghamshire branch of the family, retained professional players who performed both in Wollaton and at Middleton Hall in Warwickshire (*The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama: 1620-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011: 116).

[29] It is also useful to remember Peter Burke's argument that, in the early modern period, we have a progressive withdrawal of the élites from what had been a shared popular culture, in which both the nobility and the lower classes participated, though Burke acknowledges that, in comparison with many other European areas, "the withdrawal of the [English] upper classes came relatively early" (*Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, London and New York: Harper and Row, 1978: 277). See also Stuart Gillespie and Neil Rhodes (eds), *Shakespeare and Elizabethan Popular Culture* (London and New York: Arden Shakespeare, 2006).

[30] Julie Sanders, *op. cit*. 2011: 119.

[31] J. R. Mulryne and Andrew Gurr (eds), *op. cit*. 2009: xxiv.

comae, et vox faucibus haesit" (II, l. 774)[32], "I was struck dumb, my hair stood on end, and my voice stuck in my throat". This Virgilian line is alluded to in Anne's reaction to Bateman's ghost, but it had already been echoed in Old Hamlet's description of his purgatorial condition to his son (I.v 15-22):

> I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
> Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
> Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres,
> Thy knotted and combined locks to part
> And each particular hair to stand on end
> Like quills upon the fearful porpentine –
> But this eternal blazon must not be
> To ears of flesh and blood […]

In both instances, vision conquers verbal utterance: what is seen surpasses all attempt at articulate formulation. At the same time, this phenomenon generates hyper-theatricality, since this surplus of *stimuli* lends itself to sensational spectacle. It is thus under the seal of anxiogenic spectatorship that "[t]he story that we glance at" ("The Prologue to Censurers", l. 14) should be taken.

Sampson's play-text employs numerous examples of a destabilising vision: a ghost, dreams, visions, and picture-gazing. These could all be subsumed under the term "shadow" in the early modern period (see I.3.4): not only was it an alternative name for a "ghost" and an "image cast by a body intercepting light", but it was also "[a]pplied rhetorically to a portrait as contrasted with the original; also to an actor or a play in contrast with the reality represented" (*OED*). In fact, we could describe the main action of *The Vow Breaker* as a battle between substances and shadows, pitted against "perceant" vision and an "unperceant" heart. This is the advice given by Sir Gervase Clifton, who is described as an English military hero, to Young Bateman: "I would not have thee go / To fish for shadows and let go the substance" (II.i 45-46). Bateman obviously does not follow this warning. He himself will become a shadow and harass Anne: "It haunts me as a shadow, or a vision" (III.i.4). Note the use of "it",

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[32] H.R. Fairclough (ed.), *Virgil: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I-VI* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916). This formula recurs other times in Virgil's masterpiece, always when the hero encounters the numinous, as well explained by James Lawrence Schulman, *The Pale Cast of Thought: Hesitation and Decision in the Renaissance Epic* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998): 62 and ff. The line's translation comes from Eve Adler, *Vergil's Empire: Political Thought in the Aeneid* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003): 284.

just like on the ramparts of Elsinore castle to define Old Hamlet's ghost. Another "objectified" Bateman haunts his father in the form of a portrait.

The ghost's oath before taking Anne is, "I'll pierce the air as with a thunder bolt / And make thy passage free" (IV.iii.218-19). His phantasmatic body has literally become "light": "There is no cavern in the earth's vast entrails / But I can through as perceant as the light / And find thee" (III.i.60-62). This is a fine twist because, in its visual imagery, it contrasts Anne's behaviour. Old Bateman had imputed to the scornful Anne both insensitivity and hypocrisy: "Thy griefs are violent and work within, / 'Tis a foul sign of an *unperceant* heart / Whenas the eyes cannot impart a tear" (II.iv.110-12, emphasis mine). Sampson may well have coined the adjective "unperceant" to best emphasise this dynamic: the *OED* only records the word "perceant".

Whereas the lovers' gazes are private, Anne's perjury and Young Bateman's suicide are described as public and metatheatrical shows. Their actions make Bateman's declaration in the first act come true: "When either of us break this sacred bond, / Let us be made strange spectacles to the world, / To heaven, and earth" (I.i.221-24). Bateman describes Anne "like a polished ivory table / In pureness, without a stain or blemish" (226-27), and warns her: "If thou shouldst soil this whiteness with black deeds / Think what a monster thou wouldst make thy self" (228-29). True to its Latin etymology (*monstrum*), a monster is both something that "shows", that de*monstr*ates, admonishes, and something that "is shown", a spectacle that causes wonder. Conventionally enough, Anne is advised modesty, but she needs to exhibit the spotless "whiteness" of her chastity, which, if stained, will render her the object of a more terrible visual display.

However, Anne's vanity is her weakness. She is attracted to the false shimmer of gold when she accepts Jermane's suit. While Ursula thinks that Cupid must have rendered her cousin "as blind as a bat" (I.iv.39-40), Anne concedes that Bateman is "young, embellished with a natural, / Active, and generous, unspotted beauty" (48-49), but Jermane's "[g]old, like a second nature, can elixate, / Make the deformed fair, the fair seem foul, And we that love not must be tied to th'face" (52-54). Being "tied to th'face" will have portentous consequences in the ensuing acts.

Young Bateman arrives in Clifton on the wedding day, alerted by the "strange visions" (II.i.55) he has had in his sleep. His acquaintances meet him pityingly and "with a heavy glance" (II.ii.20), which prompts him to question his aspect: "I wear that visage formerly I did: / Six moons has not so metamorphosed me / But that I may be known" (16-18). When he finally sees Anne and Jermane through a window, he doubts and denigrates his sensorial faculties: "Bless me! What prodigious object / Is yond that blasts mine eyes and like a thief / Steals my understanding? Certes 'tis she!" (46-48). This is a grimly darkened echo of Romeo's "what light through yonder window breaks? / It is the east, and Juliet is the sun" (II.i 44-5). Whereas Juliet seems to radiate light from her moonlit balcony and vivify Romeo, Anne "blasts" Bateman's sight in broad daylight.

Bateman cries out: "Strange fears assail my senses" (55). He summons Anne and tries to convince himself that "Her sight, like to a cordial, [will] expe[l] / All former gross suggestions" (63-4). His emotions clash with reason, making him question his identity: "But I have lost myself. I am awake / And see a substance more than dreamers do" (72-73). He has invested so much in his love for Anne that his sense of subjectivity is challenged, and he does not trust his eyesight. His identity is further interrogated by Anne's reaction: "I do not know you" (75), to which Bateman replies: "I wonder then, how I dare know my self / When thou forgetst me?" (76-7). This exchange results in Bateman's intention to kill himself, that is, his self: once bereaved of Anne's recognition, he does not want any identity any longer. Still, even prior to his reappearance as a ghost, he achieves his new purpose, to make Anne herself interrogate her identity: she cries out in turn, "I have lost myself, and know not where I am" (179).

These verbal exchanges can be illuminated by recent studies on early modern subjectivity[33]. In particular, Nancy Selleck's argument on the interdependence between self and other in that particular culture posits that "Renaissance language

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[33] I have found the following studies particularly useful: Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body. Essays on Subjection* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995 [1984]); Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Angela Locatelli, "Shakespeare's Discursive Strategies and their Definitions of Subjectivity", in Michele Marrapodi and Giorgio Melchiori (eds), *Italian Studies in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (University of Delaware Press, London, and Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1999): 76-94; and Nancy Selleck, *The Interpersonal Idiom in Shakespeare, Donne, and Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[often] makes the other not merely the self's context but its source and its locus"[34]. For instance, she claims that when the other great vow breaker in English drama, Cressida, professes to Troilus that she has "a kind of self resides with you" (*Tr. and Cr.*, III.ii 94), this conception goes beyond a mere Petrarchan topos (the beloved as an 'another self'), disclosing an interpersonal construction of subjectivity akin to Bakhtin's dialogised consciousness.

Moreover, Anne's alleged "unperceant heart" is in contrast with these issues, since it cannot be regarded as a fully independent entity:

> If the heart is the locus of subjective experience, the 'self' is more, for it represents objectified identity as well. *Self* for a Renaissance speaker is not only what is felt but what is observed and recognized. The 'other self' is thus not merely a trope of intersubjectivity; it is inter*personal* in the Renaissance sense of 'person', as it joins not only two subjects, but two objects[35].

An interconnected categorisation of the "self" in early modern culture was of course linked to humouralism. The somatic dimension in all its inter-penetrability, together with social behaviour, ensures that "bodily condition, subjective state, and psychological character are in this earlier regime fully imbricated"[36]. We will see how these processes are played out in the portrait scenes.

Introducing the 'Spectacular Body': The Ghost

Old Bateman's discovery of his son's corpse is clearly indebted to II.v of Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*[37], the arresting frontispiece of which famously portrays Hieronimo finding the body of his murdered son, Horatio, hanging in the bower. Indeed, it can be safely stated that the woodcut illustration of *The Vow Breaker* expects its viewers to compare it with this image (which also simultaneously depicts different dramatic moments; besides, both illustrations employ speech balloons). Hieronimo had called it a "murderous spectacle" (II.v.9), while Old Bateman, shocked at that "heavy sight"[38]

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[34] Nancy Selleck, *op. cit.* (2008): 2.

[35] Ibid, 36.

[36] Michael Schoenfeldt, quoted ibid, 27. See also Gail Paster Kern, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

[37] A fine reading of this scene and its structural importance for Kyd's tragedy is provided by Serena Cenni, *Il corpo insepolto. Discorsività e affettività in* The Spanish Tragedy *di Thomas Kyd* (Trento: Temi, 2000).

[38] Compare with Shakespeare's *Othello*: "The object poisons sight" (V.ii 374); *Antony and Cleopatra*: "A heavy sight!" (IV.xvi 42), and also Arthur Brooke's *Romeus and Juliet*: "this heavy sight", 2840 (*EEBO*).

(II.iv.61), wishes he were instantly blinded. On Anne's arrival, he emblematises his son: "Behold the miserablest map of woe / That ever father mourned for" (78-79). Anne is unmoved and does not heed Ursula's warning that Bateman may reappear as a ghost: "Afraid on's ghost? As much as of a picture painted o'th'wall!" (151-152) This statement ominously foreshadows what will happen in the next act, and directly follows Old Bateman's intention: "Come, poor boy, these arms have borne thee oft; / I'll have thy picture hung up in my chamber / And, when I want thee, I will weep to that" (II.iv.133-35).

Here, Sampson conflates two moments of Kyd's tragedy: the discovery of the body and the "painter addition" alluded to earlier. In fact, the portrait Hieronimo had wished for is an impossibility. He had asked the painter to paint a phantasmagoric or even cinematic picture of "a tear, or a wound, a groan, or a sigh" (111), "a doleful cry" (125). In *The Vow Breaker*'s portrait scene, however, the ghost himself portrays these passions in a scene which visually mirrors the stage picture we have just described.

After Bateman's suicide, it is possible to perceive a reversal of what we could call the dramatic "visual economy". In the previous acts, Anne was the object of the others' glances as "the fair maid of Clifton", and to Bateman, she was "the jewel of these eyes" (II.iv.109). With the ghost's appearance, she ironically becomes the subject who sees, observes, and describes "the burden of [her] troubled mind" (III.i.54). Alan C. Dessen sees *The Vow Breaker* as "an especially elaborate example (heavily indebted to Shakespeare)"[39] of the convention of a ghost being visible only to one person. Anne alone can see Bateman, who, as has already been considered, optically and ontologically becomes "light". In his appearances, he actively haunts Anne, but is etymologically "an object, and a strange one", as Ursula reflects (30): something placed before one's eyes. He becomes a picture, and Anne has now the role of *blasonneur* (or, to be precise, a "*blasonneuse*")[40], and repeatedly tries to describe him ekphrastically:

> And but it wants the rosy-coloured face
> Whom meagre death has played the horse-leech with,

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[39] Alan C. Dessen, *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984): 179, n. 8.
[40] See also Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

It would not seem so ghostly in these eyes.
It bears the perfect form it used to do
As if it never knew immortality
Nor wasted underneath a hill of clay.
Sometimes as curious limners have portrayed
Tears trilling from the weeping Niobe
That some would swear the very picture wept
And art of nature got the mastery.
So did I guess a flux of brinish tears
Came from this airy and unfathomed ghost. (13-24)

In a fascinating role reversal, it is the ghost who is described as the weeping Niobe turned to stone, while that visual correlative would seem to better suit the titular vow breaker. Furthermore, she states:

And could the painters of this age draw sighs[41],
I could demonstrate sighs and heavy groans,
As if a sensible heart had broke in twain. (25-27)

Besides borrowing from Kyd's "painter addition", this is a passage in which presentation and re-presentation, mimesis and indexicality indissolubly coalesce: Anne can "demonstrate", that is, visually indicate, an invisible object. She can point out the iconography of the reactions of a self that should but does not mirror her own. In this sense, the "other self" is not to be interpreted as a foil or an alien entity to Anne's subjectivity: on the contrary, it constructs her identity interpersonally.

It is Anne now who gazes, even beyond her own control: "I am addicted to contemplation" (39), she says. We could regard this as a further instance of dramatic irony. At the very beginning of the play, Anne had protested against Bateman's leaving her to go to war: "Oh misery! Wouldst have thy love entranced / Without an echo that would sigh farewell?" (I.i.5-6) "Entranced" means mesmerised, enthralled, but we may perhaps detect a reminiscence of the myth of Narcissus and the nymph Echo. In an ambiguous phrasing, Anne seems to incorporate in herself both the self-loving youth, the "iconophile" par excellence, and the forlorn maid. Now she is entranced in front of his phantasmatic appearance, as a picture that looks back to the spectator, because she has put her mind in it, as Shakespeare writes in *A Lover's*

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[41] Compare these lines with the ones in the "painter addition": "Art a painter? Canst paint me a tear, or a wound, a groan, or a sigh? Canst paint me such a tree as this?" (111-2).

Complaint: "Many there were that did his picture get, / To serve their eyes, and in it put their mind" (134-5).

Note that until now, Anne has described an absent entity through what Honzl terms "fantastic oriented deixis"[42]. Suddenly, the ghost appears onstage as if evoked by her ekphrasis: a rhetorical representation results in a physical presentation. "As perceant as the light" (61), he menaces Anne: "Thou canst not catch my unsubstantial part / For I am air and not to be touched" (63-64). Echoing *Hamlet*, his description of the hereafter would evidently turn Anne into a Niobe figure: "[…] from thy eyes, [it would] draw liquid streams of tears, / More full of issue than a steepy fountain" (76-77). Her mental and sensorial faculties are paralysed:

> Distraction, like an ague, seizes me.
> I know not whether I see, hear, or speak:
> My intellectual parts are frozen up
> At sight of thee, thou fiery effigies
> Of my wrongèd Bateman. (80-84)

Even when the ghost exits, Anne continues to see this uncanny "shadow" that moves between the status of a frightening "effigies" and a frantic performer, an object that refuses to be passive: "It stares, beckons, points, to the piece of gold / We brake between us. Look! Look there! Here! There!" (94-95)

The ghost's appearance "embodies" contrariety: it is both emblematically legible (an "effigies") and incomprehensible (it freezes "intellectual parts"). The ghost's body as a visual object fully exemplifies what Francis Barker terms "the spectacular body". In a culture in which the greatest mystery of all is incarnation, the metaphysical made immanent, the body

> is at once sacred and profane, tortured and celebrated […] because it traverses even the polarities of the culture's investment: or rather, it is the medium and the substance in which, ultimately, those meanings are described[43].

The presentation of the body instantiates and symbolises all forms of re-presentation. The spectators view Anne, who is herself forced to view, read, and interpret the ghost's body. Her gaze partitions and dismembers the body through the

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[42] See Fernando de Toro, *Theatre Semiotics: Text and Staging in Modern Theatre* (Frankfurt: Vervuert Verlag, 1995): 32, n. 53.

[43] Francis Barker, *op. cit.* (1995): 21.

practice of ekphrasis, which paradoxically produces a symbolic unification through emblazoning.

The sight of the ghost finally generates in Anne a penetrating, "inward sorrow" (122). She wants to visit Old Bateman, and Boote cannot dissuade her with his promise that he would "feast all [her] senses" (128) to divert her.

The 'Spectacular Body' and Distraction: The First Portrait Scene

We move now to the first portrait scene. The stage direction for III.iii reads "*Enter* ANNE *with a torch*, URSULA, [OLD] BATEMAN *wailing [over] his picture.*" Ursula comments on the room with her wit, but introduces the "shadow" imagery that will concretise itself in the dual form of ghost and portrait:

> Here's not so much as a shadow to affright us. For
> mine own part, neither incubus nor succubus can do't.
> I fear not what a quick thing can do, and I think your
> dead things are too quiet to say any harm. (5-8)

The setting is described as exquisitely domestic, and Old Bateman denies any rhetorical allusion to high-flown mourning:

> Pygmalion doted on the piece he made,
> So do not I, upon thy portraiture;
> I do but hang thy fair resemblance here
> To tell me of my immortality. (14-17)

We need to remember here the function of the *memento mori*, which was so typical of English portraiture. In this case, Old Bateman uses the commemorative picture to begrudge his own survival after his child's death. What must also be noted is the symmetric staging which should remind spectators of the suicide scene. There, he had discovered his son hanging in front of Boote's house and had taken down the corpse. Here, we see him again in front of a "hanging" son *in effigie* which is taken off the wall.

Anne is comforted by Old Bateman, but keeps saying: "Yet I see nothing" (24, 35), "Still I [see] no thing" (47). Her anxiety is resolved when the ghost appears and her reaction is striking:

> My eyes set here unmoved. I'll gaze with thee
> Until the windows of my head drop out,
> But then my mind will be afflicted too
> For what is unseen there, is visible here. (60-63)

Old Bateman is no longer the only one wailing over an icon. In her "addiction to contemplation", Anne intends to gaze upon the ghost with her physical eyes as well with her mind's eye. We need to remember that imagination was thought to be an inherently visual faculty.

She frantically points at the ghost, invisible to Old Bateman and Ursula: "Look! Look! There! Here! There!" (75) Old Bateman feels mocked and his protestations have a self-apologetic tone, as if he had to defend himself for beholding a portrait:

> Because I hang his picture near my bed
> Com'st thou to laugh me? Out! Out, fondling! No!
> See thus I gaze on't, stroke his snowy hands
> And prune the curled tresses of his locks
> Which the arts-man nearly has dishevelled. (79-83)

There are two reasons why Old Bateman feels obliged to justify his action. The first is that he is wailing over the death of a suicide: self-slaughter was considered a felony in early modern England as well as the most serious sin a Christian could possibly commit. The second reason is bound with the latent iconophobic beliefs which characterised the English episteme. I suggested in the first part of my dissertation that it is important not to exaggerate the idea that, in reformed England, there was a widespread conviction that portraits could elicit immoral and superstitious effects. Yet, the practice of funerary commemorative portraiture had dangerously distinctive features which hearkened back to Catholic beliefs in Purgatory and the worshipping of dead souls. Tassi probably goes too far when she states that "[e]ven secular pictures were tainted because they could evoke immoral responses of an emotional, erotic, or idolatrous nature. The element of scandal arose in relation to all kinds of images"[44]. Yet, Old Bateman's soliloquy serves as an explanation of what he is doing to the audience: "Pygmalion doted on the piece he made, / So do not I, upon thy portraiture"

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[44] Marguerite A. Tassi, *op. cit*. (2005): 24.

(14-15). This has a clear pre-emptive value (an *excusatio non petita*) against accusations of idolatry and superstition[45].

Anne sees the portrait only now, while the audience has already been able to view it for a long time. She takes it and stands between the picture and the ghost. What follows is a formidable expansion of *Hamlet*'s closet scene: Anne compares the portrait with the ghost, verbally drawing a blazon of Young Bateman.

> Another Ganymede!
> This eye and yond are one. This front, that lip,
> This cheek a little ruddier shows than that,
> The very ashy paleness of his face,
> The mossy down still growing on his chin.
> And so his alabaster finger pointing
> To the bracelet whereon the piece of gold
> We broke between us hangs. (85-92)

Note the repetitious flow of deictic determiners. Her gaze then focuses on the emblem of her perjury, the broken coin (a decisive visual prop in the ghost's looks; see the woodcut illustration). The other two characters regard her as mad, whereas the offstage, "actual" spectators know her situation. Gradually, Anne begins to be unable to distinguish portrait from ghost. She affectionately combines the two "shadows" in her imagination:

> You shade this picture from the perceant sun
> And curtain it, to keep it from the dust[46].
> Why are you not as chary then of that?
> It looks as it were cold; alas, poor picture[47]. (94-97)

Old Bateman exclaims: "Here's but one picture!", but Anne retorts: "I say there's two" (108). She continues the blazon using familiar Petrarchan stylemes, but from a woman's (rather than a man's) perspective:

> You will not see this for to save a curtain:

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[45] For a very interesting discussion of the negotiations of grief in English Protestantism, see Elizabeth Hodgson, *Grief and Women Writers in the English Renaissance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[46] Compare these lines with these in Sampson's *Love's Metamorphosis*: "Who euer sawe a well-proportioned foot / drawne by the pensill of a curious hande, / Be[ing] behind some silken Curtaine putt / least it with blurring spotts of durt be stained, / and will not strike the Curtaine by from thence / to see the pictures totall excellence" (329 r.).

[47] Sampson plays with Hamlet's memorable "Alas, poor Yorick" (V.i 174).

His knotty curls, like to Apollo's trammels,
Neatly are displayed. I'll swear the painter
That made this piece had the other by it. (99-102)

Old Bateman decides to take away the picture from her: "It troubles your sight" (109). He tries to convince her that what she sees is only the figment of her "forced fancies" (111). He comforts her, but the ghost re-enters and shows his displeasure at this. The old man wants her to take "comfortable cordials / That shall remove these objects from thine eyes" (130-131) and warns her that her imagination could endanger her pregnancy:

Distemper not yourself at fancies,
Your time hastens to maturity;
You're very big and may endanger your fruit
If you give way to passions. (123-26)

To this Anne shockingly replies: "'Twill be abortive / As are my actions" (126-27). "Action" for Anne has lost all meaning. In her addiction to contemplation, the only acts she seems to be interested in are viewing and interpreting. Old Bateman refers to the body of beliefs related to vision during pregnancy: seeing unexpected things would either damage or leave traces on the baby. Midwifery manuals cautioned expecting women against seeing, for instance, men with visors, or they could give birth to monsters. In general, it was believed that women's passions were particularly excitable, and if their melancholy was too heavily disturbed, they would

see visions, confer with spirits and devils, they shall surely be damned, are afraid of some treachery, imminent danger, and the like, they will not speak, make answer to any question, but are almost distracted, mad, or stupid for the time, and by fits: and thus it holds them, as they are more or less affected, and as the inner humour is intended or remitted, or by outward objects and perturbations aggravated, solitariness, idleness, &c.[48]

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[48] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (pt. 1, sec. 3, mem. 2, subs. 4). Helen Hackett analyses this passage in "'A book, and solitariness': Melancholia, Gender and Literary Subjectivity in Mary Wroth's *Urania*", in Gordon McMullan (ed.), *Renaissance Configurations: Voices/Bodies/Spaces, 1580-1690* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998): 64-85. Rowland Wymer, in his study *Suicide and Despair in the Jacobean Drama* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1986: 118-19), reads Young Bateman's suicide as the result of love melancholy, and he notes the subversive implication of such a portrayal in a domestic play: love melancholy was a disease that was thought to "afflict the nobler sort of person".

Anne is then both an anti-hero (a vain, venal girl who commits perjury) and an object of compassion. Through this problematic character (bear in mind that she was named after the play's dedicatee), Sampson has his audience reflect on and negotiate religious concerns, medical discourses, and anxiogenic vision. What is also mediated in this particular scene is the nexus connecting conceptions of subjectivity and insanity. As Silvia Bigliazzi rightly proposes:

> Although criticism has often pointed out that the self in this age is hardly identifiable, in that the subject is not unfettered from society, but only the product of its relations, it is also true that there continuously crops up a preoccupation about how to define, and possibly silence, what threatens the individual from the inside[49].

In her distraction, Anne struggles to distinguish and identify the signs that appear before her. She may be the object of communal pity, but she remains a woman actively attempting to decode her condition. As a "distracted subject"[50], she experiences abnormal phenomena: in particular, objects that become so emotionally charged that they seem to come to life (the portrait), and the paradoxical, spectacular body of the ghost. If this new level of perception does not result in actual empowerment, owing to Anne's tragic end, nonetheless, it does make her role complex and challenging.

Gazes in Gynocentric Spaces, Puritan Painters, and the Reconciliation with Iconography

The action of *The Vow Breaker* proceeds swiftly, accumulating instances of shadow vision. After the first appearances of the ghost and the first portrait scene, the spectators are made into voyeurs of the intimate relationship between Anne, who has just given birth to a baby girl, the midwife and the gossips. It is an unsettling environment which becomes even more disruptive when the Ghost enters for the last time. The lying-in and birth were events that caused much disquiet within the

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[49] Silvia Bigliazzi (ed.), *Distraction Individualized: Figures of Insanity in Early Modern England* (Caselle di Sommacampagna VR: Cierre Grafica, 2012): 9, and see ibid., her "Constructing and Distracting the Erotic Self: Medical Lore and Love Insanity in *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*" (193-232).

[50] See Carol T. Neely, *Distracted Subjects: Madness and Gender in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

patriarchal system of early modern Europe: "Women's exclusive control of childbirth implies […] a potentially dangerous or hostile act, a conspiracy, a subversion of legitimate male rights"[51]. The lying-in chamber was a threatening gynocentric space, and the figures of the midwife and gossips were routinely ridiculed (compared either to witches or to asinine chatterboxes) to undercut their importance.

While exposing the secrets of childbirth (Anne has "but now" [92] given birth to the baby: she is lying in bed and the baby is being fondled by the gossips), ridicule is the main tone employed by Sampson to define this scene (IV.iii). Social anxiety is defused through the inane loquacity of the women. This portrayal might be reminiscent of Ben Jonson's treatment of midwifery in *The Magnetic Lady* (performed in 1632, though published only in 1641), a comedy in which he establishes "the rightness of this system of feminine 'nature' in the service of masculine 'culture' by showing what happens when a household of women reappropriates maternity […] in the course of their own pursuit of independent pleasure or profit"[52]. The very names of the gossips in *The Vow Breaker* (Prattle, Magpie, Longtongue, Barren) recall the names given by Jonson to his characters (the midwife Mistress Chair – i.e., French for "flesh" – Polish, and Keep) – although they also stem from common lore.

Moreover, the gossips' source of wisdom is male authority: they discuss the meaning of dreams and visions by referring to Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica* (translated as *The Judgement, Or Exposition of Dreams*, London: R Braddock for William Jones, 1606)[53]. Their silly conversation is interrupted by Anne, who relates a dream she has had. She had seen herself on the banks of the Trent, picking flowers *à la* Ophelia, when she "spied a lovely person / Whose countenance was full of splendency" (129-30). "It" (132) (again, not "he") lured her in the water "covetous / To parley with so sweet a frontispiece" (134-5) and she drowned. Young Bateman obsesses Anne both as a ghost and as a dream figure that straddles the categories of object and subject. The gossips do not understand the presage, quoting Artemidorus who "saith to dream

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[51] Helen Ostovich, "The Appropriation of Pleasure in *The Magnetic Lady*", *SEL*, Issue 34, 1994: 432. See also Kathryn M. Moncrief and Kathryn Read McPherson (eds), *Performing Maternity in Early Modern England* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2007).
[52] Ibid., 425.
[53] Griffin notes, however, that Artemidorus' treatise does not feature the interpretations referred to by the gossips (355, n. 55). One may ask if this could be a strategy to subvert male authority.

of flowers is very good to a woman in child-bed. It argues she shall soon enjoy her husband" (141-3).

All the same, Anne makes them promise not to fall asleep, "For if you slumber or shut your eyelids / You never shall behold my living corpse" (95-6). The gossips have a drink and all of them fall asleep. The spectator/reader of the play now receives an important clue: Anne has always been the only one able to see the ghost. Some could assume that Sampson wanted his audience to understand that Bateman's spirit is only a figment of Anne's perturbed imagination: her bad conscience leads her to commit suicide. Alcohol may also be thought as the main reason why the women fall asleep, instead of preternatural drowsiness. The text does not support such hypotheses. One could perhaps dispute Ursula's authority when she says that "Somnus' dorm hath struck me; / I cannot wake and must give way to rest" 187-8), but the ghost himself enters while Anne is sleeping like the others. He exclaims: "Death's eldest daughter, Sleep, with silences / Has charmed yond beldames" (189-90), and commands Anne to "[a]wake, fond mortal, ne'er to sleep again" (192). This is, then, a ghost story proper, and yet one that deeply interrogates social fears and anxieties.

Young Bateman forces Anne to follow him, and only after she has gone out do the other women wake up and run to rescue her, vehemently prompted by Boote who, trying to find a reason for Anne's behaviour, comments that lately "[s]he has been subject to distempered passions" (244). It is too late: they find her drowned in the Trent. They carry her body onstage and Ursula wails: "Behold the saddest spectacle of woe / That ever mortal eyes took notice of" (253-4). Again, the scene is given a metadramatic dimension: the "mortal eyes" that see this show are those of the intradramatic spectators as well as those of the spectators offstage.

The second "portrait scene" does not manage to be as semantically rich as the first one. While Boote is lamenting over his daughter's death, in comes Old Bateman carrying his son's picture. The women have just carried out Anne's body, which of course creates a parallelism. The two old men cry almost simultaneously: "How happy had I been if s/he had lived" (262-3). Bateman has come to gloat over his neighbour's loss ("I come to see how sorrow does become thee" 266), but after an initial rebuke in which they accuse each other and call the other "monster" (271, 275-

6), they understand the gravity of what has taken place and decide to reconcile. Their final resolution is also metadramatic: they will

> [...] dig a solemn cell
> Which shall be hung with sables round about
> Where we will sit and write the tragedy
> Of our poor children. I'll ha' it set down
> As not one eye that views it but shall weep,
> Nor any ear but sadly shall relent,
> For never was a story of more ruth
> Than this of him and her, yet nought but truth (312-9).

Apart from the obvious imitation of *Romeo and Juliet*'s last couplet, this passage nicely joins the old men's plan to the play's interest in spectacle. Just as Bateman's suicide and Anne's drowning were described as frightful and pity-inspiring shows, so the play they are going to write (*The Vow Breaker*) will cause the spectators to cry over its protagonists' spectacular ends. However, and anticlimactically enough, this is not the end of the play: it goes on in a rough, tragicomical mode. Truly enough, this is a poor organisational plan, but I would argue that the happy ending has a particular function: that is, rehabilitating the iconographic imaginary, or to use Anthony W. Johnson's interpretation of the term, the "iconosphere": "the image world shared by a culture at a particular time"[54].

To understand this, one needs to consider the (mis)fortune of the Puritan character Marmaduke Joshua. He describes himself as "a painter-stainer and a limner for profession" (I.i 192). His use of the term "limner" must be ludicrous, since he is a very poor practitioner of Nicholas Hilliard's gentle art. He tries to hide his cowardice and petulance, but to no avail. Instead of aristocratic limning, he keeps referring to painted cloths, one of the most popular types of visual art of the time, often hung in private houses, inns, civic halls, and the like. He compares himself with the biblical Joshua as depicted in "the painted cloth of the nine worthies" (I.ii 119); he compares the French with the Aesopian fox and grapes "as it is in the painted cloth" (II.i 32-33); indeed, he repeatedly uses this idiom as his pet phrase (see II.i 72 and 85; III.ii 23 and 44-5; V.i 88). He typically denounces sins, which he sees as "heathen babbles, the

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[54] Anthony W. Johnson, "Humanized Intertexts: An Iconospheric Approach to Ben Jonson's comedy, *The Case Is Altered* (1598)", in Jason Finch, Martin Gill, Anthony Johnson, et al. (eds), *Humane Readings: Essays on Literary Mediation and Communication in Honour of Roger D. Sell* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2009): 32.

maypoles of time and pageants of vanity" (III.ii 11-2) and is prevented from hanging his cat who has caught mice on a Sunday. In the last act, the others get him drunk and have him perform in a puppet play and sing ballads. Joshua does nothing to further the plot, but his figure contributes to the play's preoccupation with mimetic and artistic representation. However stereotypical, this character stands as proof against those who regard the Puritans as utter iconophobes. Joshua engages himself with the visual arts, although for (often hypocritical) didactic purposes, using the depictions of the painted cloths as *exempla*. His final vilification is one element of the rehabilitation of iconography and of theatre itself. Joshua is forced to embrace the other aspects of visual culture: popular spectacle and public pageantry. It must be remembered that traditional pastimes, music, dance, and shows were distinctly politicised activities at the time: for instance, Charles I reissued his father's *Book of Sports* (1618) to restrain Puritan rigour[55].

To counter all the instances of what I have called anxiogenic vision in the play (the ghost, dreams, and visions), Sampson decides to resurrect another "ghost", who had also been described as the fair maid *par excellence*, Queen Elizabeth I. Her dignified entrance at the end of the play, in the midst of communal festivals (hobby-horses, Robin Hood plays, puppet shows, and all), sanctions a serene reconciliation with the play's shadows. In a pageant of grace and affability, dear Queen Bess represents the return of national as well as local peace, together with the triumph of positive, official iconography. She can be regarded as another picture come to life, but one that conciliates fears and anxieties and ideologically signals the myth of a lost golden age for Great Britain. The queen's shadow paradoxically irradiates harmony and light in a visually-contested system.

The world of *The Vow Breaker* interrogates the epistemology of vision: the play sets, side by side, multiple paradigms of subjectivity (interpersonal, humoural, religious) and asks its spectators to decode reality. It exposes communal fears and desires related to the image (idolatry, official iconography, the powers and threats of the visual arts). Through metatheatre and intertextuality (best expressed through the theatregram of the staged portrait in tragedy), the play also weaves in a discussion of

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[55] See Leah S. Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

the effects of theatrical mimesis itself, which moves between sensational spectacle and revelatory forms of knowledge.

II.5 The Drama of Platonic Gazing in Caroline Courtly Play-Texts: William Cartwright's *The Siege* (1651)

> Vis, vis, vis, vis, Céladon. Je te le commande.
> – Éric Rohmer, *Les Amours d'Astrée et de Céladon*, 2007

The few readers of Caroline courtly drama, or of the Platonic romances and poetry to which it was kin, will know that the worlds disclosed by these texts have peculiar qualities, such as rarefied atmospheres, unexpected plot twists, and rhetorical orations. One stumbles into very strange things in the endless adventures of long-lost lovers who get reunited, siblings who fall in love with each other, but fortunately discover that they are not in fact brothers and sisters, knights who have to decide between honour and love, and so forth. For example, two lovers decide to stare at each other to death[1], or a queen asks with the utmost solemnity to choose between being "neglected in contynuall sight or lov'd injoyn'd to a perpetuall absence"[2]. The Countess of Carlisle would not feel herself diminished when compared to a dignified slug in William Cartwright's (1611-1643) words: "Your limbs leave tracks of Light, still as you go"[3]. In Cartwright's tragicomedy *The Siege, Or Love's Convert* (c. 1636-8, first published in 1651), a brutish tyrant is converted to goodness, virtue, and wisdom by gazing at a beautiful lady.

Of course, these texts cannot be reduced to simple narratives which follow one single line of development: the assumptions underlying them are much more complex, and they provide us with a wide array of information on their original cultural contexts. They reveal the rivalling aspects of courtly Neoplatonism and can be fully understood only by paying attention to the visual culture of the Caroline élite. In *The Siege*, physical pictures and mental images complicate the seemingly straightforward process of transformation by love since their interpretation interrogates the epistemological value of vision, as well as the performativity of gender and political

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[1] In Joseph Rutter, *The Shepheard's Holyday* (c. 1635), ed. by W. Carew Hazlitt (London: Reeves and Turner, *A Select Collection of Old English Plays*, 4th edition, 1875): vol. 12, 418.

[2] Walter Montague, *The Shepherd's Paradise* (IV.iii 2615-6) (London: Malone Society Reprints, vol. 159, 1997).

[3] *A Panegyric to the Most Noble Lucy Countesse of Carlisle* (l. 11) in Gwynne Blakemore Evans (ed.), *The Plays and Poems of William Cartwright* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1951): 441. All quotations from Cartwright's plays (including *The Siege*) and poems refer to this edition. I keep Evans' lineation which in *The Siege* does not restart at act and scene divisions, but is continuous.

and social relationships. William Cartwright addresses and negotiates the various strands of Neoplatonism through the discussion of staged pictures and their relationship with the other dimensions of the contemplation process: referentiality, performativity, and emulation.

I argue that the Neoplatonic doctrines at the Caroline court understood the practice of contemplation to entail assimilation: spectacle was participatory, and gazing upon someone or something brought about transformation. It was a culture in which power was constructed as love: the subjects' love for their rulers ensured social cohesion and the royal couple's affection could communicate itself to the others. Women especially were set centre-stage theatrically, since they were regarded as the natural propagators of social harmony, but this agency triggered sexual and political anxieties. Their power was simultaneously lauded and constrained. Women's gaze was regulated as much as the spectators' with the introduction of optical perspective in Inigo Jones' masques.

Before addressing Cartwright's play itself, I must introduce the position and personality of this playwright, and assess how far he can be described as a "courtly dramatist". Then, I will discuss how the varied features of Neoplatonic contemplation and admiration interacted with the court's visual culture, to finally consider how the ostensible gynocentrism of Caroline courtly drama was actually genuine and empowering for women.

William Cartwright and Courtly Drama

It is difficult to put a label on William Cartwright's style and work. In the past, he was grouped among the Cavalier playwrights and poets. This category poses serious problems[4] since, as often happens, it was applied *ex post facto*, and, after the civil war, was immediately used to indicate a univocal political sentiment which was not shared by all authors. A few of them can safely be called "courtier-dramatists", but William Cartwright cannot be seen as a courtier as such. He was more than anything else a scholar who became *the* Oxonian star of wit as well as of pious devotion. He was an amateur playwright who engaged in drama mainly to gain aristocratic favour. He was

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[4] See the ground-breaking and provocative study by Martin Butler, *Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

a royalist through and through, but in his plays he could also feel obliged to instruct and advise the royal couple and their different coteries. He was the playwright whose tragicomedy *The Royal Slave* (1636) provided Charles I and Henrietta Maria with the formula to best express their ideals of the subject-monarch compact. And yet, this play features interesting democratic tendencies. Moreover, as "a son of Ben", Cartwright could also write a racy, though mediocre, comedy, *The Ordinary*. His other play, *The Lady-Errant* is of particular importance, since it has been surmised that it was performed by both women and men in front of a selected audience[5]. After 1638, when he took holy orders, he seems not to have written any secular literature, though he gained an extraordinary fame as a preacher. He was appointed to deliver the speech to welcome the king at Oxford in 1642 after the indecisive Battle of Edgehill, the first pitch battle of the English civil war, and he became one of the members of the Council of War. The king himself is known to have worn black and wept at his early death of camp fever[6].

In most cases, the circumstances and date of his plays' performances are unknown. *The Ordinary*, generally considered his first dramatic experiment, was an Oxford play, likely produced around 1635. The date of *The Lady-Errant* ranges from 1633 to 1637. The familiarity with the court expressed in the Prologue, in spite of the explicit references[7] to William Prynne's infamous case, would make 1635-6 more plausible. It was probably performed not in front of Charles and Henrietta Maria, but still in front of an aristocratic, élite audience. If the hypothesis that both men and women acted it proves true, the play would function as a corrective to the notorious performance of Montague's *Shepherd's Paradise* (1633) by Henrietta Maria and her ladies (involving actresses but no cross-dressing). We have much more information on the multiple staging of *The Royal Slave*. It was performed in 1636 by the students of Christ Church as the crowning moment of the royal couple's last progress to Oxford (the other plays which preceded it included Strode's *The Floating Island* and George Wilde's *Love's Hospital*). *The Royal Slave* was a success. It made much of exotic costumes, of Inigo

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[5] See especially Sophie Tomlinson, *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 106-117 and Christopher Marlow, "Politics and Friendship in William Cartwright's *The Lady-Errant*", in Lorna Hutson, Daniel T. Lochman, and Maritere López (eds), *Representations of Friendship in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1700* (Burlington and Farnham: Ashgate, 2011): 195-208.
[6] For further biographical information, see Gwynne Blakemore Evans (ed.), *op. cit.* (1951): 3-21.
[7] See Jane Farnsworth, "Defending the King in Cartwright's *The Lady-Errant* (1636–37)", *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, Vol. 42, 2002: 381–398.

Jones' sets and machines (an artificial eclipse included), and of Henry Lawes' musical score[8]. As George Evelyn testified, this "Play much delighted his Majesty and all the Nobles, com'ending it for the best y^t ever was acted"[9]; the queen liked it so much that she paid for a second performance at Hampton Court. Cartwright supervised the production in London and received £40.

His last dramatic effort was *The Siege*. While there is no clear indication whether it was ever staged, G. Blakemore Evans has collected a series of documents which seem to strengthen the hypothesis that the play not only circulated widely in manuscript at court (and was mocked by certain town wits), but also that it was performed: the staging produced "Envy to the Sight", whereas its previous reading had been "a full Delight / To th' taken Eare"[10]. If it is true that Cartwright's career as a secular writer ended in 1638, this year can be considered the *terminus ante quem* for the play's composition. Evans posits 1636 as the most probable year when the king saw it either in Oxford or, more likely, in London. In the dedication to King Charles (*The Siege* being "the only play before the Restoration dedicated directly to the reigning sovereign"[11]), the reader learns that the royal dedicatee himself had saved an early draft of the play from the fire into which Cartwright wished to throw "this Trifle" (l. 1).

William Cartwright's collected works were published posthumously in 1651; a quarter of the volume consisted of hyperbolic eulogies by fellow writers. He had already become a nostalgic symbol of a culture that was no more, a paragon not only for poets, but also for humanity: he had been "the utmost man could come to"[12]. Until Martin Butler's provocative and ground-breaking study, it was usual to dismiss Cartwright as "a conformist to the bone", "sinuous in exploiting his mediocre talents"[13]. More recent scholarship has revealed that, whereas his skills as a dramatist

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[8] On *The Royal Slave*, see Willa McClung Evans, "Cartwright's Debt to Lawes", in John H. Long (ed.), *Music in English Renaissance Drama* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968): 103-116; Martin Butler, *op. cit.* (1984): 44-9 and Scott Paul Gordon, "The Cultural Politics of William Cartwright's *Royal Slave*" in Douglas Bruster and Thomas Moisan (eds), *In the Company of Shakespeare* (London: Associated University Press and Madison Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002): 251-269.

[9] William Bray (ed.), *Memoirs of John Evelyn* (London: Henry Colburn, 1827): Vol. 3, 415.

[10] From William Towers' commendatory poem, quoted in Gwynne Blakemore Evans (ed.), *op. cit.* (1951): 356.

[11] Ibid, 356-7.

[12] This was the opinion of John Fell, later bishop of Oxford (quoted ibid, 21).

[13] Alfred Harbage, *Cavalier Drama* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964 [1936]): 142.

are generally unexceptional, Cartwright was a key figure in the treatment of contemporaneous political and social themes in his plays.

The plays by Walter Montagu, Lodowick Carlell, Joseph Rutter, Thomas Killigrew, and their likes moved towards the new directions of Restoration taste (especially heroic drama and melodrama) and experimented with new forms, but apart from certain exceptions, these play-texts are characterised by dreary formal quality. They are interesting for the historian and the literary scholar, but Harbage's intimation back in 1936 has not been contested so far: "They are, and will remain, the most rarely read and least known of all our earlier English drama"[14]. It has by now become common to strongly dissent with Harbage's interpretations in his landmark study, and rightly so, for many reasons: for instance, he was partly oblivious of the political circumstances evoked and negotiated in these plays, and we have gained insight to the fact that women at the Caroline court were definitely not "fragile-brained ladies"[15], as he calls them. Still, Harbage's comprehensive study remains the essential overview of courtly drama: no other scholarly work has attempted to analyse this corpus of texts[16]. What Harbage's study mostly lacks is knowledge of the variety of Caroline court culture.

It is also important to question the distinction between professional drama and courtly drama as drawn by Butler: he drives an "artificial wedge"[17] between the two; to him, "pure" courtly drama "is both the least interesting and least significant aspect of the period", the assumptions underlying it "much more constricted, rigid, and defined"[18]. Instead, just as the ideology and forms of the masque were being inflected more and more into drama by the professional actors (and we may remember that masque texts were published and circulated by newswriters[19]), the sets of courtly plays were sometimes moved to the private theatres, and professional actors were used

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[14] Ibid, 3.

[15] Ibid, 14.

[16] Harbage also remains highly enjoyable; he expounds with gusto how to many English courtiers, the newly introduced Platonic cult seemed "a species of grouse-shooting with the grouse omitted" (40); or for example, when he comments: "The courtier is the most sensitive of all creatures in adapting himself to the niceties of his environment; if they are required by his habitat, he can bud dramatic tendencies with biological efficiency" (20).

[17] Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987): 33.

[18] Alfred Harbage, *op. cit.* (1964): 4.

[19] Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992): 230.

to teach the courtier players and masquers. It is not strange, then, that in the case of *The Siege* Cartwright should be inspired by Massinger's *Emperor of the East* (1632) in the scene with the ladies' pictures. Yet, we will see how profoundly Cartwright's tragicomedy is permeated by and negotiates with the culture of the élite.

Courtly drama can no longer be dismissed as futile *divertissement*. Charles I and Henrietta Maria were extremely cultivated: their joint patronage opened the island to continental influences and they were also the most active sovereigns to engage with the theatrical world. Of the latter, suffice it to mention, besides (of course) the masques, the fact that Henrietta Maria was the first queen to visit the public playhouses, and that Charles personally rescued Davenant's *The Wits* (1634) from the Master of the Revels' ban and suggested the plot for Shirley's *The Gamester* (1633) and Carlell's *The Passionate Lovers* (1638). This new type of plays was clearly innovative. It delighted in spectacle, showing "a glorious painted scene", as the then-Marquess of Newcastle, William Cavendish, criticised: "Taylors and Painters thus, your deare delight, / May prove your Poets onely for your sight"[20]. However, as Stephen Orgel has shown, it laid most stress on reasoning and debate: "In fact, if we look at plays that were specifically written to be produced with scenes and machines, we shall find them far more elaborately rhetorical than plays for the public stage"[21]. The relevant ideological tenets and controversies on which this drama rested will be discussed in the next section.

Courtly Visual Culture and Platonism

We have to come to terms with a difficult question: does it make sense to speak of a "courtly" visual culture? Was the courtiers' scopic regime or visuality different from the middling sort's? Visual culture studies do not have a precise answer to this. I argue that social class *is* one of the strongest elements that influences and changes

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[20] In the prologue to his *The Country Captain* (acted in 1640), quoted in Dawn Lewcock, *Sir William Davenant, the Court Masque, and the English Seventeenth-Century Scenic Stage, c1605-c1700* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2008): 80.
[21] Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1975): 19.

one's visual culture[22]. It is necessary to historicise the idea of scopic regimes and situate them in Caroline court culture, while remembering that, within this notion, culture and technology interact.

Let us imagine walking through the halls of Whitehall and of the other aristocratic mansions. We would be able to see liveried servants standing beside walls covered with tapestries; we would see gilt furniture and silverware, large mirrors and chandeliers; we would admire the newly acquired works of Mannerist and Baroque art from Italy (for which there was a "fevered search"[23]), Daniel Mytens' and Van Dyck's portraits and Rubens' pictures, the quality of which would just overshadow the insular tradition of painting (by 1629, Rubens himself praised in a letter "the incredible quantity of excellent pictures, statues, and ancient inscriptions which are to be found in this court"[24]). Most importantly, Orgel and Strong have shown how the introduction of perspective first unsettled and confused the spectatorship at the masques. For the first time, through Inigo Jones' sets, perspective "fix[ed] the viewer", "controlling the visual experience of the spectator"[25]. The aesthetics of spectacle was designed to strategically impress the viewers and make them wonder at and admire the lustre of aristocracy (masking its many crises). Rigid protocols of behaviour regulated how to dress, the ways to converse with and look at people of higher rank. More than anything else, Platonism was the overarching grand narrative to such modelling practices, sight being the noblest sensorial channel and the pathway, through love, leading to *kalokagathia*, the harmonious ideal of perfection, beauty, and goodness.

The visual culture of these social circles had different features. As social habits changed, so did art and theatre, influencing one another. We may remember that for Inigo Jones, masques were "nothing else but pictures with light and motion"[26]. On the same days in 1636 when Queen Henrietta went to Blackfriars to see the second part of

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[22] See, for example, Lucien Goldmann, *The Hidden God: A Study of Tragic Vision in the 'Pensées' of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, and New York: Humanities Press, 1964): 17 and ff.

[23] Linda Levy Peck, *Consuming Splendour: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 162. See also Malcolm Smuts, *Culture and Power in England, 1585-1685* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999).

[24] Quoted in Stephen Orgel, "Idols of the Gallery. Becoming a Connoisseur in Renaissance England" in Peter Erickson and Clark Hulse (eds), *Early Modern Visual Culture: Representations, Race and Empire in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000): 259.

[25] Stephen Orgel and Roy C. Strong, *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1973): Vol. I, 7.

[26] Quoted in ibid, 2.

Carlell's *Arviragus and Philicia* ("wch is hugely liked of every one"[27] – and which also includes miniatures), the King went to Van Dyck's studio in the same city quarter. One may also remember that Isaac Oliver, who occasionally limned the ladies' traits in masquing costumes, was described as "Mr. Isaac, the Painter in Blackfriars"[28]. One of the best ways to appreciate the changes of social habits is to read James Shirley's *The Lady of Pleasure* (1635)[29]. In this comedy, Aretina, newly arrived in London, shows off her affluence by imitating the great ladies' lifestyle. She buys "gaudy furnitures, and pictures / Of this Italian master and that Dutchman's" (I. 74-75) and thus sums up "[A] lady's morning work: we rise, make fine, / Sit for our picture, and 'tis time to dine" (322-3). In a parody of Platonism, the reaction given by a gallant when shown the miniature of another's deceased lover is quite telling: "I do not love the copies / Of any dead; they make me think of goblins […] 'Tis pity that a lord of so much flesh / Should waste upon a ghost, when they are living / Can give you a more honourable consumption" (III.i 174-5; 178-80). Platonic gazing is ridiculed and contrasted with pornographic consumption: a bawd, Decoy, praises his house full of "pretty pictures to provoke the fancy" (III.ii 19-21). But which Platonism is referred to in this play and coeval texts?

Several studies have been devoted to this complex question. Sometimes, it is still a phenomenon quickly dismissed as a love craze among courtiers trying to please the queen. The majority of critics, however, have investigated how this movement changed the social life of the élite. Henrietta Maria, however scant her education in France had been, introduced a complex set of beliefs and formal tenets that greatly modified the relationships between and across gender and class[30]. Henrietta's Platonism was modulated according to specific trajectories and had various roots. It featured a particular "emphasis on the world as a shadowy illusion"[31]: only love and reason can produce virtue, thanks to which one can look through this world of illusion

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[27] As wrote Charles, Prince Palatine to his mother, the queen of Bohemia (quoted in Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, Oxford: Clarendon Press): Vol. 1, .48

[28] Edward Herbert Baron Herbert of Cherbury, *Autobiography* (London: Whittaker, Treacher, and Arnot, 1830): 79.

[29] Ronald Huebert (ed.), *The Lady of Pleasure* by James Shirley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).

[30] The essential study remains the splendid *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments* by Erica Veevers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[31] Karen Ruth Britland, *Neoplatonic Identities: Literary Representation and the Politics of Queen Henrietta Maria's Court Circle* (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 2000): 2.

and come to divine perfection. The senses are not demonised, as is often thought: they form the basis for the processes of spiritual elevation. As Erica Veevers notes in her remarkable book, d'Urfé and his adepts drew on Renaissance idealism, according to which: "Through perfecting his intellectual and moral faculties, man may perceive a higher unity, in which spirit and form, soul and body, are one; out of the attraction of this unity grows love, which leads men back to its source in God"[32]. It is also extremely important to understand that "[b]ecause political life is driven by appetites rooted in sensation it must be regulated through forms the senses can apprehend. Decorum, ceremony and visible splendour are therefore essential to governance"[33].

Desire is legitimate if refined and channelled by love, which is desire of beauty, where beauty is truth. Henrietta Maria's major innovation was the aim of human desire: marriage, based on true mutual affection. Hers was "a conservative feminism, in which women exercised their beauty and virtue in such a way as to make for cordial relations between the sexes and for a general social harmony governed by religion"[34]. A more or less covert dimension was indeed the inherent (especially Salesian) Catholic feature of this Platonism: the perfection that can be attained by the lover is recognisably God's and the *servitium amoris* becomes *servitium Dei*.

However, it has justly been pointed out that Henrietta's was only one strand[35] of the Platonic movement in Britain, where Platonic doctrines had certainly been present and explored much earlier than the 1630s. However, as nicely put by Jon A. Quitslund concerning Edmund Spenser, Platonism "was known […] as a profusion of opinions, not an 'ism"[36]; the influence was "pervasive, but diffuse"[37]. These theories were not systematised and were mediated along many different approaches, which could range from Petrarchism, to the chivalric rhetoric of honour, or even to Calvinism (one need only think of Fulke Greville's poems). In the Caroline era, Platonism did become an "ism" and Plato's works were actually read (in Latin or French, since there was no

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[32] Erica Veevers, *op. cit.* (1989): 17.

[33] Malcolm Smuts, "Force, Love and Authority in Caroline Political Culture" in Ian Atherton and Julie Sanders (eds), *The 1630s. Interdisciplinary Essays on Culture and Politics in the Caroline Era* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006): 38.

[34] Erica Veevers, *op. cit.* (1989): 2-3.

[35] See Julie Sanders, "Caroline Salon Culture and Female Agency: The Countess of Carlisle, Henrietta Maria, and Public Theatre", *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 52, no. 4, 2000: 449–64.

[36] Jon A. Quitslund, "Platonism", in Albert Charles Hamilton (ed.), *The Spenser Encyclopedia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990): 546.

[37] Sarah Hutton, "Platonism, Stoicism, Scepticism and Classical Imitation", in Michael Hattaway (ed.), *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000): 49.

English translation yet). In Cartwright's *The Royal Slave*, Cratander, the protagonist, peruses "a discourse o'th' Nature of the Soul"[38]: the playwright expected his sophisticated audience to understand that Cratander is referring to Plato's *Phaedo*.

Henrietta's strand of Neoplatonism is generally contrasted with the absolute woman-worship promoted by Lucy Hay, Countess of Carlisle, whose coterie resembled much more markedly the habits of the Parisian salons. More recent studies[39] have shown that it is fallacious to regard this Platonic discourse along the divide of *amitié* and *preciosité*. Instead of seeing it in terms of factions, I would prefer to consider these varieties in terms of networks of sociality. It has been demonstrated how the different aspects of Platonism provided the élite with new models of friendship-making (especially female friendship[40]), of agency and political subordination. Charles I was quick to appropriate it for his personal rule: love is constructed as power, and vice versa, and social harmony must be obtained by conquering one's rebelling passions.

Within Caroline culture, "images not only represented authority, they possessed authority"[41]. Thus, courtly spectacles and masques were instruments to illustrate the ways in which the perfect Platonic ruler behaves, or to denounce certain critical aspects of a ruler's administration. Self-representation became crucial. The subjects of Van Dyck's portraits "are themselves because they have command of their own potentially unruly appetites and so have fulfilled their highest nature. And exercising command over themselves, they effortlessly command their worlds"[42].

Poets and playwrights reacted diversely to these cultural movements. Sometimes they heavily parodied them, sometimes they tried to adapt and convey a particular brand of Platonism. It is remarkable that the same author could produce sublime hymns to Platonic love and also the crudest caricature of it. It is legitimate to think that, at least for some of them (and for some of the courtiers, naturally), Platonism was only an opportunistic fad. Yet, we will find in *The Siege* material supporting Scott Paul Gordon's argument that this proliferation of views can be better understood by

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[38] Gwynne Blakemore Evans (ed.), *op. cit.* (1951): 203.
[39] Karen Ruth Britland, *op. cit.* (2000): 13 and ff.
[40] See Jennifer L. Hallam, "All the Queen's Women: Female Double Portraits at the Caroline Court", in Andrea Pearson (ed.), *Women and Portraiture in Early Modern Europe: Gender, Agency, Identity* (Burlington and Farnham: Ashgate, 2008): 137-160.
[41] Kevin Sharpe, *op. cit.* (1992): 223.
[42] Ibid., 224.

the elitism of these doctrines. He states that "the very structure of Platonic discourse compels those who believe in it to suspect the sincerity of others who deploy it"[43], since it "rigorously construct[s] the difference between the many driven by their passions and interests and the few able to transcend them"[44].

Cartwright could write both panegyrics to Platonic love and funny refutations, the most famous being *No Platonique Love*, the second stanza of which reads:

> I was that silly thing that once was wrought
> To Practise this thin Love;
> I climb'd from Sex to Soul, from Soul to Thought;
> But Thinking there to move,
> Headlong I rowl'd from Thought to Soul, and then
> From Soul I lighted at the Sex agen[45].

However, it has been said that Cartwright's "plays give the most thorough and reasoned discussion of Platonic love doctrines to be found in drama"[46]. I find that this is no overstatement and we shall see in the rest of this chapter how he negotiated these modelling paradigms in *The Siege*. Before doing this, one needs to take into account the means through which the Platonic lovers could undertake their ascent, that is, contemplation. Texts codified the dynamics of contemplation in particular ways to channel aesthetics, art, and morality into distinct directions.

Platonic Contemplation in Caroline Literature: "Turn all eye / All depth and mind"

When Anne, the protagonist of William Sampson's *The Vow Breaker*, says she is "addicted to contemplation" (III.i 39), her type of contemplation seems worlds apart from the forms of Platonic gazing found in the coeval courtly drama. In *The Vow Breaker*, contemplation is, among other things, kin to idolatry. In courtly literature, contemplation is connected with wonder; wonder being "the quality that, in Platonic theory, leads the mind to the apprehension of truth"[47].

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[43] Scott Paul Gordon, *op. cit.* (2002): 261.
[44] Ibid., 253.
[45] Gwynne Blakemore Evans (ed.), *op. cit.* (1951): 494.
[46] Ibid., 24.
[47] Stephen Orgel and Roy C. Strong, *op. cit.* (1973): Vol. I, 10.

Sight was understood as the noblest of senses and it was through sight that love could conquer the mind and the soul; by means of the *pneuma* (the refined spirits), it physically mediated between the two lovers. The loving couple *par excellence* were, of course, the king and the queen and this is how William Habington described their affection: "The Stoic, who all easy passion flies, / Could he but hear the language of their eyes, / As heresies would from his faith remove / The Tenets of his sect and practice love"[48]. This imagery is coupled with the ubiquitous trope of the power of the eyes of one's love object and of the fire of mutual feeling: "how great a flame, / From their breasts meeting, on the sudden came?". Davenant elaborates on this trope and shows how vision can lead to virtue: "For through the casements of her eyes, / Her soul is ever looking out. / And with its beams she does survey / Our growth in virtue or decay, / Still lighting us in Honour's way"[49].

Marsilio Ficino himself had contrasted the "*contemplazione*" of spiritual love with the "*voluttà*" of physical love (itself regarded as an ocular disease, "*mal d'occhio*")[50]. But in place of Ficino, William Cartwright would expect his spectators and readers to refer to Diotima's words in Plato's own *Symposium*:

> But if it were given to man to gaze on beauty's very self – unsullied, unalloyed, and freed from the mortal taint that haunts the frailer loveliness of flesh and blood – if, I say, it were given to man to see the heavenly beauty face to face, would you call his […] an unenviable life, whose eyes had been opened to the vision, and who had gazed upon it in true contemplation until it had become his own forever? […] it is when he looks upon beauty's visible presentment, and only then, that a man will be quickened with the true, and not the seeming, virtue –for it is virtue's self that quickens him, not virtue's semblance. And when he has brought forth and reared this perfect virtue, he shall be called the friend of god, and if ever it is given to man to put on immortality, it shall be given to him[51].

"Contemplation" is indeed a word that recurs extremely often in this type of English courtly texts. A few examples may be of use. This term emerges in an often-cited historical document, James Howell's letter to Philip Warrick, dated 3 June 1634, which comments on the introduction of Platonism at the English court:

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[48] "To Castara Upon the Mutual Love of their Majesties", *Poems* ed. by Kenneth Allott (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1964): 203.

[49] Lines from *Salmacida Spolia* (1640), quoted in Erica Veevers, *op. cit.* (1989): 36.

[50] Marsilio Ficino, *El Libro dell'Amore*, ed. by Sandra Niccoli (Florence: Olschki, 1987): 179; 189.

[51] Edith Hamilton et al. (eds), *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (New York: Pantheon Books, transl. by Michael Joyce, 1961): 210a-212b.

The court affords little News at present, but that there is a Love called Platonick Love, which much sways there of late; it is a Love abstracted from all corporeal gross Impressions and sensual Appetite, but consists in Contemplations and Ideas of the Mind, not in any carnal Fruition. This love sets the Wits of the town on work[52].

Inigo Jones said that he had fashioned the queen's dress for *Tempe Restored* (1632) "so that corporeal beauty, consisting in symmetry, colour, and certain unexpressable graces, shining in the Queen's majesty, may draw us to the contemplation of the beauty of the soul, unto which it hath analogy"[53]. In Du Bosc's *L'Honneste Femme* (1632), one of the founding texts of this school, we read:

I add also that the action of the soul is not less true than that of the body, but only less gross […] The most noble employ of man depends upon a faculty, which tyrants themselves cannot prevent from acting. We can love and meditate even in bonds; contemplation is always in our power […][54]

These are all very different texts, yet they all emphasise the centrality of contemplation in Platonic discourses. Characteristically, the opponents of the Neoplatonic cult would heavily satirise contemplating men and women. In Jonson's *The New Inn* (1629), the brooding Lord Lovel explains: "I oft have been too in her company; / And I looked upon her, a whole day; admired her; / Loved her, and did not tell her so; loved still, / Looked still and loved, and looked and sighed" (I.vi 108-11)[55]. Later, Margaret Cavendish would entitle one of her comedies *Lady Contemplation*, recounting the exploits of the eponymous heroine. John Cleveland penned one of the best examples of antiplatonic verse, satirising exactly these ideas:

Old Tantalus as well may surfet on
The flying Streams by Contemplation. […]
If all Content were placed in the Eye,
And Thoughts compriz'd the whole Felicity?
Pictures might court each other and exchange
Their white-lime Looks, woo hard, and yet seem strange:
No! Love requires a quick and home Embrace,
Nor can it dwell for ever on the Face.
What ever Glories Nature's tender Care

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[52] Joseph Jacobs (ed.), *Epistolae Ho-Elianae: The Familiar Letters of James Howell* (London: 1890): Vol. I, 317.

[53] Quoted in Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong, *op. cit.* (1973): Vol. I, 2.

[54] I could not find this passage in Walter Montague's 1656 translation of Du Bosc; consequently, I quote from a much later anonymous translation: *The Accomplish'd Woman* (London: J. Watts, 1753): Vol. 2, 154.

[55] Michael Hattaway (ed.), *The New Inn* by Ben Jonson (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1984).

Compiles to make a peice divinely rare,
Th'are but the sweet Allurements of the Eye,
Fix'd on a Stage to catch the Standers by.
Or like rich Signs exposed to open Sight
To tempt the Traveller to stay all Night[56].

Here we have an interesting comparison, which will also surface in Cartwright's *The Siege*, between the love of pictures and Platonic love. This quotation is important because it shows how allegedly antiplatonic texts were suffused by the doctrines they seemed to oppose. Beauty is here explained as an attractive surface, as captivating as a dramatic show. Yet, this surface needs to efface itself and make room for something else: in antiplatonic texts, to carnal love; in Platonic orthodox texts, to higher forms of love. Surfaces often play a paradoxical role in these texts, which recalls Deleuze's study on Baroque and the fold. According to Deleuze, the Baroque fold that moves between matter and soul "is a virtuality that never stops dividing itself, [where] the line of inflection is actualized in the soul but realized in matter, each one on its own side"[57]. The reader is constructed as a spectator who is called to cherish and admire material beauty. At the same time, surfaces serve as vehicles to lead further, either to carnal or spiritual love. A short poem by Lovelace is emblematic of such interaction, *Upon the Curtain of Lucasta's Picture*:

Oh, stay that covetous hand; first turn all eye,
All depth and minde; then mystically spye
Her soul's faire picture, her faire soul's, in all
So truely copied from th' originall,
That you will sweare her body by this law
Is but its shadow, as this, its; – now draw[58].

Who is the "you" in the poem that receives these directions? On one level, it is Lovelace himself. But the poet desires his readers to fully appreciate the woman's beauty and he evokes it through a particular form of ekphrasis. The temporal succession of the different passages through which contemplation takes place is very intriguing. The admiration of Lucasta's picture is the final stage: before that, the readers are made spectators who need to activate their imagination and "mystically"

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[56] From "Platonick Love", accessed at *EEBO* 19 July 2016.

[57] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold, Leibniz and Baroque* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, transl. by Tom Conley, 1993): 39.

[58] William Carew Hazlitt (ed.), *Lucasta: The Poems of Richard Lovelace* (London: John Russell Smith, 1864): 53.

contemplate the mnemonic image of Lucasta, which re-presents the idea of Lucasta. Such an idea is itself an image of the Good: thus, although the readers do not personally know Lucasta, they are all the same invited to participate in her Platonic beauty. We have a physical picture which represents a woman, whose beauty is to be evoked through a mental image and contemplated in its spirituality which is itself connected to the idea of divine virtue. These levels are all interrelated and so are referentiality, mimesis, memory, and contemplation. This goes well beyond the usual Platonic stereotype of art as a copy of a copy. Vision instead is intensely performative, connecting different dimensions and directing towards higher forms of love. Before discussing Platonic contemplation as presented in *The Siege*, it is necessary to look at the role of portraits in courtly play-texts and romances.

Portraits in Courtly Romances and Drama

In the context of Caroline élite coteries, art imitated life as much as life imitated art, and the practices of self-fashioning are inextricably bound up with these two domains. Cartwright's intended audience were avid readers of courtly romances and often modelled their lives according to them. *L'Astrée*, in particular, was Queen Henrietta's favourite reading. Her sister-in-law, Elizabeth Stuart, and her husband, Frederick, the Elector Palatine, also loved d'Urfé's work so much that they called each other Astrée and Céladon after the protagonists of that romance. From their touching correspondence, we notice how they saw each other through the perspective of pastoral and we know that, just like Céladon, Frederick collected miniatures of Elizabeth and wore them "assiduously"[59]. It became a vogue to pose as heroes of these romances, and gallants would "lie a-bed, and expound *Astraea*"[60].

It is of particular significance that most of the romances abundantly enjoyed by this type of refined readership present episodes in connection with gazing at pictures, exchanging miniatures, and comparing faces with portraits. This was already well attested in Sidney's *Arcadia*, but the sheer quantity of this element lends itself to interrogation. This proliferation of pictures is often used to fashion one's relationship

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[59] Nadine Akkerman (ed.), *The Correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): Vol. 1, 330.
[60] From Marmion's *The Antiquary*, quoted in Alfred Harbage, *op. cit.* (1964): 28.

with others and to stabilise one's own identity. However, pictures were powerfully embedded in cultural rites and practices in real-life. An instance is represented by a passage in a letter from Constantinople (dated 30 March 1623) from the diplomat Sir Thomas Roe to Elizabeth Stuart, extolling the powers of her picture:

> I humbly beseeche your Matie to accept my thanks for *the* greatest Jewells and honors I possess, in yo*ur*s and his Ma.^ts pictures, which all Nations haue come to see. Among others, the *Emperours* Agent beeing with me [probably Cesare Gallo], I forced *the* sight vpon him […] I will not flatter your Matie, *your* picture here doth conquer hearts; and I am infinitly satisfied, that no aduersity hath power to banish those smiles w*h*ich yet smile vpon us; Euery day we honor them, they make my house a Court, and my Chamber a presence[61].

The uses of pictures always revolved around the same thematic conventions. Lovers contemplate the beauty of their darlings through the portraits which no earthly artist can ever reproduce; they exchange miniatures as love tokens; they destroy them because of a supposed treason or offence; they recognise each other through them, and so on. Moreover, portrait ownership entailed an entitlement to the possession of the subject.

In d'Urfé's *L'Astrée*, one of the prototypical examples of this literature, the reader encounters many passages related to Platonic gazing at pictures. Indeed, Éric Rohmer chose one of these out of all the possible themes of this meandering work to conclude his wonderful film adaptation, *Les Amours d'Astrée et de Céladon* (2007). In the film, like in its source, we have many pictures being admired and exchanged. The most important, however, are two, one physical, the other phantasmatic. First, the heroine shepherdess, Astrée, is astounded to find her own picture as "*le symbole de l'amitié*" over the altar in the forest temple. The site was built by Céladon, who had been forced to desert his beloved (she believes him dead) and used a miniature of her as a model for the altarpiece: the picture is an enlargement of the miniature. People worship this picture not out of idolatry, but out of true adoration ("*un sainct amour*") since it re-presents the Idea of Astrée. The second picture comes in the finale, when Astrée wishes that her female companion, Alexis, were indeed Céladon: Alexis looks like her darling's "*portrait vivan*t", in Astrée's words. It is Céladon disguised, of course, but far from this being a trite stereotype, Rohmer shows how powerful and rewarding this anagnorisis is. Astrée cries: "*Vis, vis, vis, vis, Céladon. Je te le commande*" ("Live,

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[61] Nadine Akkerman (ed.), *op. cit.* (2015): Vol. 1, 419.

live, live, live, Céladon. I command you"). It is as if she wished Céladon into existence: her mental image is metamorphosed into a living work of art. This conclusion is absent in d'Urfé's unfinished work, but it brings to the fore some of the central questions of the romance: the complex relationship between being and seeming, art and life, act and performance, between the powers of imagination and memory. The phrase "*portrait vivant*" does occur in the text and Rohmer admits that this episode was what prompted his directorial choices[62]. When Leonard Willan turned d'Urfé's work into a play (printed in 1651), he preserved the detail of a second picture. Céladon reveals himself to Astrée by "shew[ing] her from her breast first a ribbon, then a picture" and says: "Alexis I am not, but in Disguise; / See here the spoiles unwittingly I forc'd / From thy fair self, when from't I was divorc'd; / Or if thy Celadon thou knowest not, / See if thine own Face thou hast not forgot"[63].

These actions reflected common behaviour in the early seventeenth century. We know, for example, that Venetia Stanley refused to marry Kenelm Digby as long as another unidentified man (the Earl of Dorset?) owned her picture. Digby could not persuade her otherwise and had to challenge his rival who "[w]ithout drawing his sword […] placed the portrait in Digby's hands, accompanied by a written declaration, that if ever he had uttered a word derogatory to her honour, he had falsely slandered her"[64]. Aubrey maligns Venetia when he writes that "Sir Edmund Wyld [also] had her picture, and you may imagine, was very familiar with her"[65]. These biographical events found their way in Digby's *Loose Fantasies*, a loose adaptation of the story of his courtship and marriage with Venetia[66]. Life was turned into art, and vice versa.

Courtly drama, too, is replete with pictures. For instance, in Carlell's *Arviragus and Philicia*, Arviragus cannot bear the fact that a woman is holding his miniature in her bosom without his knowledge. In *The Shepherd's Paradise*, Agenor/Genorio strengthens his resolution by pulling out and looking at his lover's picture: "I will thus send after / the Infection by the same way it did get / in, to trye if this can over take it,

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[62] As reported and explored in Jacob Leigh, *The Cinema of Eric Rohmer: Irony, Imagination, and the Social World* (London and New York: Continuum, 2012): 248-250.

[63] *Astræa, or, True Love's Myrrour. A Pastoral*, accessed at *EEBO* 19 July 2016.

[64] Nicholas Harris (ed.), *Private Memoirs of Sir Kenelm Digby* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1827): xxix.

[65] John Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, ed. by Richard Barber (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1982): 105.

[66] This romance has been edited by Vittorio Gabrieli (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1968).

& being it back; I / will not goe without this sheild before me, & thus arm'd / I will go on" (IV.ii 2558-62). The male protagonist of Sir William Lower's *The Phaenix in Her Flames* has loved an Arabian princess' picture since he was fourteen and for six years he has "serv'd this shadow with a zealous heart"[67]. This is the atmosphere and cultural context in which Cartwright's *The Siege* is situated, and it is through this mutual imitation of art and life that we must analyse William Cartwright's treatment of Platonic contemplation in the play.

Performing Gazes in *The Siege*

The source of the play[68] is a passage of Plutarch's *Life of Cimon*: Pausanias, the great general and regent of Sparta, besieged Byzantium and commanded a maiden of the city, Cleonice, to lie with him. At nightfall, she ordered the servants to put out the lights and, as she approached the sleeping Pausanias, clumsily upset the lamp-holder. The man thought that an enemy was attacking him and killed Cleonice. Her ghost began to haunt Pausanias, who was driven out of Byzantium and soon found his own death.

Cartwright alters the names of the protagonists: Pausanias becomes a Thracian tyrant, Misander (literally, the man-hater, with Thrace being renowned for its barbarian warmongering), and Cleonice is renamed Leucasia, from Greek *leukós*,

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[67] William Lower, *The Phaenix in Her Flames* (London: Thomas Harper and Michael Young, 1639): 70.
[68] Here follows a brief synopsis of the play. Pausanias, a Thracian tyrant lays siege to Byzantium. He sees a beautiful Byzantine girl and demands that the citizens give her to him, or else he will raze the city to the ground. The Byzantines do not know which girl he has seen and fearfully send him Nicias, a painter, who shows him the portraits of the three most beautiful girls of the city, plus the picture of the widow Pyle, a haughty and ugly woman on whom Nicias dotes but who wants to become the tyrant's consort. Misander identifies the girl he had seen: Leucasia. Her father, Eudemus, tells her that she has to pretend to acquiesce with his desires, and then kill him. At night, Leucasia approaches the sleeping tyrant but she hesitates; Misander wakes up and wounds her, thinking she is an enemy. The Byzantines are up in arms but Misander does not care, he remains gazing upon Leucasia who is asleep. Leucasia's friend Euthalpe instructs him how true love can transform one's soul and sublimate one's desire towards the Good. Leucasia revives, notices Misander's change, but tells him that he must not touch her, he must refine himself even more. A truce is proclaimed. On hearing that Misander wants to marry his daughter, Eudemus asks Pyle for a poison. She understands what he wants to do with it and gives him a sleeping potion instead: the person who drinks it will fall in love with the first person seen when they wake up. Pyle imagines that it will be herself when Misander wakes up, but Leucasia thinks that it is really a poison and drinks it herself. The first person she sees is Misander but she had already begun to love him. In the comic subplot, Prusias, a Thracian captain, imitates Misander in all, and falls in love with Pyle through her picture. The widow orchestrates a trick to deceive Nicias and Prusias and other absurd suitors who meet in a crypt, disguised as furies, angels, and cadavers. General confusion ensues which is solved by the wedding of Leucasia and Misander.

white, bright (kin to *leússo*, to look at, behold). Her very name[69] signals her being the object of purity to be gazed on and the agent who irradiates spiritual light and harmony. Cartwright changed and enriched the action by adding secondary characters, a comic subplot, and especially by turning the girl's murder into a non-fatal wounding, which provides the means for the tyrant to refine his attraction to Leucasia. This relatively obscure[70] episode narrated by Plutarch must have been very appealing to Cartwright, who recast it in courtly discourse. It was necessary to change the unsavoury topic of parents leaving their daughter to a man's lust: Eudemus, Leucasia's father, therefore commands her to kill him while pretending to acquiesce to his desires. In the scene of the failed murder (III.i), I argue that Cartwright manages to evoke at least three different intertextual moments, unifying them with the original Plutarchian source: the biblical story of Judith and Holofernes; a reversal of *Othello* (V.i), when the Moor comes to suffocate Desdemona; and especially (something that has been ignored by previous scholarship), the myth of Cupid and Psyche.

Before further discussing this, it is better to start examining the play from the beginning. Crucially, *The Siege* begins with a discussion of the merits and powers of pictorial representation. The citizens of Byzantium gather to consider Misander's strange request: if they do not offer him the most beautiful girls of the city, he will raid and destroy Byzantium. They enter (as reads the stage direction) accompanied by Nicias the painter "with the Pictures of three Byzantine Virgins". These pictures have been drawn so that Nicias can bring them to Misander, who gets to choose the fairest of all. Considering the occasional dullness of courtly drama, it is very refreshing to notice that the comic undercurrents of *The Siege* are noticeable from the start. One of the citizens says: "They must be sent / Or we must die" (I.i 2-3), to which another replies: "Wee're no such subtile feeders / As to make Meals on Air" (3-4). This is the habitual language of antiplatonic discourse, but here Cartwright plays with the reader/spectator's expectations: these characters are hungry for real; they are starving

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[69] It is almost the same name of the protagonist of *The Lady-Errant*, Lucasia. It is no coincidence that Katherine Philips chose this pseudonym for her friend, Anne Owen: she was perhaps the author most influenced by Cartwright. See Hero Chalmers, *Royalist Women Writers, 1650-1689* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004): 56-104.

[70] Apparently, it may be less known today than it was in past centuries: it was the subject of a painting by Jacques Louis David (*La Mort de Cleonice*, now at the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Nantes), is referred to in Byron's *Manfred*, and is the focus of an unfinished novel by Edward Bulwer Lytton, *Pausanias the Spartan*.

because of the siege. Eudemus, Leucasia's father, quickly identifies Misander's orders as an "unruly Passion, kindled by / Report of Beauty [which] doth grow big with flames" (I.i 10-11). Misander's state is interpreted as unbridled desire: he cannot rule his own affections, which seek the beautiful only out of carnal lust. Eudemus tries to prove that the tyrant's passion can be directed to anything and anybody beautiful: he "saucily exact[s] what e'r is fair" (12); "[w]ithout distinguishing of Age, or Sexe" (66), his desires could spread to the city's matrons, "[y]our daughters, nay perhaps your Sons"[71] (65). The citizens prove brutish, caring as they do only for their stomachs, and Patacio, another citizen, warns that should one yield to such overbearing desires, the very foundation of civilisation would collapse in almost Hobbesian terms: "Man will refresh himself on man; the stronger / Devour the weaker" (100-1). Therefore, Eudemus wants the others not to send the pictures, "these three faces" (62), as he calls them.

Nicias' character is fully comic. He is also famished and he hopes that Misander will reward him with food. He is in love with the widow Pyle, a haughty lady who provides comic relief to the serious main plot. She orders him to give Misander her own picture, besides the other three, since she is convinced of being the most beautiful woman of Byzantium, "bright" and "Maiestique" (I.ii 155). She shows off her own brand of Platonic female power: "Shee's more than servile that desires not Rule" (I.iii 223); "I swell / With Axioms, Methods, Rules; I have as strong / A Modell in my head of Reformation, / As they that are most factious" (II.ii 667-70). This is a parody of that type of Platonic love cult which regarded women as divine beings to be worshipped. The comic subplot finds another element in Prusias, "a courtier turn'd Captain" of the Thracians (*Dramatis Personae*), but we shall see that he becomes the vehicle of a different and more complex form of parody.

The next scenes (I.iv and v) are set in the Thracian camp, and one gleans from the captains' talk that Platonism has preposterously found its way even in that most savage of regions. The captains give a funny survey of this situation: "At home […] *Celadon* he / Loves *Amaryllis*, *Amaryllis Daphnis*, / But *Daphnis Cloe*, *Cloe*

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[71] The play presents other passages related to same-sex desire. For instance, a Thracian captain foretastes the delights of the city's looting: "Women, and Boys, catch he that can, they are / His own that first laies hold on them" (I.iv 292-2), and Misander compares his gazing on Leucasia to the god of Sleep's (not Diana's) gazing on Endymion (V.iii 1930). See below, in the last section, on gender issues in *The Siege*.

Melibæus, / Fond *Melibæus Mopsa*, *Mopsa* at last/ Some body, that loves some body, that I know not: […] Heart loves Heart / To th'end o' th' Chapter" (I.iv 244-50). The soldiers are happy to find themselves again on the battlefield, where they can enjoy women in the brutish manner of yore instead of having to call them "Nymphs, / And Goddesses, and Hamadryades" (I.iv 258-9), as if they did not "Consist of Flesh and Bloud" (264). Given these premises and Eudemus' words in the previous scene, one would expect Misander to be of the same antiplatonic mindset. Indeed, when he comes on stage, his abrupt and violent sentences seem martial enough ("They shall know what 'tis to delude him that / Ne'r threatned twice" I.v 309-10), until he speaks of what he is seeking: "there's / A Jewel in it [i.e. Byzantium], which if it should be touch'd / By any but my selfe, I should account / My Diadem guilty of offending Nature" (321-4). The city "contain[s] a Virgin of such sweetness / As makes each Place *Elysium* as she passeth" (345-6). He does not want to attack Byzantium lest she be harmed, "but that her Beauty will / Disarm ev'n Cruelty it self, and so / Work her escape by conquering with a Look" (360-2), "for sure she must be blest that is so fair" (368). Beauty has already begun working on his soul: he has undertaken the first steps of the ascent towards love. Yet, his feelings must be refined. Everything has started when his "hunting Eye" (376), viewing the Byzantine people, "survey'd each Virgin / With a most eager and committing Look" (377-8) until he saw a particular girl: "He had no sooner spy'd, but his nimble Soul / Did visibly climb unto her Eyes / By their own Beams" (379-80). With such pleonastic expressions, the reader-spectator learns of the inception of love's power through sight.

As said, however, this is only the first degree of love's working. He still views his beloved as an object (a jewel); he exclaims: "Why shall they dare thus to deny her me / To whom all things of price are due?" (348-9). His own identity is changing, however, and he confesses: "I am not well" (370). Thus, Cartwright's play is about many sieges: the ostensible one is the one laid by the Thracians on Byzantium, but there are at least other two: the besieged body of Leucasia by Misander, and Misander's own self that is made defenceless by love (compare the treatment of the siege imagery in *The Picture*)[72]. The last siege works through sight and it is not

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[72] However, the theme of a soul attacked and besieged was very ancient: we may think of the psychomachia in the medieval *Castle of Perseverance*. Cartwright's tragicomedy paves the way to those

coincidentally that now the girls' pictures are brought in, among which Misander immediately identifies Leucasia's.

At first, he inveighs against the Byzantine gentlemen: "Do y' mock me with a shadow and present / A Baby for a Goddesse?" (I.iv 391-2); he will take revenge on them by making the city inhabited only by "idle foolish Pictures, such as these" (395), as lifeless bodies. Prusias, however, comforts Misander: "You need not doubt performance" (404). "Performance" is a key word: in this case, it refers to the tyrant's future enjoyment of the selected girl, but may also signal a progression from painting to a livelier type of representation. This exhibition of the pictures is Cartwright's tribute to a scene in Massinger's *The Emperor of the East* (first published in 1632): in that play, also set in Byzantium, the young emperor's sister shows him two pictures of eligible brides, to which the emperor says: "Must I then judge the substances by the shadows?" (II.i 47). However, Misander's belittling of the pictures gives way to exclusive appreciation: "How dare you look upon 'em, being I am / To make my choice of one?" (409-10) He then recognises Leucasia's portrait and orders them to fetch her: "I love her in the Picture" (422).

Now we have the second contemplation in the play: the first, Misander's first encounter with Leucasia, is not staged, but only evoked. A stage direction says: "*As* Misan. *contemplates* Leu. *Picture*, Pru[sia] *contemplates on the Widdows*". Misander is shocked that Nicias, the painter, could portray Leucasia without falling in love with her: "Could he gaze so long on, as to pourtray, / And have so little flame, as not to love?" (431-2) One needs to remember that the relationship between limner and model was thought to be extremely intimate. Hilliard himself writes that the artist needs to cultivate an impeccable reputation and to be a perfect gentleman:

> Wherefore it behoveth him that he be in heart wise, as it will hardly fail that he shall be amorous […] How then can the curious drawer watch, and as it were catch these lovely graces, witty smilings, and those stolen glances which suddenly like lightning pass […] without blasting his young and simple heart, although in pleasing admiration[73].

siege plays of the Interregnum and Restoration, such as Killigrew's *Siege of Urbin* (1666) and Davenant's *Siege of Rhodes* (1656).

[73] Nicholas Hilliard, *The Arte of Limning*, ed. by T. G. S. Cain and R. K. R. Thornton (Edinburgh: Carcanet Press, 1992): 57.

Clearly, Nicias' character invites such doubts. One of the lords notices Misander's contemplation and asks: "Why do you fasten those large Eyes, which should / Shed light, as doth the Sun, on every place / Due to the World, upon a silly Tablet?" (436-8). Misander's reply is crucial: he acknowledges that Leucasia's face has "a most lawfull captivating Power / [that] Makes all our Senses hers". This may be commonplace enough, but correctly read, it explains what Platonic contemplation entails: assimilation. Marsilio Ficino had circulated this view that had seeped through French romances and was influencing British culture. From a phenomenological point of view, the spirits traversed the lovers' bodies and unified them. In D'Urfé's work, we read about the same process but on another level: by means of "*l'infinie puissance d'amour [...] l'amant se transforme en l'aimé, et l'aimé en l'amant, et par ainsi deux ne deviennent qu'un*"[74] (by means of "the infinite power of love […] the lover turns into the loved one, and the loved one into the lover, and thus two become but one"). The process has begun.

Misander proceeds in a triter way: the picture is no longer necessary, because he says, "I have her in my Mind, a Tablet that / Thine hands cannot remove; there I behold her / Drawn by my Thoughts far better than the Pencill" (444-6). The power of the picture however is not lost, as his final distich proves: "A shadow can thy larger Thoughts confine; / Hiding a Power that's Tyrant over thine". Pictures and images all are beautiful as such, but especially because they refer to something unseen. As well pointed out by Tony Gheeraert, in courtly romances, the characters' "*libido videndi*" is so extravagant that they confuse having one's love and owning their picture. To cite another example from *L'Astrée*, when Silviane sees Childéric kissing and holding her portrait, she receives "*un très grand sursaut de se voir entre les mains d'autre que d'Andrimante*" ("a very great surprise to see herself in somebody's hands that were not Andrimante's")[75].

Before coming to the murder scene and the third contemplation, one needs to discuss Prusias's role in II.i. He follows two other captains, but keeps looking at Pyle's

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[74] Honoré d'Urfé, *L'Astrée* ed. by M. Hugues Vaganay (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1966): 251, translation mine.

[75] Quoted in Tony Gheeraert, *Saturne aux deux visages. Introduction á* L'Astrée *d'Honoré d'Urfé* (Rouen: PURH, 2006): 160, translation mine.

picture and, drawing her blazon, repeats Misander's very words, creating an interesting echo effect. It is easy to dismiss this as a simple act of ridicule. He extols the widow's beauty which is evidently far from remarkable, thus aping Misander. Still, I would argue that his role here creates a short circuit with the poetics of Platonic emulation through parody. His is a literal parody: a song (or speech) running parallel to another[76]. Prusias mimics Misander and the captains notice this: "Must you be imitating of your Prince / In everything forsooth?" (497-8); "h' hath conn'd Misander, & we came / Just to the Repetition" (521-2). Yet, Prusias' feelings seem to be as sincere as Misander's. Platonic discourse had it that love could propagate itself and instil virtue in the people surrounding the true lovers "by conversing and Example" (III.vii 1328). This was strategically used in the political discourse of the time: the king and the queen served as examples for their subjects. Prusias' behaviour interrogates this representing, mimetic process. (Further proof that we should not simply laugh at him is that he is not given an absurd name, but is one of two kings of Bithynia). His mimicry is also repeated in a mirror scene, II.v, with Pyle's picture again. And again, when Misanders wounds Leucasia, it is Prusias who tries to absolve him, to which the others say: "Faith, cut her throat in imitation too" (III.iii 1073). Prusias' answer is faultlessly Platonic, the opposite of what a comic character would say: "You never had the goodness, as to Love" (1080). To this the courtiers importantly reply: "There may be / True hearty Subjects, though they may not be shadows / Cast from the Body Royal" (1089-90). This is the short circuit previously referred to: Platonic love is constituted by gazing on Beauty, the images of which radiate harmony. Yet these images, which should foster emulation, are always questioned, just like the portraits.

Another character is accused of parodic emulation: Euthalpe. She is an interesting figure: though not of humble lineage, she decides to serve and follow Leucasia, to whom she is bound by an elective affinity. Her noble speeches ("by fit degrees […] To serve thus, / Is but to light my Taper at Anothers, / That I see burns more cleer" 572-5) are mocked by the widow: "This you have conn'd / Out of some wandering Story that you read / To make your Lady sleeps" (575-7). Prusias and Euthalpe's

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[76] On parody as an instrument that exposes the ways in which ideology operates through continual re-iteration, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

modes of behaviour have a subversive quality, especially when they transgress social class: as Euthalpe explains: "Endowments are an inbred Soveraignty" (570). This social transgression is to be taken much more seriously than Pyle's project of creating a topsy-turvy "Parliament of women" (647), if she becomes queen (a topic dealt with in Cartwright's *The Lady-Errant*).

We come now to the play's centre, which consists of Misander's failed murder at the hands of Leucasia, leading to the pivotal contemplation scene. Misander is "*discover'd asleep*" (S. D.) and Leucasia, a latter-day Judith, comes to kill him. Predictably enough, she exclaims: "I cannot do it for my heart", but this decision comes after she and Misander form a reversed tableau of *Othello*'s bedroom scene (V.i). As noted by J. B. Evans, the Moor's "Put out the light" speech is cited: Leucasia refers to the "wavering Taper" that "Doth seem to watch, and listen to what I say, / And trembles now to think what shall be done a Spy; first then extinguish that. / Darkness belongs unto thy deed. Sin never / Yet wanted light" (III.i 960-5). The staging of this scene would be very dramatic, since the use of candles would nicely correspond to all the darkness and light imagery. But Misander wakes up and wounds Leucasia, uttering a fine phrase attuned to the Early Stuarts' belief in the divine right of monarchs: "When Kings / Lye down, ev'n Darkness doth become their Guard" (969-70). This is ironical: he calls for lights and discovers what he has committed.

This passage bears striking similarities to an episode in the myth of Cupid and Psyche as related by Apuleius. Psyche has never seen who her mysterious lover is and she is persuaded by her envious sisters that he is a monster that needs to be vanquished. Thus, one night, she prepares a knife to kill him in the bedroom and takes a lamp to see him, transgressing her husband's orders. Amazed at his beauty, she spills the oil of the lamp on Cupid, who wakes up and flees. Later, in one of the trials Psyche needs to go through in order to regain her lost love, she falls into a magic sleep and only Cupid can rescue her (compare *The Siege*, IV.x). Leucasia and Misander's story is so similar to this myth that it cannot be fortuitous. Cartwright's treatment was not neutral: Apuleius' story has been described as "one of the central myths by which

Charles and Henrietta Maria constructed the public image of their marriage"[77]. Rubens was commissioned a painting illustrating their courtship in mythological disguise, with Charles playing Cupid and Henrietta Maria as Psyche. The myth accordingly became extremely fashionable in England: Orazio Gentileschi honoured the royals with a painting depicting Psyche's discovery of the god (c. 1628-30), Thomas Heywood wrote a dramatic adaptation *Love's Mistress* (performed in 1634), Milton referred to it in *Comus* (1634), Marmion spawned a long verse epic, *Cupid and Psyche* (1637), and around 1638 Van Dyck, Rubens, and Jordaens were all asked to produce a series of paintings for the Queen's House in Greenwich. The myth was heavily allegorised and revolved around the drama of Platonic gazing and chaste love[78]. In Cartwright's *The Siege*, the contemplation of a man leads, through violence, to a cleansing contemplation of a virtuous woman.

It is highly interesting to see how Misander reacts. He is desperate, calls the surgeons since "the hurt is mine […] every drop of Bloud's your Soveraigne's" (974-5), and says:

> What e'r I did before was yet virile,
> Having this plea at least, that 'twas to Man.
> The Sex here is my shame, what shall I say
> The Beauty of it is? That makes my Act
> Deform'd beyond expression. (982-6)

The gender issues of this passage and of the contemplation scene will be addressed presently. For the moment, it is important to quote Misander's wish that real and metaphorical darkness should take him: "Darkness, enwrap me. Though mine Eyes are blest / In viewing her […]" (1056-7).

Act III, scenes iii to vii are all contiguous. They begin with Misander soliloquising on a couch on his dire fate, and then there is the arrival of the other Thracians who warn him that Byzantium has rebelled. Misander completely ignores their questions and only asks after Leucasia's health (III.iv). She is brought onstage (III.v) with Euthalpe; a boy dressed as a virgin sings, lulling her to sleep. Now begins an extraordinary theatrical moment. The stage direction reads: "*As she fals asleep*

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[77] Jane Kingsley-Smith, *Cupid in Early Modern Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 173. Much of the subsequent information comes from this interesting study.

[78] See Peggy Muñoz Simonds, *Myth, Emblem, and Music in Shakespeare's* Cymbeline*: An Iconographic Reconstruction* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992): 78-92.

Misander *seats himself just over against her, and looks immoveably upon her, not regarding any thing done in the next Scene"*. For almost 130 lines, the actor playing Misander does not stir, but remains only gazing on Leucasia. The Byzantines come in arms, but they, seeing Misander looking at the girl, stop and rest "amaz'd" (S.D) in turn. Nicias the painter recognises the theatrical power of this; he comments: "Here's more work for my Pencill than my Sword" (III.vi 1173). This is a *tableau vivant*, a work of art. Eudemus does not understand Misander's behaviour: he is shocked at what he interprets as a cruel voyeuristic act which seems to spread among the various spectators. "Can you see him / Gazing upon these Wounds he made, and yet / Not give him one himself? Look how he takes / Delight in's Act ev'n to an Extasie" (1192-5). Euthalpe offers to explain to him the Platonic process of contemplation. He is as still as Leucasia; gazing upon her, Misander is assimilating her state; he is no longer moved by scopophiliac lust but is being altered by true love. Euthalpe is sure: "Lust never yet / Could look so quiet and so peaceable" (1239-40), now it is Eudemus who is a "Most passionate Man" (1237), no longer the tyrant. Eudemus, however, disagrees and exposes what he perceives as Misander's theatricality: "yfaith hee'd make / A very pretty Actor" (1242-3). The strange stasis produces a paradoxical peace (paradoxical but perfectly coherent with Platonic discourse): the Thracians and the Byzanthines declare a truce.

That Eudemus is wrong and Euthalpe is right is proved by Leucasia's awakening. Misander himself, seeing this, revives and the two of them expound on the properties of Platonic contemplation. Misander has "drunk in Revelations from the sight / Of [her] diviner Front" (III.vii 1276-7). His physical eyes and the distempered "Eye of Love" will heal "by looking on her healing Vertues" (1303; 1307); the intertwining gazes forming "one Circular flux of Glories" (1336). Leucasia is surprised at Misander's alteration: his mind "is now like the State / Of that above, where still one equall Calm, / One soft continued Quietness" (1340-2). She instructs the adoring Misander that he needs to refine his feeling even more and to aspire higher. Thus she refuses physical embrace until he is ready, but importantly, she does not stigmatise the senses:

> [...]   I banish not the Senses
> When I name Reason; for as we must please

The Mind and the Soul, so we must feed the Sight,
And sometimes too the Touch; in that we are
Not Reason only, but Eye too, and hand. (1364-8)

Partaking of this sight, Misander has gained access to spiritual elevation through vicarious death, because Leucasia has drawn "the Veyl away that was before Love's Eyes" (1400). Now they must "step higher, and contend / To make our selves Immortal which is done / When each by dying in himself doth come / To live in something made of both these Deaths" (1387-90): perfect Love (D'Urfée's motto was *mourir en soi pour reviver en autrui*, which is itself reminiscent of François de Sales' tenets).

The rest of the play is less relevant for our purposes. Here is a brief summary. Eudemus does not believe in Misander's conversion and still thinks that Leucasia's honour has been lost. He asks the widow Pyle to give Misander a poison before he weds his daughter. Pyle seems to comply, but instead gives him a potion come straight from Shakespeare' *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: it is a powerful sleeping drink which will cause the person assuming it to fall in love with the first person they see (Pyle hopes that it will be herself). Instead, Leucasia takes it, believing it was a poison. All bewail the fact and again, Misander gazes on the girl's body (V.iii). He offers to kiss this sleeping beauty but is stopped by Euthalpe: he cannot contradict Leucasia's orders (these are stilted Platonic notions indeed). He vows he will gaze on her just like Sleep watched Endymion (note the gender reversal: normally it would be Diana watching the youth) (1930). Leucasia wakes up, but the potion's effect is more or less nullified: she already loved Misander, who is now fully converted, though she now praises her love in elevated terms (she has come back from Elysium, and it is "A pleasure far beyond all those below / In only viewing you" V.vi 1950). The themes of *la mort en soi*, apparent death, and art are somewhat strengthened by other elements: at the wedding, there is a masque of statues coming to life, and the Boccaccian comic subplot sees Pyle's various suitors scare one another in a crypt. With Misander and Leucasia's marriage, Thrace and Byzantium declare peace. Euthalpe refuses Misander's pledge to find a suitable partner for her since she cannot find a more perfect pleasure "than viewing [their] joyn'd Excellencies" (V.viii 2359). Misander happily concludes: "Now we are one, my fair *Leucasia*" (2360). The process of imitative assimilation through contemplation is complete.

A Sisterhood of Pictures: Subjectivity and Subjection of Leucasia as Spectacle

It is time to draw some conclusions. As we have seen, in William Cartwright's *The Siege*, the power of Leucasia to convert the tyrant lies in the exposure of her beauty under the gaze of the adoring man. The contemplation of Leucasia's body leads Misander to the Platonic perception of a higher realm and to knowledge. However, this dynamic is more complex than it may seem. Not only does Leucasia become a work of art which is simultaneously "lively" and dead, but Misander himself merges his identity with hers. This process produces a theatrical *tableau vivant* which mixes aesthetic admiration with dangerously political inertia. However, these risks are overcome by Platonic politics: love produces self-balance, which in turn ensures peace.

Sight is given predominant importance in the play, both in terms of artistic contemplation and especially in terms of Platonic love's gazing. It has been said that Cartwright's "plays are remarkable for their conscious spectacularity, each one containing ceremonials or pageantry of an almost operatic quality"[79]. They certainly prefigure melodrama. Another relevant element concerns the role of the woman in this tragicomedy given the purportedly "feminist" quality of Caroline courtly drama as often claimed in most studies[80].

On the one hand, the spectator-reader is invited to share Euthalpe's idea that "there's no Sex in the mind" (III.vi 1190). Leucasia becomes a saint, a blessed creature that has to be adored in order to reach spiritual purification. Euthalpe tries in vain to moderate Misander's praise of women which is absolute: "Woman was born / to rule […] 'tis the good man's Office / to serve and reverence Woman […]" (V.viii 2302-3; 2310-1); "Love then doth work in you, what Reason doth / Perform in us; here only lies the difference, / Ours wait the lingring steps of Age, and years, / But th' Woman's Soul is ripe when it is young; / So that what we call learning, is / Divinity in you" (2326-31). Woman's soul is already mature: hence the lack of evolution in Leucasia's character which may ostensibly seem as two-dimensional as a portrait.

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[79] Alfred Harbage, *op. cit.* (1964): 144.

[80] See e.g. Alison Findlay, *Playing Spaces in Early Women's Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 110-43, and Anna Battigelli, *Margaret Cavendish and the Exiles of the Mind* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1998): 11-38.

On the other hand, Leucasia, for all the solemn and high-flown panegyrics on feminine beauty and virtue, is petrified in man's beatific vision. She acts when most inactive, either wounded or asleep (twice); she even speaks fewer words than the other leading characters. Whereas other Caroline plays negotiate the threat of the actress[81], in *The Siege* Leucasia's empowerment through contemplation remains questionable. The conjunction between death and beautiful women has been elucidated by Elisabeth Bronfen in her study *Over Her Dead Body*[82]: it is a deeply-rooted nexus in Western culture that seeks, among other things, to anaesthetise the fear of death with the aesthetic admiration of a beautiful woman's body. Once again, however, it is necessary to historicise.

It is true that "[t]he emphasis of [Caroline] court culture was broadly femino-centric", as women were "projected centre-stage as the embodiments of ideal beauty"[83]. Nevertheless, female agency was very often vehemently constrained. Jerome de Groot's argument is illuminating:

> female agency, in similar fashion to female performance, is seemingly celebrated but only within strict guidelines and under the adoring and constructing gaze of the male writer. Performance legitimates and contains the female; the presentation of virtue involved in courtly Platonism and intellectual patronage simultaneously circumscribes and enables the transgression of the female [...][84]

Man's subjectivity is also repeatedly questioned. We have already seen how there is first a partial subversion of the roles in the tableau of a sleeping tyrant and a Judith-like avenging virgin. Misander then turns from action to passive contemplation. He even says that Leucasia's love would complete him (recalling Plato's original spherical creatures) so that "To love her would / Be a superfluous thing, my self sufficing / My self, as once *Narcissus* did *Narcissus*" (III.vii 1315-7). Euthalpe may be right in supposing he is secretly aiming at supplement rather than complement (1313; 1320). Indeed, the participatory assimilation process of Platonic contemplation

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[81] See Sophie Tomlinson, "She That Plays the King: Henrietta Maria and the Threat of the Actress in Caroline Culture", in Jonathan Hope and Gordon McMullan (eds), *The Politics of Tragicomedy. Shakespeare and After* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992): 189-207.
[82] (Manchester and New York: Routledge, 1992). This book has very interesting pages on Desdemona.
[83] Ibid, 190.
[84] Jerome de Groot, "Coteries, Complications and the Question of Female Agency" in Ian Atherton and Julie Sanders (eds), *op. cit* (2006): 200.

I have so far discussed is the major element in the blurring of gender categories negotiated in the play.

There is also another level to be taken into consideration: melodramatic as it is, the scene of the conversion can be understood also from the perspective of Cartwright's own views on the power of the theatre. Writing of John Fletcher's love scenes, he comments that "some who sate spectators have confest / Themselves transform'd to what they saw exprest, / And felt such shafts steal through their captiv'd sence, / As made them rise Parts, and goe Lovers thence"[85] (ll. 57-60). We understand, then, that contemplation in *The Siege* can also be interpreted metadramatically: love's assimilation process is reproduced, and re-presented through theatre.

In one of his poems, "To a Painter's Handsome Daughter"[86], William Cartwright employs the trope of art rivalling and surpassing nature. More interestingly, he does not recur to that other familiar motif, the painted woman, but compares the painter's daughter with his pictures as if they were siblings:

> Such are your Fathers Pictures, that we do
> Beleeve they are not Counterfeits, but true;
> So lively, and so fresh, that we may swear
> Instead of draughts, He hath plac'd Creatures there;
> People, not shadows; which in time will be
> Not a dead Number, but a Colony:
> Nay, more yet, some think they have skill and Arts,
> That th' are well-Bred, and Pictures of good Parts;
> And you your Self, faire Julia, do disclose
> Such Beauties, that you may seem one of those;
> That having Motion gain'd at last, and sense,
> Began to know it Self, and stole out thence.
> Whiles thus his aemulous Art with Nature strives,
> Some think H' hath none, Others he hath two Wives.
> If you love none, fair Maid, but Look on all,
> You then among his set of Pictures fall;
> If that you look on all, and love all men,
> The Pictures too will be your Sisters then,
> For they as they have Life, so th' have this Fate
> In the whole Lump either to Love or Hate;
> Your Choice must shew you're of another Fleece,
> And tell you are his Daughter, not his Piece:
> All other proofs are vain; Go not about;
> We two'l Embrace, and Love, and clear the doubt.
> When you've brought forth your Like, the world will know
> You are his Child; what Picture can do so.

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[85] Gwynne Blakemore Evans (ed.), *op. cit.* (1951): 521.
[86] Ibid, 476.

Cartwright suggests that a woman is a picture that lives and propagates love. So is Leucasia, and Misander's identity changes through her "inactive agency". This process is exposed, however, through a discussion of the game of surfaces (be they portraits, shadows, or mental images) and its parodic re-iteration. The element of theatrical *tableaux vivants* further complicates the seemingly straightforward dynamics of contemplation.

Platonic gazing was the mode through which staged pictures traversed the Interregnum and reached Restoration drama. What is interesting is that this ideological network also kept thriving in the following centuries. As an example, we can quote a passage from a 1703 poem[87] by Sarah Fyge Egerton, *To One Who Said I Must Not Love*:

My Kindness to his Picture I refrain,
Nor now imbrace the lifeless lovely Swain.
To press the charming Shade tho' thro' a Glass,
Seems a Platonick breach of Hymen's Laws,
Thus nicely fond, I only stand and gaze.
View the dear conq'ring Form that forc'd my Fate,
Till I become as motionless as that.

Similarly, Cartwright's *The Siege* interrogates the assumptions and practices of Platonic gazing that characterised Caroline culture, where the participatory process of contemplation rendered the boundary between self and otherness, and between life and art, very labile.

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[87] As found in David Fairer and Christine Gerrard, *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015): 14-5.

Conclusion

This dissertation has analysed the web of interconnections that grows out of the presentation of portraits on the early modern English stages. I have argued that it is only by investigating the early modern English material and visual cultures that the meanings of staged portraits can be fully, or at least satisfactorily, ascertained. In fact, my hermeneutic approach aimed at opening up the networks of staged portraits both as commodities and as dramatic agents. Very often, what results from the observation of portraits on stage is a particular kind of metatheatre that interfaces with highly socially-charged issues of the period. The aesthetics of spectacle and display can reflect, shape, or subvert the paradigms of gender, class, and subjectivity, and the staging of a portrait can address the meanings that concepts such as "mimesis", "theatre", and "art" have in a particular society at a particular time. Moreover, looking at a portrait commonly introduces a subject-object differentiation, but looking at someone looking at a portrait can have very different effects.

This is the first study on staged portraits in early modern English drama to make comprehensive use of the main insights offered by material and visual culture studies coupled with the semiotics of theatre and drama. Previous scholarship has focused on Shakespeare's works or on Elizabethan play-texts only[1], while I have extended the field of observation to Jacobean and Caroline drama. Wassersug's study[2] usefully provided me with the corpus of seventy-five plays featuring a staged portrait, but its classificatory and thematic approach left ample room for further critical enquiry, along different perspectives.

I hope to have shown why portraits are a particular type of prop, one that foregrounds the very processes of representation (see I.1.1-2). Their functions are multiple and depend on the playwright and playing company's awareness of the portraits' semiotic potential. First of all, their presentation on stage re-enacts the most

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[1] See Marguerite A. Tassi, *The Scandal of Images. Iconoclasm, Eroticism and Painting in Early Modern English Drama* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2005), and Keir Elam, "'Most truly limned and living in your face': Looking at Pictures in Shakespeare", in Jacquelyn Bessell, Fernando Cioni, and Virginia Mason Vaughan (eds), *Speaking Pictures: The Visual/Verbal Nexus of Dramatic Performance* (Madison and Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010): 63-89.
[2] Yolana Wassersug, *'My Picture I Enjoin Thee to Keep': The Function of Portraits in English Drama, 1558-1642* (Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 2015).

basic instance of performance: ostension. On the other hand, they are particular props because they are "indices" *sensu* C. S. Peirce, that is, they are physical metonymies: direct substitutes for, or, indirectly, deictical indications of a person. Beyond this function, they can become highly transactional objects, forging relationships between actors and the audience.

Staged portraits, however, are not just signs operating in a vacuum. They had what Arjun Appadurai has called "social lives"[3] which did not transcend the time and setting in which they were displayed. This is exactly what makes these props of the early modern English drama unique. Both in the public and in the private playhouses, there was a frontal, almost immediate communication between actors and audience. In this sense, I have argued that spectators were all invited to "passion over pictures" in this type of theatre (see I.4.2). The activity of playing was believed to work within an emotional and cognitive system that bonded actor and spectator. By paying attention to the visual nature of this theatre, it is possible to better understand how it clashed with and operated along the period's embattled epistemology (see I.2.1-3 and I.4.1). Staging portraits concentrated and problematised the power reputed to reside in the exchanges of glances between audience and actors. I have strongly disagreed with a number of earlier studies[4] that maintain that this dynamics occurred along an iconophilia-iconophobia dualism.

Historians have proved that portraits usually escaped the risk of being attacked by iconoclasts; claims of idolatry were also limited. Because of their secular subject, portraits remained a safe mode of expression, but, as a consequence, the uses of portraiture had ramifications that affected many ethical issues and social practices. They could become ideal instruments to show one's self-fashioning by displaying one's social status and religious devotion. They were strategically used as proofs of one's political allegiance or tokens of one's affections (see I.2.1 and I.3.1-3). Dramatists and playing companies explored and made much of the symbolical uses of portraits and explored them.

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[3] See Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

[4] See esp. Marguerite A. Tassi, *op. cit.* (2005) which draws on Patrick Collinson, *From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: The Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation* (Reading: University of Reading, 1986) and Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

Moreover, portraits were not the possession of only the élites, as thought by most scholars until recently. These artefacts were part of the everyday life of many Elizabethans and their use became more and more frequent in the Jacobean and Caroline period. Spectators must have been interested in the values and price of these artefacts and, especially in the private theatres, the staging of portraits could address the burgeoning culture of artistic connoisseurship. It follows that, even in the case of miniatures, the spectators would have wanted to actually *see* these props.

Sometimes, the aleatory, ever-shifting dimension of performance makes it difficult to pinpoint how the pictures were staged, but sometimes, it *is* possible to ascertain how the actors wielded them. Thanks to information derived from textual and paratextual material, as well as from theatrical tradition, one can determine whether a miniature or a larger portrait was used. I made a list of the cues that signal the presence of a sizable portrait instead of a miniature (I.4.3): with reference to the aforementioned dramatic corpus of seventy-five plays (see Appendix), the use of larger pictures is shown to be no anomaly, which challenges the conclusions of previous studies in this field. The question of the format of the staged pictures is not futile: each type of portrait communicated differently to the audience in terms of its own visual culture and in terms of theatrical proxemics and kinesics. The use of a particular picture could also activate genre expectations and intertextual references. I have given examples of staged pictures in early modern Spanish drama and within the *commedia dell'arte* tradition (I.4.3) because their comparison with English drama confirmed that both the visual culture and the performative aspects of theatrical productions markedly influence the staging of these props.

I put forward the idea of a "poetics of limning" active in early modern England that has not been properly recognised by previous scholarship (see I.3.4). I show that poets and dramatists appropriated the language of limning, that is, the watercolour-based technique used to paint miniatures. The activities of "limning" and "shadowing (forth)" provided authors with a complex framework of rhetorical paradigms that correspond to the gnoseological practice of coming to terms with a reality which was understood to be simultaneously opaque (needing revelatory illumination) and vacuous (needing artistic re-fashioning).

I also addressed a number of questions not always satisfactorily covered by scholars so far, concerning the price of the staged pictures, and their negotiation of gender issues. I suggested we apply the category of the "populuxe" to understand the value invested in these objects and I identified the three strategies used by the playing companies to stage women's pictures in a theatre without actresses. Moreover, I briefly discussed the relationship between painting and make-up, which aroused fierce polemical disputes, but also gave playwrights a means to reflect on theatrical mimesis[5].

The performative potential of portraits is great, but their roles in drama is often rather circumscribed: in the majority of cases, portraits are tokens exchanged by lovers, devices permitting an *anagnorisis*, or commemorative objects of dead or absent characters (see I.4.3). In order to comprehend what happens when these props are investigated in depth, it is of great interest to consider, firstly, how and when their values and meanings are explored in a specific play or in relation to the corpus of a particular playwright, and secondly, how they could negotiate particular cultural issues. Hence the importance of the case studies in my dissertation. The five plays under scrutiny, however disparate their genre and respective fortune, have yielded insights that have generally been absent in previous scholarly works. In fact, whereas the portraits in Shakespeare's works have been receiving increasing attention[6], the information gained from them cannot be complete if one does not consider the dramatic output of Shakespeare's contemporaries. Particular attention was paid to the performative dimension of these texts, referring to what can be known of their original performances and, whenever possible, to contemporary productions.

The chapter on *Hamlet* (II.1) focused on the close reading of the "Look here upon this picture" speech in the so-called "closet scene" and its markedly different version in the First Quarto. I showed that these differences have a structural relevance to this edition of the play as a whole: they indicate an early confidence in the veracity and power of sight that would be seriously interrogated in the later editions (specifically,

[5] See also Farah Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006) and Annette Drew-Bear, *Painted Faces on the Renaissance Stage* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1994).
[6] See Keir Elam, *Shakespeare's Pictures: Visual Culture in Drama* (London and New York: Bloomsbury) and Armelle Sabatier, *Shakespeare and Visual Culture* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Methuen), both forthcoming.

the Second Quarto of 1604-5 and the Folio of 1623). Moreover, by discussing the elusive question of the format of the two pictures in this scene, and also the nature of its setting in the First Quarto (where the room is never called a "closet", but a "lobby"), it is possible to discover a new level of agency in the character of the queen. She seems to strategically negotiate the displaying of her two husbands' portraits following, but also disrupting, the societal norms that bounded noble widows in early modern England in relation to the commissioning and showing of portraiture.

A noblewoman's practice of looking at the picture of her husband features prominently also in Webster's *The White Devil* (II.2). My analysis concentrated on the mechanisms of multiperspectivism that characterise this play, which I call a "night-piece with many foci". The dramatist has a character describe his actions as a "night-piece", which can be interpreted metatheatrically. By investigating the features of this pictorial genre, I show that some playwrights (in particular, Webster, Dekker, Fletcher, and Massinger) appropriated them and exploited the horrific potential of these paintings. Webster emerges as particularly interested in the material dimension of painting, employing both physical pictures as props and the imagery of painting in many of his plays. In *The White Devil*, multiperspectivism opens up the play towards aesthetical and ethical undecidability. In particular, these effects are foregrounded in the scene of Isabella's murder by means of a poisoned portrait: her death occurs in a dumb show the multisensoriality of which has never been taken into account by other scholars. I showed that the portrait plays a central role in the dynamics between immediacy and hypermediation that distinguishes this scene, according to Katherine M. Carey[7].

The third case study, Philip Massinger's *The Picture* (II.3), showed the extraordinary multiplicity of functions of the magic miniature that both theatrically and dramatically dominates this tragicomedy. This picture is not simply a fetish or a synecdoche of the wife's body, as expounded in other essays[8]. I have examined it in the light of humouralism, showing that it is certainly influenced by the wife's altered

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[7] See Katherine M. Carey, "The Aesthetics of Immediacy and Hypermediation: The Dumb Shows in Webster's *The White Devil*", *New Theatre Quarterly*, Vol. 23, no. 1, Feb. 2007: 73-80.
[8] See Erin Obermueller, "'On cheating Pictures': Gender and Portrait Miniatures in Philip Massinger's *The Picture*", *Early Theatre*, Vol. 10, no. 2, 2007, and Bradley D. Ryner, *Performing Economic Thought: English Drama and Mercantile Writing, 1600-1642* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014): 188-212.

temperament, but also by the husband's jealousy. The frequent metatheatrical references in the play reinforce the view that looking at and interpreting the magic picture dramatises the very processes of self-representation. The miniature as a device exposes the interpersonal construction of the early modern self and the performativity of gender identity in the context of what Mark Breitenberg has called the "anxious masculinity"[9] of the period. In their interpretation of the picture, the characters express the problematic relationship between conjugal and gnoseological *fides* and modern scepticism, as well as the transition between two different epistemological systems: the traditional realm of natural philosophy and humouralism, and the new science with its empiricism.

My analysis of Sampson's *The Vow Breaker* (II.4) had at its core the close reading of its adaptation of *Hamlet*'s "closet scene". The protagonist is called to decode reality but cannot distinguish between her betrothed's ghost and his portrait. I suggested we understand this scene by considering the use of staged portraits in a group of early modern English tragedies as a "theatregram"[10], a combinatorial dramatic unit that never sheds the memory of its earlier incarnations and that has an organic relevance to the whole play-text. The "closet scene" in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* can be seen as the main source of this intertextual concatenation, although there is a number of other plays to which it is indebted. Sampson's hybrid play makes much of this theatregram because it pits it against a thematic backdrop that dramatises examples of anxiogenic vision: idolatry, the effects of official iconography, the sensual power of dreams. I showed that the evident sensationalism of this piece serves to foreground the threatening status of images in the Caroline period as well as within the processes of theatrical mimesis itself.

Finally, I illustrated the ways in which William Cartwright's *The Siege* addresses the visual culture of the Caroline élites. No single essay has ever appeared on this specific tragicomedy that showcases the features of Neoplatonic contemplation interacting with the court's visual culture. I showed that it is possible to understand this only by knowing how varied courtly Neoplatonism was as a phenomenon. In the

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[9] See Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[10] See Louise George Clubb, "Theatregrams", in Donald Beecher and Massimo Ciavolella (eds), *Comparative Critical Approaches to Renaissance Comedy* (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 1986): 15-34.

play, physical pictures and mental images problematise the seemingly straightforward process of spiritual refinement by love since their interpretation interrogates the epistemic value of sight, gender performativity, and the practices of social emulation. The juxtaposition between lively pictures and objectified, passive women effectively undermines the ostensible gynocentrism of Caroline courtly drama.

Lastly, I wish to briefly suggest some lines for further research. A monograph on staged statues in early modern English drama has yet to appear: it may be interesting to compare the staging of sculpture with the results of my analysis. Perhaps more importantly, no study has been devoted thus far to staged portraits in Restoration drama. Even a cursory research of play-texts from the second half of the seventeenth century indicates that staged portraits were no rarity in Restoration drama[11]. It would be useful to see how the staging of women's portraits changed with the introduction of the first actresses. Moreover, by the end of the seventeenth century, the architecture of the playhouse had changed, which led to a loss of the actor-spectator facial communication and to the fact that portraits became more and more part of the theatrical décor. It would be worthwhile also to investigate how the development of new media (in particular, photography and its antecedents and cinema) influenced the staging of portraits in the light of intermedial and multimodal analysis.

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[11] Examples of staged portraits in Restoration drama include: Richard Fanshaw's *Querer Por Solo Querer: To Love only for Love Sake* (c. 1653-4, never staged, a translation of a Spanish play – a Persian king falls in love with the queen of Tartary only through her picture; he contemplates it, speaks to it, and even falls asleep while gazing on it); William Davenant's *The Play-House to Be Let* (1663, it contains an imitation in mock-French of Molière's *Le Cocu Imaginaire* – a girl is so enamoured that she faints merely upon looking at her darling's miniature); Thomas St. Serfe, *Tarugo's Wiles: Or, The Coffee-House* (1668, a translation of Moreto's comedy *No Puede Ser* – a girl tries in vain to hide her beloved's miniature; the same play was translated by John Crowne as *Sir Courtly Nice* in 1685); William Davenant's *The Man's The Master* (1668, based on a comedy by Scarron – a servant gives his own picture to a noble girl instead of his master's, love intrigue follows); Thomas Otway's *Don Carlos* (1676, the Duchess of Eboli keeps the prince's miniature instead of his wished-for recipient, his father's wife) and *The Soldier's Fortune* (1681, a captain's miniature lies at the heart of love intrigue and revenge); the most famous instance, that is Aphra Behn's *The Rover* (1677 – it features two small pictures and a large one of the courtesan, Angellica Bianca); Delarivier Manley's *The Royal Mischief* (1696, set in Turkey, two lovers fall in love by gazing upon each other's miniatures), and George Farquhar's *Sir Harry Wildair* (1701, a miniature is the proof of a wife's adultery), *The Inconstant* (1702, a father shows his son the picture of a woman he would like him to marry), and *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1707, in a gallery, portraits and pictures of landscapes and mythological figures are licentiously discussed while another couple is shown "making love in dumb show"). See Cynthia Lowenthal's article "Portraits and Spectators in the Late Restoration Playhouse: Delariviere Manley's *Royal Mischief*" (*The Eighteenth Century*, Vol. 35, no. 2, 1994: 119-34) which analyses Manley's play and Behn's *The Rover*, and especially Elin Diamond, "Gestus and Signature in Aphra Behn's *The Rover*", *ELH*, Vol. 56, no. 3, 1989: 523. I thank Dr Tiziana Febronia Arena (University of Catania) for referring me to this article and for sharing her memories of the RSC production of *The Rover* in 2016.

The portraits presented on stage in early modern English drama have certainly influenced the history of drama and literature. Through late eighteenth-century and Victorian bardolatry, the Shakespearean lovers' exchanging of miniatures became a topos: even now there are some who believe that miniatures "were *first used* by Shakespeare as a symbol of intimacy and possession [while] later they were employed in order to describe subtle meanings of love and fidelity in works by British authors of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, such as Jane Austen, and Charlotte Brontë"[12] (emphasis mine). Another case is the one represented by the motif of the picture that comes to life in Gothic drama and literature. From the start, the Gothic found many of its nuclei in Shakespearean drama[13], and conversely, the productions of Shakespeare's plays in the following century reflected a Gothic contamination: in Macready's 1845 *Hamlet*, the Ghost entered and disappeared through the frame of his own portrait[14]. Indeed, the literary work that most famously thematises a portrait, Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), weaves interesting links between *Hamlet* and the Gothic[15].

Through endless refashioning as well as inter- and transmedial adaptations, early modern staged portraits have reached us across time. I hope to have shown that they were richly polysemic objects, fraught with ideological implications and aesthetic riddles, in their own culture, and that they can still interrogate and affect us even now.

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[12] Kumiko Mukai, *Hawthorne's Visual Artists and the Pursuit of a Transatlantic Aesthetics* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008): 35.

[13] See, for instance, John Drakakis and Dale Townshend (eds), *Gothic Shakespeares* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2008); Christy Desmet and Anne Williams (eds), *Shakespearean Gothic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), and Elisabeth Bronfen and Beate Neumeier (eds), *Gothic Renaissance: A Reassessment* (Oxford: Manchester University Press, 2014).

[14] Something similar had occurred in Karl Immermann's 1834 production and returns, for example, in the 1886 adaptation of Cressonois and Samson (starring Sarah Bernhardt as Ophelia). Kerry Powell's speculation (in "Massinger, Wilde, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*", *English Language Notes*, no. 16, 1979: 312-15) that Wilde drew on Massinger's play for Dorian Gray's portrait seems very tenuous to me. However, it can be said that, since Edgar Allan Poe was "an avid reader" of John Webster (Grigoriĭ Mikhaĭlovich Kozint͡sev, *King Lear, the Space of Tragedy*, transl. by Mary Mackintosh, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977: 218), his stories, replete with uncanny portraits, may also have been stimulated by the poisoned picture of *The White Devil*.

[15] See Kostas Boyiopoulos, "Simulation in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: Echoing *Hamlet*, Anticipating Baudrillard, and the Comparative", *Comparative Critical Studies*, Vol. 11, no. 1, 2014: 7-27.

Appendix

Here follows a table with the 75 plays from the Elizabethan to the Caroline era which feature the presentation of a portrait on stage. They are listed chronologically; the dates, with a few alterations, are those indicated in Martin Wiggins's (in association with Catherine Richardson) *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012-forthcoming). This list would hardly have been possible without the generosity of Yolana Wassersug, who sent me her still unpublished PhD dissertation *'My Picture I Enjoin Thee to Keep': The Function of Portraits in English Drama, 1558-1642* (University of Birmingham, 2015), in which she gives an outline of the plot of each of these plays. I have integrated her list (Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* and Ford's *Love's Sacrifice* had been overlooked). I have included the names (when known) of the playwrights and playing companies who performed them, and the genre to which they belong (often relying on Wiggins' *Catalogue*). Another precious source of information has been the entry "picture" of Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson's *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama 1580-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

  More importantly, I have added a further criterion, size, which requires clarification. Every time, I have added a note explaining why I chose to classify the format of the picture as either "visible" or as a "miniature". By "visible", I mean that the picture used is definitely intended not to be a miniature and that, in many cases, it was sizable enough to be seen by the audience. The editions of the play-texts from which I quote are those referred to in the Bibliography.

	Title	Date	Playwright; Playing Company	Genre	Size	Notes
1	Wedding masque	1566	Thomas Pounde; players unknown	Masque	Visible	Picture of nude Diana
2	*Campaspe*	1583-4	John Lyly; Oxford's Boys	Comedy	Undefinable	Probably visible. Portrait of Campaspe and pictures of mythological figures in Apelles' shop

3	*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*	1587-98	William Shakespeare; Lord Chamberlain's Men	Comedy	Visible	Silvia's picture: "The picture that is hanging in your chamber"
4	*Dido, Queen of Carthage*	c. 1588	Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nashe; Children of the Chapel	Tragedy	Visible	"See where the pictures of my suitors hang"
5	*The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*	c. 1588	Robert Wilson; Leicester's Men	Comedy	Visible	Picture of Robert Tarlton
6	*James IV*	1588-92	Robert Greene; the Queen's Men (?)	Romance	Undefinable	Ida's picture
7	*Fair Em*	1589-91	An.; Lord Strange's Men	Comedy	Visible	Princess of Denmark's picture on a shield
8	*Edward II*	1591-3	Christopher Marlowe; Pembroke's Men	History	Miniature	Miniatures exchanged between Edward II and Gaveston ("Here, take my picture, and let me wear thine")
9	*The Blind Beggar of Alexandria*	1596	George Chapman; Admiral's Men	Comedy	Visible	Cleanthes' picture; more unlikely, a statue (according to Wassersug 2015)
10	*A Warning for Fair Women*	c. 1597	Thomas Dekker (?); Lord Chamberlain's Men	Tragedy	Visible	Portrait of Master George Sanders hanging on a tree in a dumb show
11	*The Comedy of Humours*	1597	George Chapman; Admiral's Men	Comedy	Undefinable	Probably visible: a woman's portrait, set along with other props

						(hose, codpiece, sword)
12	*Hispanus*	1597	Roger Morrell (?); St. John's College, Cambridge	Comedy	Visible	Silvia's: "look over there, to your left, a young man coming along, carrying a picture"
13	*The Merchant of Venice*	1598	William Shakespeare; Lord Chamberlain's Men	Comedy	Miniature	Portia's picture in the lead casket
14	Entertainment at Mitcham	1598	An.; players unknown	Entertainment	Visible	A board depicting English monarchs
15	*Antonio and Mellida*	c. 1599	John Marston; Children of Paul's	Comedy	Visible	Two men's pictures, one perhaps Marston's picture
16	*The Wisdom of Doctor Dodypoll*	1599-1600	An.; Children of Paul's	Comedy	Miniature and visible pictures	Miniatures called "jewels"; Lassinbergh draws Lucilia
17	*The Trial of Chivalry*	1599-1600	An.; Derby's Men	Romance	Miniature	"Me thinks, so long as this is in my hand, I claspe my Ferdinand betweene my armes"
18	*Hamlet*	1600-01	William Shakespeare; Lord Chamberlain's Men	Tragedy	Undefinable	Claudius' and Old Hamlet's (see II.1)
19	*The Cucqueans and the Cuckolds Errant*	c. 1601	William Percy; Children of Paul's (ever performed?)	Comedy	Visible	Picture of Robert Tarlton
20	*Twelfth Night*	1601	William Shakespeare; Lord Chamberlain's Men	Comedy	Miniature	Olivia's: "Here, wear this jewel for me, 'tis my picture"
21	*Satiromastix*	1601	Thomas Dekker; Lord Chamberlain's	Comedy	Undefinable	Probably visible: two

					Men and Children of Paul's			men's pictures carried "under [a] cloak" (Bowers 1952: "of some size"); one is Ben Jonson's caricature
2 2	*Blurt, Master Constable*	1601-02	Thomas Dekker?; Children of Paul's	Comedy	Visible	Man's picture; "here, hang this counterfeit at my bed's feet"
2 3	*If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody*, II	1604	Thomas Heywood; Queen Anne's Men	History	Visible	Middle-class gallery with the portraits of civic worthies
2 4	*The Wit of a Woman*	1604	An; players unkown	Comedy	Visible	Multiple pictures hung up at a painter's shop
2 5	*The Honest Whore* I	1604	Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton; Prince Henry's Men	Comedy	Visible	Infelice's portrait on a "painted board"
2 6	*The Fawn*	c. 1605	John Marston; Children of the Queen's Revels	Comedy	Undefinable	Duke Hercules' picture. Probably visible (Wiggins 2012: among "large portable objects")
2 7	*Zelotypus*	1605-7	An.; St. John's College, Cambridge	Comedy	Undefinable	Probably visible: a woman's picture used in order to advertise a brothel
2 8	*Timon of Athens*	1605-8	William Shakespeare (and Thomas Middleton?); King's	Tragedy	Undefinable	A painter shows a poet his picture of a

			Men?			man
2 9	*The Puritan Widow*	1606-7	Thomas Middleton; Children of Paul's	Comedy	Miniature	Inferred: the widow kisses her husband's picture she seems to draw out of a locket or something similar
3 0	*The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles, Duke of Biron*	1607-8	George Chapman; Children of the Queen's Revels	Tragedy	Undefinable	Duke Biron's picture. Probably visible (Wiggins 2012: among "large portable objects")
3 1	*Periander*	1608	John Sandsbury?; St. John's College, Oxford	Tragedy	Visible	Melissa's picture. It hangs in a gallery and is contrasted with the mirror held in the other hand
3 2	*The Fair Maid of the West* I	1609-11	Thomas Heywood; Queen Anne's Men	Comedy	Visible	A "table", the picture of Spencer, the Fair Maid's betrothed
3 3	*A Woman is a Weathercock*	1609-10	Nathan Field; Children of the Whitefriars	Comedy	Undefinable	Probably a miniature (among other small objects such as letters and bracelets)
3 4	*The Atheist's Tragedy*	1610-11	Cyril Tourneur; actors unkown	Tragedy	Miniature	Picture contained in a ring
3 5	*The White Devil*	1612	John Webster; Queen Anne's Men	Tragedy	Visible	Poisoned portrait of Duke Brachiano (see II.2)
3	*Scyros*	1613	An.; Trinity College,	Tragicom	Miniature	Pictures

6			Cambridge	edy		contained in necklaces
3 7	*The Two Noble Kinsmen*	1613-4	John Fletcher and William Shakespeare; King's Men	Tragicomedy	Undefinable	Probably miniatures (Jenkins 1982; Elam 2010)
3 8	*The Night Walkers*	1613-6	John Fletcher; Lady Elizabeth's Men	Comedy	Undefinable	Maria's picture, probably visible: "rude frame"
3 9	*Albumazar*	1615	Thomas Tomkis; Trinity College, Cambridge	Comedy	Visible	Probably not a portrait at all ("image / Fram'd on a Tuesday"), but an astrological card
4 0	*The Devil Is An Ass*	1616	Ben Jonson; King's Men	Comedy	Visible	Picture of the devil
4 1	*The Devil's Law Case*	c. 1617	John Webster; Queen Anne's Men	Tragicomedy	Visible	Crispiano's portrait; it "hangs in my inner closet"
4 2	*The Humorous Lieutenant*	1619	John Fletcher; King's Men	Comedy	Undefinable	Probably a miniature (worn by a girl)
4 3	*Stoicus Vapulans*	1619	An.; St. John's College, Cambridge	Comedy	Visible	Pictures of heroes, gods, and abstractions
4 4	*The Custom of The Country*	c. 1619	John Fletcher and Philip Massinger; King's Men	Tragicomedy	Undefinable	Probably miniatures: "my picture in her hand"
4 5	*Women Pleased*	c. 1620	John Fletcher; King's Men	Tragicomedy	Miniature	Contained in a jewel
4 6	*The Noble Spanish Soldier*	c. 1622	Thomas Dekker; actors unknown	Tragedy	Visible	The king's defaced portrait
4 7	*The Spanish Gypsy*	1623	Thomas Dekker, John Ford, Thomas Middleton and William Rowley; Lady Elizabeth's Men	Comedy	Visible	A girl's curtained portrait
4 8	*The Wise Woman of*	c. 1623	Thomas Heywood; actors unknown	Comedy	Visible	Pictures in a brothel

	Title	Year	Author; Company	Genre	Type	Description
	Hoxton					
49	*The Renegado*	1624	Philip Massinger; Lady Elizabeth's Men	Romance	Visible	Portraits of courtesans
50	*The Vow Breaker*	1628-36	William Sampson; actors unknown	Tragicomedy	Visible	Young Bateman's portrait (see II.4)
51	*Julia Agrippina*	1628	Thomas May; actors unknown	Tragedy	Visible	"lovely table" of Acte, Nero's concubine
52	*The Lover's Melancholy*	1628	John Ford; King's Men	Tragicomedy	Miniature	A "tablet"
53	*The Grateful Servant*	1629	James Shirley; Queen Henrietta's Men	Comedy	Miniature	Inferred: Leonora's picture seems to be pulled out of the Duke's clothes or something similar
54	*The Picture*	1629	Philip Massinger; King's Men	Tragicomedy	Miniature	The magic picture turns yellow (see II.3)
55	*The Twins*	1629-42	W. Rider; actors unknown	Tragicomedy	Visible	A woman's "wooden" picture
56	*The Emperor of the East*	1631	Philip Massinger; King's Men	Tragicomedy	Visible	Noblewomen's pictures (see II.5)
57	*The Traitor*	1631	James Shirley; Queen Henrietta's Men	Tragedy	Visible	The duke's stabbed portrait
58	*The Novella*	1632	Richard Brome; King's Men	Comedy	Miniature	Francisco's picture is taken out of a box
59	*The Shepherd's Paradise*	1633	Walter Montague; Queen Henrietta and her ladies	Pastoral tragicomedy	Miniature	Co-eval S.D.: "Hee pulls out her Picture"
60	*Love's Sacrifice*	1633	John Ford; Queen Henrietta's Men	Tragedy	Undefinable	Fiormonda's and Bianca's
61	*The Fatal Contract*	c. 1634	William Heminge; Queen Henrietta's Men?	Tragedy	Visible	Miniature and a defaced portrait "drawn by an Italian",

No.	Title	Date	Author; Company	Genre	Visibility	Notes
						depicting various episodes
62	*The Queen's Exchange*	c. 1634	Richard Brome; King's Men?	Comedy	Miniatures	Aristocratic miniatures, one is dropped on the ground
63	*Eumorphus*	1635	George Wilde; St. John's College, Oxford	Comedy	Undefinable	Probably a miniature, but possibly visible enough to show a man with a beard
64	*The Lady of Pleasure*	1635	James Shirley; Queen Henrietta's Men	Comedy	Miniature	Other pictures mentioned, by Dutch and Italian painters
65	*Arviragus and Philicia*, II	c. 1636	Lodowick Carlell; King's Men	Tragicomedy	Miniatures	Co-eval S.D.: "Takes a Picture out of her bosome"
66	*The Floating Island*	1636	William Strode; Christ Church, Oxford	Comedy	Undefinable	Probably visible: the queen's picture is "crowned"
67	*The City Match*	1636	Jasper Mayne; King's Men	Comedy	Visible	The frame of a big picture
68	*The Siege*	c. 1637	William Cartwright; actors unknown	Tragicomedy	Visible	Girls' pictures (see II.5)
69	*Aglaura*	1637	John Suckling; King's Men	Tragedy (plus an alternative happy ending)	Undefinable	A noblewoman's portrait; "Something made up for her in haste"
70	*The Strange Discovery*	c. 1638	John Gough; actors unknown (perhaps never performed)	Romance / Tragicomedy	Visible	Picture of Andromeda (Heliodorus' *Aethiopi*

No.	Title	Year	Author; Company	Genre	Category	Notes
71	*The Passionate Lovers*, I	1638	Lodowick Carlell; King's Men	Tragicomedy	Undefinable	*ca* plot) Agenor's picture. Probably visible ; co-eval S.D.: Enter "with a picture"; "Carry from me this Picture to my dearest Mistress."
72	*The Gentleman of Venice*	1639	James Shirley; Queen Henrietta's Men	Comedy	Visible	Gallery of women's pictures
73	*The Phaenix in Her Flames*	1639	William Lower; never performed	Tragedy	Miniature	Amandus seems to take Phaenicia's picture out of his bosom or something similar
74	*Thibaldus*	1640	Thomas Snelling; St. John's College, Oxford	Tragedy	Visible	Thibaldus' picture which can be stabbed
75	*The Walks of Islington and Hoxton*	1641	Thomas Jordan; actors unknown	Comedy	Undefinable	Probably a miniature: it comes with a letter

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I hereby declare that I completed the submitted doctoral thesis independently and with only the help referred to in the thesis. All texts that have been quoted verbatim or by analogy from published and non-published writings and all details based on verbal information have been identified as such.