

Learning How to Look:
Stylistic and Aesthetic Contexts of Elizabeth I's Portraiture

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Introduction

Frances Yates's *Astraea* and Roy Strong's numerous works remain the foundational studies of Elizabeth Tudor's visual representations. Yates traces the emergence of Elizabeth as "an imperial virgin," (33) Virgo-Astraea, and the poetic (and visual) uses of that allusion in Elizabethan statecraft. Strong, a student of Yates, catalogues the portraits of Elizabeth, grouping them by artist, decade, or theme. He points out the various allegorical components of particular portraits and delineates a shift from early, non-allegorical works to later, allegory-laden, productions. Strong's *Artists of the Tudor Court* and *The English Renaissance Miniature* both discuss the vogue of miniature portraits in Elizabethan England, examining their production and uses by the queen and her courtiers. He contrasts the roles of full-scale portraiture and miniature, placing each in the context of public spectacle or private court; these two realms are by no means mutually exclusive (there is public spectacle in the court and private symbolism in public progresses). Following Yates and Strong, interest in the political uses of portraiture, pageantry, miniatures, and costume gained momentum. Susan Frye takes issue with various biographers (Plowden, Jenkins, Erickson) on Elizabeth's appearance when she delivered her speech at Tilbury. From this, she proceeds to give attention to "what Queen Elizabeth I wrote and said about the difficulties of constructing her power" (Frye vii). Frye works predominantly with written texts, though her insistence on Elizabeth's active engagement with her own representation is crucial to any discussion of her visual representation, since it reminds the viewer that the queen is the subject (with its connotations of agency) of the portrait, rather than simply its object or subject to the

painter. While Frye integrates Elizabeth into the discourse of her representation, *Dissing Elizabeth*, edited by Julia Walker, illuminates negative representations of Elizabeth in both portrait and text. These essays analyze dissensions with official representations of Elizabeth. The forms of dissension range from sermons to poetry and the collection ends with “image[s] of the queen” (Walker “Contents”). Though predominantly concerned with such dissensions during Elizabeth’s lifetime and reign, the final essay does address posthumous images of the queen as they relate to Stuart politics. Walker’s *The Elizabeth Icon, 1603-2003* concentrates on the posthumous images of Elizabeth that become an idea “that is England” (4). Though the content of this book is beyond the scope of my present project, it does make it clear that studying Elizabeth’s portraits or rhetorical self-representation(s) is particularly complicated by 400 years of (at times a- or anti-historical) iconography of Elizabeth. *The Elizabeth Icon* appeared in 2004, only two years after Dobson and Watson’s *England’s Elizabeth*, which also focuses on Elizabeth’s “afterlife in fame and fantasy.” This book emphasizes the uses of Elizabeth’s image for the wish-fulfillment of subsequent eras; such an emphasis accepts that Elizabeth’s portraits and rhetoric have been viewed as ambiguous and flexible in meaning to non-Elizabethans.

Andrew and Catherine Belsey’s article “Icons of Divinity,” constitutes one of the most cited examinations of how particular portraits, specifically the Armada portrait, construct Elizabeth in terms of the Tudor dynasty. While the article does analyze the painting’s construction, it does not linger over stylistic details and their consequent aesthetic effects, except insofar as it draws parallels between portraits of Elizabeth and her father, Henry VIII. The authors assume that these parallels would have been

immediately apparent to an Elizabethan viewer. Louis Montrose's various articles on Elizabethan imaginary examine the cultural and political contexts of representing the Queen. (The transition between Belseys/Montrose could be smoother) His 2006 publication, *The Subject of Elizabeth*, incorporates his earlier articles' points, offering a sustained contextualization of political uses of representation, as well as the discursive nature of representing a public figure like Queen Elizabeth. His chapter "Instrumental Adoration" is the most resonate for this work. In it, Montrose examines Sir Walter Raleigh's construction of himself as an adoring subject. Montrose makes it clear that Raleigh's adoration was intended to have an instrumental effect; it was meant to impress on the Queen his ability to manipulate her image for their "mutual benefit" (Montrose 103). Montrose begins where this paper will leave off—he assumes a particular aesthetic at work in Elizabeth's self-image, but does not examine it in terms of style or aesthetics per se. While he does mention the effects of portraits, he does not offer a consistent frame of reference for either style or aesthetics. This paper will hopefully provide background to his study.

I will show that Elizabeth I and her government made choices in style when sanctioning portraits. These stylistic choices usually favored English traditions in representation. The underlying aesthetic intent of royal portraiture was therefore bolstered by a nationalistic preference for native visual styles. In addition, Elizabeth's speeches and public appearances were meant to reinforce her official image, whether it appeared on coins, seals, large portraits, or Court miniatures. These points may seem obvious, and are, in fact, often taken for granted by scholars. However, the political framework of Elizabeth scholars and the Italian bias of art historians do not always make

underlying assumptions of style and aesthetic intent clear. This paper will therefore first address the stylistic contexts of painting in the sixteenth century. I will attempt to expose the bias in favor of Italian art that denigrates English paintings. Next, I will analyze Sir Philip Sidney's *An Apologie for Poetrie* and Sir Thomas Hoby's translation of *The Courtier* in order to fully contextualize the sense of aesthetics manipulated by Elizabeth, her government, and her Court. Finally, I will analyze examples of Elizabeth's writings in which she engages this aesthetic. I believe that Elizabeth and her government made conscious decisions in favor of English painting styles in order to reinforce her written and performed rhetoric of herself as a thoroughly English monarch. These stylistic decisions were meant to combine in the person and portrayal of the Queen so that a subject viewing Elizabeth or her portrait would have a full, overwhelming aesthetic response created by the combination of speech, performance, and portraiture. The ends of such a response are excellently described by Montrose, Frye and others. This paper is meant to foreground their discussions by suggesting and emphasizing the Queen's direct engagement with the aesthetics invoked when a subject viewed her portraits, especially for the first time.

Aesthetic and Stylistic Contexts

Florence

The Florentine school of painting in the sixteenth century was already one hundred years beyond Leon Battista Alberti's (1402-1472) theories of perspective, proportion, and expression through gesture. This school symbolizes Renaissance art to most students and the general public. It is also the paradigm for many scholars, resulting in a bias in favor of Florentine styles when judging painting of any country's

Renaissance. It is important for the study of Elizabeth's portraits to understand the theory of aesthetics in Florence. Unfortunately, the Florentine style bias obscures the aesthetics of Italy which directly relate to Elizabethan portraiture. Style is not synonymous with aesthetic. When scholars discuss English style, they concentrate on comparing it to Italian, usually Florentine, models. This leads to the conclusion that England was out-of-date and forestalls any discussion of aesthetic intent. The purpose of this section is to point out the styles used by scholars as a model. Doing so will illuminate the fact that no one model can apply to every region's style. The multiplicity of styles accepted as Italian highlights the sense of choice available to artists and their patrons. Underlying most these styles, however, was a sense of aesthetics that did defy boundaries. It is also important to avoid conflating Florence with Italy. Rather than assume that "Italian" is synonymous with "Florentine," it is necessary to remember that Italy was not a unified state, nor did it have a uniform production of paintings. If we accept that different city-states had competing styles, it will follow that England may also have adopted its own style. If we can dismantle the Italian bias as it is presented to us by many scholars such as John Buxton and Lucy Gent, we can examine Elizabeth's style and underlying aesthetics with greater clarity. Removing the style bias will leave space for analyzing where style and aesthetics meet in Elizabeth's self-representations. This will lead to an analysis of why Elizabethans avoided Italian models in favor of a distinctive English style that was manipulated by Elizabeth and her government to reinforce her persona as a quasi-divine figure. Finally, the English will no longer have to play historic "catch-up" to a retrospectively applied Florentine model; instead, Elizabeth and her court

will receive the attention to their discursive aesthetics that the Florentines have had for so long.

To keep this summary of styles brief, I will only focus on particular aspects of painting. The most important differences between English and Florentine painting are uses of light and color, expression, and perspective. According to Anthony Blunt, the Renaissance in Florence was marked by

painting and sculpture [in which] naturalism flourished, but a naturalism based on the scientific study of the outside world by means...of perspective and anatomy. ...the revival of Roman forms was used to create a style which answered to the demands of human reason rather than to the more mystical needs of medieval Catholicism (1).

This “whole new view of the arts” (Blunt 2) was presented in Florence by Alberti. The basis of the new ideas was a concept of science, specifically mathematics, as a foundation for representing the world as it appears (Blunt 10-11). Alberti’s *Della Pittura* was written in 1436 but was not published in English until 1726. It was published in Italian in 1547. Most significant for this thesis is his understanding of light in painting. Alberti discusses light separately from color, which marks a departure from the medieval concept of light and color as a single property. According to Moshe Barasch, medieval art theory evinced a fascination with “luminescence”; Barasch states that theorists “did not refer to the lights and shadows of an object in nature, and to the creating of the illusion of such an object on a flat surface” (14). Alberti intended to create such illusions and “the question of how to apply lights and shades becomes a central theme in *Della pittura* [sic]” (Barasch 14). Barasch also points out that Alberti’s theories of light are not all technical.

Barasch finds Alberti's tone when explaining light "definitely detached" (15). Alberti's suggestions, such as condemning the use of gold in painting and using white sparingly, indicate "almost a fear of too much light" (Barasch 15) because of its powerful "fascination" (15) for medieval culture. Light is thus a means to an end; it no longer has a purpose in itself. Because Alberti accepts that paintings and especially light can have an emotional effect on the viewer, he attempts to remove light from its mystical uses. His theory of painting makes light a means toward perspective, rather than a stylistic quality with a related aesthetic effect. Finally, Alberti views light "as...the revealer of form, of the structure and volume of material bodies" (Barasch 16).

Alberti applied his theory of light to all genres of painting. Blunt's analysis of the *Della pittura* finds that Alberti believed "subject painting of any kind, as opposed to that of single figures, is the noblest kind of painting" (11) because it is the most difficult and most likely to capture the "activities of man, like a written history" (12). The theory of affecting painting is again operative, which leads Alberti to emphasize gesture and facial expression as the conveyors of emotion. This dovetails his concept of light, which should be useful and restrained. Light should be less affecting than the implied movements of painted bodies. Light and gesture must display naturalistic yet emotionally charged scenes that do not depend on bright color for appeal. A painting must stimulate the reason for its effect, rather than the splendor associated with medieval art.

As with light, Alberti's gestures are most concerned with verisimilitude: "The function of the painter is to render with lines and colours, on a given panel or wall, the visible surface of any body, so that at a certain distance and from a certain position it appears in relief and just like the body itself" (quoted in Blunt 14). Alberti thus explains

a system for representing accurately, describing a device that allowed the painter to use linear perspective. Alberti also stipulated that “we must always take what we paint from nature and always choose from it the most beautiful things” (quoted in Blunt 15). The scientific imperative that governs his use of light, gesture, and perspective does not, therefore, merely produce rote imitation. It does, however, negate the employment of the imagination in creating a painting. Alberti is the first theorist of Florentine art to abandon the medieval models. His theories are considered the first articulations of what we now call Renaissance art.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) studied painting in Florence and follows Alberti’s scientific bases for painting and adds a new dimension of his own. While he accepted that “painting is a science because of its foundation on mathematical perspective and on the study of nature,” (Blunt 26) he placed strong emphasis on observation and empirical knowledge of the natural world. Leonardo’s elevation of painting as a fine art is based on its ability to present images of nature “with more truth than the poet” (quoted in Blunt 27). Thus the capacity of painting to imitate nature completely is a main component of judging art. Leonardo also follows Alberti’s new conception of light as a means to produce the appearance of solidity on a plane. Leonardo asserts that

the first business of the painter is to make a plane surface appear to be a body raised and standing out from this surface, and whoever excels the others in this matter deserves the highest praise. And this study, or rather this summit of our learning, depends on lights and shades” (quoted in Blunt 33).

He likewise continues to emphasize the imitative, not improving, function of painting in relation to nature. According to Blunt, Leonardo is more stringent on this point than Alberti before him. Leonardo was “primarily interested not in the beautiful but in the individual and the characteristic” (Blunt 31). Blunt goes on to suggest that Leonardo’s distaste for the improved figure of nature was grounded in an adherence to scientifically based verisimilitude. Leonardo’s intention was to imitate, as with a mirror, the world and the figures in it, and to avoid the “stylization and monotony into which Florentine artists were threatening to slip” (Blunt 33). Alberti emphasized proportion from nature in order to counter the medieval lack of imitation; by Leonardo’s time, art as imitation of nature was a given in Florence, and so an individual body’s proportions were desirable to Leonardo. He also favored painting from nature, not another painter, so as to maintain a naturalistic style. However, he does grant that the artist can invent creatures and landscapes that do not exist in nature, but the artist must not give free reign to his imagination. According to Blunt, Leonardo’s guidelines for invention still follow scientific foundations of plausibility: inventing something not in nature must still appear as if it could exist because “the imagination does not see such splendour as the eye sees” (quoted in Blunt 37). Compared to Alberti, Leonardo is more explicit about the uses of gestures. While Alberti uses gesture to convey emotional content, Leonardo writes that “the good painter must paint principally two things, which are man and the ideas in man’s mind. The first is easy, the second difficult, because they can only be expressed by means of gestures and the movements of the limbs” (quoted in Blunt 34). Following da Vinci, Florentine art became strongly naturalistic and scientific. It avoided

“improving” Nature and instead sought perfect verisimilitude. This style was lauded by admirers of da Vinci such as Vasari, but it was by no means universally adopted.

Venice

Venetian painting followed a different trajectory than that of Florence. Barasch points out that “by the late fifteenth century, Florentine theory of art was fairly complete...whereas at this stage Venice had practically no theory of art” (90). By the middle of the sixteenth century, “the great Florentine theoretical works enjoyed a position of authority, already supported by tradition...[while] at the same time, Venice experienced a sudden flowering of art theory” (Barasch 90). While the Venetian theories of art were based on an exchange of ideas with Florence, the Venetians maintained a “critical attitude toward Florentine concepts” (Barasch 93). Barasch describes Venetian art theory as “an eclectic amalgam” (93) of Florentine, northern European, native, and medieval influences; there is no systematized theory of art in Venice as compared to Florence. The scientific basis of Florentine art theory was less favored by the Venetians writers, who focused on the practice of workshops, expressiveness in painting and sensuality in color and brushwork. The theories of art are therefore freer than the Florentine, though not without a resulting ambivalence. The theories in Venice often assume a “nonprofessional beholder” (Barasch 93) and use the dialogue form, rather than the systematic Florentine organization. In addition the Venetians evinced a relative lack of interest in “anatomy [or]...the optical and geometrical foundations of perspective” (Barasch 93).

Contact with Florence and its artists influenced Venetians, but it did not lead them to necessarily accept all of Alberti or da Vinci’s theories. The Venetians adapted

Florentine models for their own stylistic expression. The two city-states cannot be unproblematically subsumed under a common ‘Italian’ tradition. The ‘Italian’ model of contemporary scholars often fails to recognize that Venice and other cities such as Milan did not conform to Florentine modes. Italy was home to a number of styles, many of which had little success in England. Comparing England to these schools stalls analysis of why the above aspects of art were not used extensively in sixteenth-century England. In the same way that various Italian courts accepted, rejected, or (most often) adapted Florentine theories and styles of painting, the English engaged various examples of Italian art with varying degrees of acceptance.

Portraits of Women—Florence and Venice

A specific difference between Venice and Florence is the treatment of women in portraiture. At the end of the fifteenth century in Florence, the portrayal of women shifted from profile portraits that were meant to “convey the *mores*, the constructed behaviour, the virtuous conduct of these idealised [sic] women, together with the physical characteristics of a type of beauty, rather than the *animus*, the existence of a mind” (Tinagli 79) to three-quarter portraits. This shift allowed followers of Alberti and Leonardo to experiment with expressiveness and personality in their portraits of women. This style of portraiture followed the poetic style of Petrarch and his idealization of Laura. In addition to the idealization of physical beauty, there is a sense of the portrait as person, a figure with whom the viewer can “establish... an imagined relationship, based on the reaction between the sitter and viewer” (Tinagli 91). Paola Tinagli discusses the techniques used by Leonardo to effect this feeling in the viewer; Leonardo believed that

if the poet claims that he can inflame men to love...the painter has the power to do the same, and indeed more so, for *he places before the lover's eyes the very image of the beloved object, [and the lover] often engages with it, embracing it, and talking with it*” (quoted in Tinagli 91, emphasis added).

Part of establishing such a connection was a direct gaze allowed by the new three-quarter position of the sitter. A direct gaze becomes important in English portraiture which also attempts to engage the viewer. As with Leonardo's other genres of painting, his interest in portraiture was the reflection of nature. As such, he eschewed the established tradition of recording the details of dress and ornament in portraits. Within the Florentine tradition, Raphael combined the two modes by melding the new naturalistic representation with the familiar depiction of dress and jewels. In contrast to the new individuality for women in paintings from Florence, the Venetians never embraced this new type of portrait. Instead, they focused on idealizations of women that have no identifiable sitter. Restrictions on women's self-promotion may partially explain this difference. Tinagli states that it is difficult to know the artists' intentions in painting these idealizations; it is even more difficult to assess the reaction of viewers. This Venetian reluctance to paint women with individual attributes seems to resonate in England with portraits of Elizabeth described by scholars as “fantastic” and “maddening” (Strong, “Cult” 16). However, these same pictures frequently include a direct gaze and intimate symbols of personal relationships. At some level, then, they do utilize an Italian innovation, but it is a mistake to view Elizabeth's portraits from an imagined “Italian”

paradigm of even a single city's style. English style during Elizabeth's reign was an eclectic blend of various Italian, native, and northern styles.

State Portraits in Italy

An interesting aspect of Italian ideas of portraiture is Tinagli's brief discussion of the rise of "state portraits" (104) in Italy. She details the subtle shift from three-quarter portraits with "tantalising [sic]" and "elusive" (Tinagli 93) attributes to portraits "where the sense of an individual presence is subsided in favour of a representation of authority and power" (107). Tinagli writes, "these are not personal portraits; intimacy is absent, personality does not matter, the sitter appears remote from the viewer, and in size, format and style these paintings are constructed around the needs of public display" (107). This characterization will provide a point of comparison between Elizabeth's images as potentially both state portrait and personal image, depending on the viewer.

Against the backdrop of Italian styles, the English styles can seem, as many scholars assume them to be, unsophisticated, impersonal, and cold. Though the Italian models are necessary for understanding the extant analyses of Elizabeth I's portraiture, they should not be automatically privileged. Instead, it is desirable that they be understood as the English understood them in the sixteenth century, rather than a twentieth/twenty-first-century understanding of art history as a single tradition into which various regions were incorporated, albeit at different times. It is also important to recognize the difference between theories of art and works of art. Scholars generally seem to accept the underlying assumption that understanding of a concept leads to emulation through practice. This assumption has led to nuanced examinations of Alberti, Leonardo, and Lomazzo and how well their theories relate to artistic practice, usually

their own. In contrast, analyses of English painters have generally compared native artists to Italian theories and practice. The lack of examples in an Italian style in England leads scholars such as Lucy Gent to assume that English artists were unaware or uncomprehending of Italian treatises and paintings. She makes no allowance for a theory's acceptance being applied with a different style. Part of the problem is the lack of treatises on art in England in the sixteenth century. Nicholas Hilliard's *Art of Limning* (c.1598) is considered the first native art treatise. It is more concerned with practice than with theory, which leads to comparisons of Hilliard with Italian writers. Whether comparing paintings or theories to Italian models, scholars privilege Italian practice so that sixteenth-century English style becomes stymied by its medieval antecedents. Theories of art in England can be found in more general treatments of the arts, and poetry in general. The most famous example of such a work is Philip Sidney's *An Apologie for Poetrie*. Reading Hilliard in light of Sidney and other proponents of his aesthetic ideals will begin to shift the paradigm for judging English art from an Italian to a native point of view. After analyzing Sidney, and especially Hilliard, it will become clear that the English were piecemeal in their acceptance of Italian styles and aesthetics. This is most obvious in Hilliard's own treatise, where he both praises Italian artists, and defends his disinclination to follow their styles.

England

English style in the sixteenth century is generally considered to be "medieval" at best; at worst, it is dubbed "old-fashioned" (Gent 17) and overshadowed by "anachronism" (20). Unlike the scientifically-driven Florentine and Venetian models, the English tradition of painting is more accurately a series of *adaptations* of existing native

medieval styles and aspects of Continental styles. Unlike the Italian models, English painters favored a continued emphasis on patterns, bright colors (often closely tied to heraldry), line over shadow, and portraiture as the predominant type of painting. However, while these characteristics may be considered particularly English, not all painters in England were native, nor did they all follow English, or even Italian, styles of painting. Certain intervals, particularly the reign of Mary I, are marked by a different style, and perhaps a different aesthetic intent, than the Elizabethan epoch of portraiture.

Pattern

The first aspect of English painting of importance for this paper is the emphasis on pattern. Janet Arnold has made it clear that many of the elaborate patterns in Elizabeth's portraits were not artistic inventions, but actual fabrics in the Queen's possession. The interest in representing patterns remained strong in England but began to fall away in Florence, and to a less extent, in Venice. It persisted in England, continuing to represent status, the exchange of gifts, and the intricacies of court allegories. Strong views Hilliard's early large paintings of Elizabeth as "reassertion[s] of the *native preference* for line and colour, the flat and two-dimensional" (Strong, *Gloriana* 80, emphasis added). The emphasis on pattern results in "a wooden stylized icon of clothes and jewellery...[with a] lack of regard for the rationality of pictorial space" (80). Though Strong goes on to explain many of those clothing pieces and jewelry, his characterization of style leaves consideration of aesthetic manipulation of style impossible. If the English had "no regard" for their style, they could not have made choices about it. Strong makes a necessary contribution to Elizabeth's iconography, but his bias silences questions of stylistic intent on an aesthetic level. Arnold has examined such portraits for their

accuracy in depicting pieces of clothing, and has connected many painted images with surviving fabric scraps. Rather than investigate the portraiture as catalogue, however, many scholars simply dismiss pattern as an indication of (an often decried) medievalism of the unsophisticated English artist or patron. Rica Jones connects the “flat patterning” of Elizabethan portraiture with “stiff poses,” and says that the two characteristics “may hearken back deliberately to medieval times” (237), though she does not theorize about *why* a medieval style would have been advantageous to Elizabeth and her government. Indeed, her tone suggests that such a “hearken[ing] back” is a less-than-desirable choice.

Gent and Karen Hearn both betray dissatisfaction with pattern as an emphasis in English painting. Gent suggests that “depend[ing] on outline, pattern and colour for...effect, not on perspective and modelling [sic]” (21) is outdated and exposes a lack of understanding of Italian models on the part of the English. She tangentially accepts effect as part of portraiture but only to point out the ineptitude of English translators and artists. Hearn states that Hans Eworth’s style eventually evolved such that “the rich costumes of the 1560s take centre stage, in portraits preoccupied with pattern and with the attire, jewellery and heraldry that indicate wealth and high status” (63). Preoccupation is coded negatively in her description, though she does not imply that Eworth was failing to grasp Italian models in the way Gent’s analysis would suggest. Arnold’s work on Elizabeth’s wardrobe suggests that patterns played a variety of roles in Elizabeth’s court. Certainly the commonplace knowledge that rich fabrics with intricate embroidery signaled wealth and status is true. In addition, fabrics were unique gifts given to the monarch and then, in many instances, awarded to courtiers by the monarch. The circulation of clothing is demonstrated by Arnold’s work and contextualized by

Jones and Stallybrass. The latter point out that clothing was, in many respects, valued more highly than painting, and was therefore both wealth and a signifier of wealth. It thus makes sense that a monarch like Elizabeth who was, contrary to popular opinion, generous with her textiles, would choose to have those patterns minutely represented in her portraiture. Salamon suggests that the sometimes misaligned torsos of miniatures by Hilliard were “a price that sitters willingly paid for the rich, decorative effects that Hilliard gave their finery” (78); if this is true at all, it may be justly applied to Elizabeth as well as her court. The effects of pattern resonated with English patrons who were engaged in a Court culture headed by a single woman who frequently used patterned clothes as a medium for buttressing an opulent image of her reign.

Color and Heraldry

The English preference for color over functional light is related to heraldry, which is also related to the patterning found in many English portraits. Hilliard also links colors with precious gemstones, enhancing the sense of color as rare, valuable, and pleasing. Limning provides the most abundant examples of color and pattern in sixteenth-century English visual art. Its connection to manuscript illumination strengthens the sense of the medieval operating in the portraits’ aesthetics. Illuminating manuscripts, especially capital letters, is tied to heraldry and the use of emblems. Roy Strong writes that

beyond a shadow of doubt...the Elizabethan art of limning is lineally descended from the manuscript workshops of Ghent and Bruges during the golden age of the Dukes of Burgundy” (Strong, *Monarchy* 201).

Lucy Gent writes that “the ubiquitous popularity of heraldry, which Elizabethans casually thought of as a species of ‘painting’...confirmed painting as an art of colour” (17). Her

tone is, again, dismissive, but the point valid. However, Hilliard makes the distinction that miniature painting is a noble art because

it is a thing apart from all other *Painting* or *drawing* and tendeth not to comon mens usse, either for furnishing of Howsses, or any patternes for tapistries, or *Building*, or any other worke what soever, and yet it excelleth all other *Painting*” (16).

Hilliard thus relates heraldry to miniatures, but firmly asserts that limning portraits is a nobler use of color and the artist’s skills. Hilliard makes it clear in his unfinished tract, of which half is devoted to colors, that colors are valuable for both their effects and their purity; they are not simply decorative, but affective. Rather than Gent’s assumption of “casual” Elizabethan thought, this paper follows Hilliard and posits conscious decisions about how painting should function, and how it should incorporate color in sixteenth-century England. Heraldry and manuscript illumination are incorporated into Hilliard’s work—he is primarily a limner, though he also produced large paintings. Hilliard repeats throughout his *Art of Limning* that “the eye is the life of the picture” (24); as such, he attempted to present character in the sitter’s eyes, but also to “delight the eye” (Salamon 85) of the beholder with “reflection, radiance, [and] appropriate glow” (85) through the application of bright colors. It is important to understand his art’s roots in medieval illumination (often associated with religious texts) and heraldry, which emphasizes status and lines of descent. These roots are not left uncultivated, however; the religiosity of illumination is re-imagined during Elizabeth’s reign to encompass Elizabeth’s role as Supreme Governor of the Church of England and her insistence on her divine election as

sovereign. The mediievally-derived aesthetic remained, but the focus shifted. This new aesthetic intent will be part of the focus of the second half of this paper.

Color in painting is intimately linked to conceptions of light. As Barasch makes clear, the use of shadows in Italian, especially Florentine, painting was accompanied by a new understanding of the function of light. In England, the new way was not viable until the end of Elizabeth's reign and it was not popular until James I's reign. The question of shadows and light in English painting is, however, a matter of emphasis, not lack. English paintings by both native and foreign artists use shadowing in various degrees. Overall, however, sixteenth-century England, particularly Elizabeth's reign, is considered peculiar in its use of line to suggest facial features, rather than the Continental schools' use of shadows. The early sixteenth-century artist Hans Holbein was certainly not adverse to techniques that create deep shadows and three-dimensionality. While considered more linear than French court painters of the same period, Holbein was less hostile to shadows than Hilliard later in the century. Susan Foister summarizes Holbein's lasting influence as minimal, however: "it is usually argued that Holbein's style of portraiture had little following in sixteenth-century England, being succeeded by a taste for the work of Netherlandish-trained artists and then the more stylized productions of English-born painters" (21). The role of light in English portraits is often dependent on the monarch and his or her political, aesthetic, and personal aims. According to Neil Cuddy, Henry VIII's impetus for patronizing Holbein was a political and cultural 'keeping up with the Joneses,' Charles V and Francois I. In the desire to "attract a first-rate exponent of the new art" (Cuddy 14) of painting, Henry VIII's court favored Holbein, whose portraits are the closest to the three-dimensionality familiar in Italian

painting of the same time. It is interesting to note that Henry's "royal 'painters'...were still mainly occupied in painting heraldic devices, for palaces and court pageants" (Cuddy 14).

The uses of light, color, and pattern are closely linked and important in England, even when English monarchs were more open to Continental modes of representation. Edward VI, as many scholars, most recently Montrose, have pointed out, attempted to emulate his father's portraiture, and they therefore contain more shadow than Elizabeth's portraits; they generally follow Holbein or Scrots. Mary I's iconic portrayals are a mix of English and Habsburg styles. The mix of styles did not seem to work in her favor, though there were many contributing factors to her lack of popularity. For the purposes of this paper, it is sufficient to state that styles adopted by Mary I would be undesirable to her successor. The Tudor need for legitimacy began with Henry VII and continued to concern the entire Tudor line. Establishing legitimacy through images began with Henry VIII. All Tudor portraiture following Henry VIII incorporates some aspect of his style and iconography. Light seems to be one of the most mutable of these aspects. Henry VIII is considered a great patron of artists by scholars, while Walpole's assertion that "'there is no evidence that Elizabeth had much taste for painting'" (quoted in Strong, *Gloriana* 10) remains a truism. However, lacking a documented taste for painting does not, as seems to be the assumption, also mean that Elizabeth was uninterested in the style of paintings and those styles' aesthetic possibilities. It is perhaps this realization that clarifies the vicissitudes of light throughout the Tudor dynasty.

Genres of Painting

The final distinguishing feature of painting in England during the sixteenth century is the type of paintings commissioned. Most surviving paintings are portraits, though we also know, through inventories, that “people also displayed maps, painted genealogies and coats of arms” (Hearn 10). Hearn points out that “narrative—including religious—images continued to be owned and...displayed, well after the full impact of the Reformation had been felt” (10). It is therefore impossible to say that the English were only interested in portraiture, though their interest was certainly more than that associated with Italian or northern European schools of art. John Buxton points out that Phillip Sidney “is exceptional among Englishmen of his time in preferring mythological or historical paintings to portraits” (108). He goes on to say that “there can be no doubt that for the great majority [of Englishmen] painting meant, first and last, portraiture” (Buxton 110). Buxton, and most scholars after him, accept that

portraits therefore become ceremonious, to suit this purpose [reminders to posterity], as if, like the sepulchral effigies, they were intended to show to the sitter’s descendents not what kind of man he had been, but what office he had held, what dignity he had achieved. The resulting full-length portraits of great personages in superb costume are uniquely English, remote from the more naturalistic portraits that were in fashion on the Continent. (Buxton 111).

The preference for the individual was particularly favored by the English for a number of reasons. Humanism’s emphasis on the viability of mankind as worthy of inquiry is the general impetus in all of Europe for the emergence of individual portraiture. In England

particularly, religion, nationalism, and tradition seem to exert strong pressure on painting, keeping it focused on “stylized” (Foister 21) portraiture.

Records such as the Lumley Inventory make it clear that while portraiture dominated art collections, it was not the sole art of England. Lumley’s collection, for example, had “portraiture as the predominant subject matter,” but he also had a “great range of subject matter mentioned in [his] Inventory” (Hearn 158). The many uses of portraits most likely contribute to their survival, as do political and religious changes. Strong notes that “vast numbers of portraits” (Strong, *Portraits* 91) of Edward VI survive, whereas Mary I’s do not, though Edward’s reign was only a year longer. He attributes this to the “religious revolution of 1559, which produced a consequent demand for most of the standard types of portrait” (Strong, *Portraits* 91) in which Edward was portrayed. Edward’s portraits, not only reflecting the preferred Protestant connotations of those in power in 1559, were also “standard types” which could be recycled for various uses. Styles and iconographies of the late, Catholic Mary I were less desirable and therefore more likely to be destroyed, ignored, or left un-reproduced by Elizabeth and her government.

Italian styles in England

As the preceding sections show, there was consistent cross-pollination between England and Italy. Why is sixteenth-century English art backward and lacking a proper appreciation of Italian advancements in style? Scholars steeped in an Italian paradigm ask this question, however subtly, when discussing English painting. A more fruitful question is why Italian styles were not adopted in their entirety by English patrons and artists. My specific suppositions about Elizabeth’s stylistics and aesthetics will follow a

general sense of the reception of Italian ideas in England. I will eventually show that while Italian *ideas* were often acceptable to English travelers, artists, and patrons, the *styles* of Italy were not adopted. This section will follow the transmission of ideas while simultaneously citing reasons for a cautious approach to Italy in England.

A major deterrent to the adoption of Italian styles was the Reformation and its particular trajectory in England. The styles of Italy, which were heavily influenced by humanism, were assumed to be particularly Catholic. Italian patrons, artists, and recipients of artworks were usually wealthy and influential Catholics. The political uses of portraiture, including marriage negotiations, dictated that sympathetic governments would exchange paintings and artists. During strong reforming periods England was less likely to entertain foreign artists working in Italian styles because of their ties to Catholic, and therefore politically hostile, governments. English xenophobia is an accepted commonplace, but it did not preclude English travelers in Italy or Italian artists in England. Early in Henry VIII's reign Italian enjoyed a great vogue within the Court. According to Lewis Einstein, Henry VIII "was fond of foreigners, and especially of Italians" (97) and therefore studied their language. Italian ideas were likewise greatly popular, being exchanged amongst humanist scholars such as Thomas More and his Continental contemporaries. Einstein points out that More was "the great connecting link...between court and university" (42) and did much to spread Italian ideas beyond the small university circle. Through such exchange, encouraged by Henry VII and Henry VIII, humanist ideas found their way to England. Amongst travelers, "Venice in particular aroused the admiration of all," (Einstein 143) while Florentines were considered by Dallington to be showy without substance (145). These early waves of

travel and exchange eventually began to give way to a fear of Italian cultures' "pitfalls and perils" (Einstein 156). Einstein views the growth of Puritanism as responsible for a reaction to otherwise popular imports from Italy, including manners and fashions. Eventually, however, the "'Italianate Englishman'" (Einstein 156) became the focus for an English sense of the "evil practices" (157) of the Italians. Roger Ascham describes the "Englishman Italianated" (568) as "he that by living and traveling in Italy bringeth home into England out of Italy the religion, learning, the policy, the experience, [and] the manners of Italy" (568). Ascham's objection to this figure is the dependence on and preference for Italian modes while in England. His implication is that Italian ways have no place in England because they were "enchantments of Circe" that would "corrupt" "honest living" (568). The sense of threat from these practices was only intensified by a sense of papacy as a license to dissolute living. This feeling is fully articulated in a 1576 petition of the Lords and Commons to Queen Elizabeth. It lists Catholicism's threats as

common blaspheming of the Lord's name, the most licentiousness of life, the abuse of excommunication, the great number of schismatics and heretics daily springing up, and...hindrance and increase of obstinate papists, which ever since your majesty's sworn enemy the Pope [published] his bull...have given evident testimony of their correct affection to him and of their will disobedience to your majesty. (Marcus 172)

Einstein sums up the religious perspective of Italy by stating that "Puritanism, which looked with suspicion on anything hailing from a Catholic nation" encouraged the view of Italy as "the enemies' country, [which] was to be rigidly avoided in spite of its

attractions” (159). The petition to Elizabeth certainly incorporates these themes. The threat of the Inquisition and of Jesuits was particularly inflammatory. The height of this fervor came during Elizabeth’s reign, especially after the Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth in 1570. It was the aftermath of this event that led to the above-quoted petition. Humanist ideas that originated in Italy were welcome in England but Italian styles of dress and conduct were cause for suspicion, alarm, and calls for repressive legislation.

Other than religion, it is difficult to track the various events or conditions that directly opposed the adoption of Italian styles in England. Class was a motivating factor, as only the wealthiest in England could afford to travel for leisure. Using Italian dress was considered enough proof of a preference for Italy, so that prominent opponents of Italian culture, such as Elizabeth’s own tutor Roger Ascham, could observe Italian manners and assume that an individual had also accepted the Italian aspects quoted above. According to Einstein, Ascham also viewed the Englishman infatuated with Italy as “ill taught to be either an honest man or a good subject of his prince or his God” (162). The shifting allegiances of religion could thus become a political liability. Ascham’s *Schoolmaster* appeared in the same year that Elizabeth was excommunicated; it is obvious that his objections to Italian modes were not a reaction to the papal bull—he died in 1568, two years before the bull.

The sense of an Italian model creating poor subjects would certainly heighten fears about promoting an Italian visual style, especially at court. Elizabeth’s image after an Italian mold would certainly have been upsetting to her councilors, many of whom were staunch Protestants. A desire for good subjects is a desire central to the argument of this paper. In Elizabeth’s reign, the two are not synonymous, as they appear to be in

much recent scholarship, which overlooks the manipulations of style meant to elicit strong aesthetic responses from the viewer. However, choices in aesthetics are intimately linked to choices in politics.

At the highest levels of society in Elizabethan England, there was debate about the value of actually traveling to Italy or appearing to adopt Italian styles. While the language was favored by the Queen and her court, the religion was condemned and the way of life avoided. What emerges is a sense of careful boundaries in regard to Italian, and other Catholic, styles from the Continent. The language was a necessary and useful tool for diplomacy, literature, and as a connection to the classical world. Humanist philosophical ideas were central to all arts in Europe of the sixteenth century. Humanists in England did not necessarily misunderstand Italian styles (certainly not to the extent assumed by Gent); English patrons, councilors, and scholars (including the Queen) chose other visual ways to accomplish an ideal of instrumental aesthetics. Their choices were specific to the religious and political contexts of Elizabethan England.

Instrumental Aesthetics

Sixteenth-century England, following arguments already set out earlier in Italy, understood aesthetics to be functional. That is, experiencing aesthetic pleasure was not an end in itself. Pleasure from music, poetry, or visual art created desire in the individual; this desire might lead to emulation, adoration, or improvement on the art. This sense of aesthetics is radically different than the indifferent judgments advocated by Kantian models of understanding. Elizabethan England was concerned with art on a physical, eroticized level that post-Kantian formulations do not have. It is therefore necessary to summarize the accepted idea of aesthetics' role in culture before using an

instrumental aesthetic paradigm to reexamine Elizabethan state choices about visual styles.

An Apologie for Poetrie

The most important articulation of instrumental aesthetics in England was Philip Sidney's *An Apologie for Poetrie*. Sidney was celebrated in England as one of its brightest sons; he was a scholar, artist, and commemorated after his death as a martyred soldier of the true faith. In the *Apologie*, Sidney attempts to persuade his readers of the efficacy of poetry in creating and improving courtiers and subjects. While his stated goal is to support poetry as a noble art, he makes many references to visual art and its effects. Such passages are the most illuminating for this discussion. Examining the underlying assumptions about visual art (and other visual stimuli) will foreground my central point about Elizabeth's choices for an instrumental aesthetic that was based on particularly English visual styles. Elizabeth and her court were certainly familiar with his views, though the *Apologie* was not printed until 1595.

In his *Apologie*, Sidney concentrates primarily on the ability of poetry to have "hard dull wits softened and sharpened with the sweet delights of Poetry; for until they find a pleasure in the exercises of the mind," (98) the ignorant will not seek knowledge. Sidney's interest is, of course, poetry, but his frequent use of visual metaphors and the power of the eyes makes his claims about poetry applicable to many arts, especially painting, poetry's sister art. Sidney speaks of desire leading to knowledge and the "eyes of the mind" (99), often conflating seeing with hearing or reading poetry, as when he calls poetic images "speaking picture[s]" (101). In addition to literary and philosophical sources, Sidney also draws on anatomical beliefs about the senses and their effect on the

mind and reason. Though the *Apologie* is a defense of poetry, Sidney frequently invokes the power of vision to make his analogies. He makes frequent mention of the eyes and the act of seeing through poetry. When he cites archetype examples, he writes “that we seem not to hear of them, but clearly to see through them” (Sidney 108). In the same way, the parables of Christ are so evocative that Sidney declares “truly...me seems I see before my eyes the lost child’s disdainful prodigality” (109). Reading “instructing parables” (Sidney 109) is akin to conjuring images in the mind of the reader or listener. Poetry’s appeal is not wholly a process of understanding. The poet stimulates the imagination, or the recipient’s capacity to “see” the poet’s inventions as though they were real. This image then has the power to “move” and “that moving is of a higher degree than teaching...for who will be taught, if he be not moved with desire to be taught” (Sidney 112). The two ideas, that of sight and that of ravishment, are joined explicitly when Sidney writes “we are ravished with delight to see a fair woman” (136). When he writes that “the more excellent [painters] bestow...[that] which is fittest for the eye to see,” (102) Sidney credits painting with creating the effects he would claim for poetry. The painter, like the poet, has the ability to aid his prince by bringing “heart ravishing knowledge” (Sidney 98) to the prince’s subjects.

In addition to the charming appeal of poetry, Sidney outlines the role of the poet who controls this power. The poet’s ability to teach well is his or her predominating civic benefit. The poet produces works that “move men to take that goodness in hand, which without delight they would fly as from a stranger, and teach, to make them know that goodness whereunto they are moved” (Sidney 103). The end result is a good, knowledgeable subject. The poet’s work is most appealing to those not “already taught,”

and the poet is “the right popular philosopher” (Sidney 109). Charming elaborations on philosophical ideas or historical facts are more likely to instruct a large audience, even those “more beastly than beasts” (Sidney 109). Sidney specifically links this kind of teaching to “serv[ing] your prince,” (111) and suggests that “our poet the monarch...not only show[s] the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it” (113). Thus, both the monarch and the subject-poet teach by creating desire.

For Sidney, this desire is most properly found in poetry, though his own language suggests that he already attributes the instrumental power to images. This draws on the anatomical commonplace that the eyes were the most trustworthy sense organ, but also the one most likely to lead an individual into sin. The pleasure of the gaze must be harnessed in particular ways in order to avoid sinfulness. Sidney’s explication of poetry again offers an appropriate paradigm. The poet, unlike the historian or philosopher, is able to “mak[e] things either better than Nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in Nature” (Sidney 100). The ability to figure forth “what may be and should be,” (Sidney 102) rather than plain fact means that the poet can portray only the best things for men and women to emulate. Sidney promises that Nature’s world is “brazen, [but] the poets only deliver a golden” (100) world. It follows that visual art can also present a “golden” world that will be more efficacious a teacher than even a real example, since “the feigned [example] may be tuned to the highest key of passion” (Sidney 110). By only displaying the best aspects of an individual, the painter can best induce the desire to respect and emulate that individual. In the case of Elizabeth and

other monarchs, the aesthetic end was translated from respect and emulation to admiration and obedience.

The sense of aesthetics laid out by Sidney is interspersed with examples and rhetorical questions that indicate Sidney's desire to situate himself and his poetry within an English tradition. While he references Plato, Virgil, Plato, Dante, and Boccaccio, he also praises Gower and Chaucer as worthy examples of the use of poetry. Chaucer's Pandar is mentioned alongside Agamemnon and Medea; Chaucer and Gower "encouraged and delighted with their excellent fore-going" (Sidney 96) such that their readers followed "to beautify" (96) English. Sidney's sense of England's potential is reinforced when he laments the "hard...stepmother" "England (the mother of excellent minds)" (131) had become by the sixteenth century. The flaw in native poetry is not a flaw in poetry itself, but a lack of encouragement amongst the proper practitioners; "base men with servile wits" (Sidney 132) "walk...stumblingly" (133) after Chaucer. Sidney insists that poetry created by the correct poets will only have good effects. Poetry's ability to enflame the hearts and minds of readers and listeners makes it efficacious. That efficacy must be directed in order to counteract the "abuse" (Sidney 125) done to poetry by poor wits. It is a short step to a similar argument for painting in England. Paintings that draw the viewer into them have an increased chance of imparting a particular version of the person depicted. To direct the aesthetic response to a portrait, the Elizabethan government made use of an English style, itself bolstered by the Queen's speeches and public appearances.

Sidney's English tradition is one of mixtures. He acknowledges that "some will say it [English] is a mingled language" (Sidney 140) but the disparagement does not

trouble Sidney, who views mixing as strengthening, writing “and why not so much the better [when mixed], taking the best of both the other” (140). Earlier, when discussing the genres of poetry, Sidney seems equally at ease with stylistic mingling. To him, “if severed they [the styles] be good, the conjunction cannot be hurtful” (Sidney 116). Painting, then, might also be thought of in at least two ways under Elizabeth. Contemporary scholars argue that painting was in the hands of the unskilled. This is possible, if Sidney’s dire assessment of English poetry was felt to apply equally to its sister art. However, it is my supposition that English painting was accepted as a blending of various styles; Sidney’s ideas on aesthetics would have assured the native style its own place in the aesthetic scheme of things. Rather than a deficient copy of an Italian style, English portraiture would have been seen as a native form of expression. This would make it more palatable to a wide range of viewers and therefore be the most reasonable choice for an affecting programme of portraying a monarch who stressed her Englishness.

The Book of the Courtier

Sidney was not alone in his understanding of the use of aesthetics. His defense does not treat painting as such, though an earlier popular source does. Baldesar Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier* addresses all aspects of the ideal courtier, though no single attribute receives as much attention as poetry does in Sidney’s apology. Castiglione’s book was translated into English by Sir Thomas Hoby and first printed in 1561, predating Sidney’s printed *Apologie* by more than thirty years. Thomas Sackville’s commendatory poem suggests that the *Courtier* surpasses even the “rare and curious woorkes” “royall kinges...reare up to the skye” that “feed the eye” (lines 1-3). Those

works beautify the buildings, while the lessons of Castiglione's book beautify the Court. (It is interesting to note that Sackville describes architecture and tapestry, which were popular English arts, not paintings or sculptures, in his poem.) The *Courtier* is not a defense, like Sidney's work, but a conduct manual, presented in the form of dialogues at the Urbino court. The book itself deserves "worthy praise" (Sackville line 14); the dedicatory poem works within the tradition of aesthetics that Sidney later explicates. Reading the poem will presumably lead to reading the book, which is pleasurable, in no small part because of Hoby's "passing skill," (Sackville line 13) which will lead to emulating the examples in the book.

The most relevant aspect of the courtier for this paper is the knowledge of painting. Hoby prefaces his translation with a summary list of the courtier's attributes as described by Castiglione. At the end of the list, he reiterates the "final end of a Courtier": "to beecome an Instructer and Teacher of his Prince or Lorde, inclininge him to vertuous practices" (Hoby no pagination). Sidney clearly echoes Hoby; both are engaged in creating a system in which court culture uses aesthetics to improve society, beginning with the courtiers and the prince. Castiglione lauds painting as thus noble and useful. He establishes painting's classical pedigree with the story of Pictor Fabius, who was so "addicted" (Hoby no pagination) to his painting that he signed it. From there, the speaker lists paintings uses, especially in warfare, citing its ability to communicate fortifications, town layouts, and related reconnaissance. Castiglione also mentions extant Greek and Roman statuary as indicative of the excellence of the arts of sculpture and painting. He groups painting with sculpture because

“though peincting be a diverse matter from carving, yet they do both arise out of one self fountayne (namelye) of a good patterne. And even as the ymages are divine and excellent, so it is to be thought peinctinges were also, and so much the more, for that they conteine in them a greater workemanshipp” (Hoby no pagination).

Hoby’s use of “patterne” is suggestive. George Bull’s twentieth-century translation of Castiglione uses “good design” (97) as the source for sculpture and painting. The early modern English edition perhaps reflects a misunderstanding. Lucy Gent suggests that English translators of Italian works did not have words to adequately convey the Italian concept of design. Instead, they relied on concepts of outline and pattern. Whether this is true of Hoby’s work is uncertain. It is tempting to suggest that Hoby made a decision to translate in favor of a recognizable English preference for pattern. This would be equally uncertain, but more receptive to an English tradition, rather than a failed progression along Italian lines.

Beyond functionality, Castiglione considers paintings memorial and a medium in which to “set out...thing[s]” (Hoby no pagination). He raises painting above sculpture for its ability to portray or “set out” objects and people, but reminds the reader of sculpture’s superior suitability for memorial functions. In the discussion of painting’s depicting function, Bull’s translation of “decorative” (98) is another strong divergence from Hoby, which suggests that Hoby did not read Castiglione as suggesting mere decoration, but rather painting’s ability to imitate the vagaries of Nature. The character Giovan Cristoforo asks the Count to expound on the assertion that painting “set[s] out” better than sculpture; he betrays suspicion of the “outwarde syght and those colours that

deceive the eyes” (Hoby no pagination) in painting. Cristoforo favors the naturalness of three-dimensional sculpture as a truer imitation. The Count replies with a question: “Think you it agayn a triflyng matter to counterfeyt naturall coulours, flesh, clothe, and all other coloured thinges” (Hoby no pagination). Even though the theoretical school at work in the *Courtier* is Italian, this view is particularly at home in England. Reproducing “naturall coulours” is what elevates painting above sculpture. For an English reader, it is entirely possible that the Count’s comments about shadows and perspective could be interpreted within an English tradition of pattern and bright color. In addition to the flexibility of readings available in Hoby’s translation, there are some possibilities missing. Bull’s 1976 translation has “the painter requires still greater skill in depicting members that are foreshortened and taper gradually...[which] simulates foreground and distance” (99). In the same passage, Hoby has “plainnesse and farnesse,” (no pagination) which is less precise in suggesting perspective. “Farnesse” and “distance” are analogous, but “plainnesse” is open to interpretation in a way that “foreground” is not. It is possible that Gent’s insistence on the lack of familiarity with Italian ideas leading to inaccurate translations is correct. Certainly for a twentieth-century reader Bull is clearly discussing linear perspective, whereas Hoby seems to be mixing his concepts, plainness being visibility and farness being distance. It is also possible that Hoby’s translation reflects preference, or tradition, not ignorance. If that is true, Hoby’s *Courtier* presents an Italian work but refashions or interprets that work to present it within an English framework of painting.

The tensions between Italian and English styles are visual, though both styles share an instrumental aesthetic. After discussing the manner of painting, the Count and

Cesare Gonzaga briefly discuss whether painters love beauty more than non-painters. Hoby's translation here is very close to Bull's and is straightforward. A painter "could knowe [a beautiful woman] more perfectlye then" (Hoby no pagination) a non-painter, according to Alexander's example in giving Campaspe to Apelles. The further example of the painter Zeusis underscores the painter's most "perfect judgment in beawty" (Hoby no pagination). These ideas are not as particular to a region as painting styles. The concept of beauty as an idea of goodness, appreciated through desire and contemplation was part of neo-Platonic thought that was already widely accepted in England among the educated. The visual style described by Castiglione appears in Hoby's translation as reconcilable with an already established English preference; the aesthetic ideas need no reconciliation, as they were established humanist commonplaces.

Finally, Castiglione's Count tells Gonzaga that "this delite of yours proceadeth not wholly of the beawty, but of the affection which you perhappes beare unto the woman" (Hoby no pagination). He also says "there may be other thinges also that beside beawty often times enflame our mindes, as maners, knowleage, speach, gestures and a thousand mo (which peradventure after a sort may be called beauty to) and above all the knowing a mans self to be beloved" (Hoby no pagination). These statements suggest the instrumentality of all aspects of a person; a person's attributes can "enflame" the mind such that others will love them. The painter is the most appreciative of a person's physical beauty and can most skillfully portray it. They are also most able to convey the enflaming attributes of a person to others through the medium of portraiture. The combination of physical beauty and personality in a single image or series of images is

part of Elizabeth's state portraiture. Through a native style, she attempted to fully display herself to her subjects as a physical beauty with admirable personal attributes.

Hoby's *Courtier* and Sidney's *Apologie* are examples of an aesthetic sense imbued with the ability to "move" viewers and listeners. The goal of a painting or a poem is not an immediate appeal to reason. First, the artist creates desire in the viewer. The aim of that desire is to entice the viewer into continued viewing, which will eventually lead to understanding through contemplation. The overlooked factor in Elizabeth's portraiture is her manipulation of the aesthetic moment(s) of desire. While many scholars, from Strong to Pomeroy to Montrose, assume that paintings were meant to enhance the "cult" of Elizabeth and make the people "love" the monarch, none has carried out an analysis of how effective particular images or styles were in "moving" the sixteenth-century viewer.¹ Through a combination of speeches, images, and public appearances, Elizabeth's government seems to have attempted to construct her such that the moment of viewing her image would have the most affective impact possible.

Elizabeth's Styles and Aesthetics

Before Elizabeth I came to the throne in 1558, there was already an established Tudor tradition in portraiture. Louis Montrose provides the most recent synopsis of this tradition in *The Subject of Elizabeth*. He characterizes sixteenth-century royal portraiture in England as familial, with adaptations, changes, and continuities between the various Tudor monarchs. He connects Elizabethan portraits to Henry VIII (who likewise adapted his father's representations), Edward VI, and Mary I. Each of these monarchs' portraits added dimensions to Elizabeth's style, but none was adopted in its entirety. For this

¹ . My critique here is focused on the lack of interest in examining this question, rather than on a lack of results. It is, perhaps, impossible to reconstruct how 'moved' an early modern viewer/listener/reader was.

paper, the most important point in this tradition of familial painting is that the Elizabethan government made choices, deciding which styles of previous monarchs were most suited to the new queen. Montrose and the Belseys examine these decisions from a political perspective. Montrose analyzes the portraits as “a way to fashion a brief history-through-images,” (9) while also examining the subtle changes necessitated by Elizabeth’s sex. The Belseys’ also discuss adaptations based on sex, while emphasizing Elizabeth’s insistence on her Englishness. Their important article “Icons of Divinity” is almost wholly concerned with linking Elizabeth’s Armada portrait to a Holbein portrayal of Henry VIII; their analysis highlights the Queen’s lineage claims, but it does not address the stylistic changes, most noticeably a shift to “brilliant lighting...[that] eliminate[s] almost all shadow” (11). The stylistic shift is surely meant to draw attention to the Queen’s face and position, which in turn leads to an awareness of the portrait’s antecedents. The Holbein portrait depends largely on Henry VIII’s imposing physicality and size. It seems likely that a shift to a flatter, brighter style compensates for Elizabeth’s smaller, frailer female body. Such a shift maintains a similar aesthetic appeal, while also deflecting attention away from Elizabeth’s differences from her father. While both Montrose and the Belseys make necessary and important points about the queen’s visual representations, neither specifically mentions the stylistic changes from Holbein to Gower as they relate directly to aesthetics.

It is difficult to discuss Elizabeth’s style leading to a particular aesthetic end because Elizabeth did not write about aesthetics as such. However, Elizabeth sprinkled references throughout her speeches and prayers that were in sympathy with Sidney and Hoby. As Elizabeth’s tutor, Roger Ascham’s humanist background, coupled with his

suspicion of an excessive emulation of Italian styles, is sure to have made an impression on Elizabeth.² In Elizabeth's speeches and prayers, she makes clear distinctions between written or spoken ideas and visual images. The trend in England seemed to be an acceptance of Italian ideas and a modification or rejection of Italian styles.³ Elizabeth appears to follow this trend in her portraiture, but her statements on visual art display ambiguity toward the value of images. Her personal style rhetorically elevates verbal communication, while her public persona mixes the verbal with visual images. Italian humanist aesthetics and English styles of painting remind her subjects of her speeches and public actions, so that they endear subjects to the monarch. In this way the Elizabethan government attempted to keep images of the Queen within a positive, affective aesthetic that could assist their broader political aims.

Montrose's work in *The Subject of Elizabeth* takes for granted, in some ways, this paper's point about instrumental aesthetics. He easily, almost offhandedly attributes instrumentality to Tudor portraiture. However, he does not extensively treat the styles in Tudor painting, except to note the peculiar nature of Mary I's images and the dangers of strict verisimilitude in representing Elizabeth. He begins to examine the reasons for Mary's style being "in the tradition of Raphael and Titian" (Montrose 56). This is the first mention of style as such; Henry VIII's portraits are contextualized within political and dynastic concerns. It is interesting that aesthetics are not linked directly to Mary's portraits in Montrose's discussion. He does not pursue questions of intent on Mary's

² . Roger Ascham describes the "Englishman Italianated" (568) as "he that by living and traveling in Italy bringeth home into England out of Italy the religion, learning, the policy, the experience, [and] the manners of Italy" (568) Ascham's objection to this figure is the dependence on and preference for Italian modes while in England. His implication is that Italian ways have no place in England because they were "enchantments of Circe" that would "corrupt" "honest living" (568).

³ . This idea is developed more fully earlier in this paper.

part. Where he assumes Elizabeth's aesthetic aims are obvious, her style is left unexamined; the opposite is true for Mary. Given the aesthetics of Henrician portraiture, which are similar to Elizabeth's and other monarchs of the period, it is noteworthy that Mary's portraits are indicators of an accepted truth—her alienation from her English subjects as “foreign”—rather than attempting to influence opinion. It is surely the failure of Mary's picture and the success of Henry's that persuaded the Elizabethan government to make careful stylistic decisions. The familial ties to Henry, which, according to Montrose, conveniently sidestepped both Edward VI and Mary I, are most evident in composition and content, rather than style. Montrose appears to conflate design with style, which does a disservice to the choices of Elizabeth and her government. Certainly Elizabeth desired to elicit responses like that described by Karel van Mander: “the King as he stood there majestic in his splendour, was so lifelike that the spectator felt abashed, annihilated in his presence” (quoted in Montrose 22). This is precisely the goal of instrumental aesthetics. Montrose rightly comments that “this was surely the response that the royal icon was intended to elicit” (22). What he does not mention are the stylistic changes that Elizabeth used as she emulated aspects of Henry's portraiture. The moment in which the viewer is abashed is only fleetingly acknowledged by Montrose, though he provides an excellent analysis of the *rhetorical* strategies Elizabeth used to maintain a familial tradition while simultaneously incorporating her different sex into that tradition. As the most recent analysis of Elizabeth's images, Montrose's inconsistent treatment of style and aesthetics is unfortunate. Taking aesthetics for granted while simplifying stylistic decisions makes a discussion of Tudor portraiture unclear, as does the inverse

perspective. Analyzing rhetoric and style together through an instrumental lens provides the surest foundation for reading Montrose's political and cultural contextualizations.

The portrait discussed by Montrose is the Holbein painting from the Whitehall Privy Chamber. Holbein's work is less dependent on deep shadows than Italian styles, but his work is the most dependent on shadows of any artist considered here (e.g. Mor, Scrots, Hilliard). Henry VIII's portraits in Holbein's style are therefore closer to naturalistic ideals set forth in Alberti or da Vinci. It is not a style that remained popular. Foister makes it clear that Holbein's style was eventually succeeded by Netherlandish and native English styles of portraiture. For Elizabeth, Holbein's style for women, characterized by an "averted gaze and by [a] lack of idealisation" (Hearn 39) would be particularly unsuitable. It is thus somewhat misleading or incomplete to suggest that Elizabeth's royal images are meant to merely reflect Henry's. Both Strong and Montrose are correct about various paintings' similarities in composition, but there remains style, which becomes caught up with questions of aesthetics and therefore intent. The style of a portrait like the Armada panel, visually recalling Holbein's Henry portraits, becomes more native as the context of the portraits becomes increasingly English in a nationalist sense. The context is the defeat of the Armada, a strongly nationalistic subject. The posture of the Queen, as asserted by the Belseys, echoes Henry VIII. The style of painting, however, does not. It eschews the Holbeinesque naturalism in favor of a brighter, more two-dimensional depiction of the of the Armada events.

The *effects* of Henry's royal iconography are pursued through an increasingly nationalistic portraiture style that resists the more foreign aspects of Continental painting. Eventually, Elizabeth's portraits move away from both Holbein and Antonis Mor, who

painted Mary I in a “format [that] remained alien to English painting” (Hearn 54). Hearn describes Mor’s portrait of Mary as “visual[ly] disempower[ing]” (54) for Mary and emphasizes its foreign qualities. It was commissioned by Mary’s Habsburg father-in-law Charles V and she thus had “relatively little control” (Hearn 54) over the image, which became “definitive” (54). Hans Eworth’s portrait of Mary, however, is in the English style. In contrast to Mary’s inconsistent uses of style, there are no portraits of Elizabeth in a thoroughly Continental mode. Strong suggests that Mor’s panel is a compositional source for the ‘Darnely’ portrait, but points out that Elizabeth stands rather than sits. He also attempts to connect the painting to Zuccaro, which would indicate “a momentary return to [the] internationalism” (Strong, *Gloriana* 88) of Mary’s Mor portrait. The tradition of monarchical portraiture in England is thus not simply derivative of Henry VIII’s postures. In the Eworth panel Mary’s “pose, standing with head slightly to one side and with clasped hands, has several antecedents in English portraiture...it was a pose that, for female sitters, strongly denoted rank and high status” (Hearn 66). Beyond content, the style of the Eworth portrait is flatter than the Mor panel, with strict symmetry and a “pyramidal composition” (Hearn 66) that also elongates Mary’s face “in order to create a more regal and imposing image” (67). Here Mary is identifiably English, portrayed as such in an English style which is also more likely to garner her image the kind of response her father’s images received. Mary’s portraits are thus a mix of English and Continental styles; her aesthetic aims are not the issue here, but her lack of popularity on the grounds of her mixed birth and foreign marriage provide a strong cautionary tale for the Elizabethan state. It is likely that Elizabeth (and/or her government) would be careful to strongly embrace English examples of style if she wished to avoid visual

ambiguity and avoid the displeasure of her subjects while attempting to guide them into obedience in the way suggested by Sidney's poet-monarch.

Elizabeth's own writings contain hints about her aesthetic goals in her role as monarch. As mentioned above, the majority of her opinions are on the powers of speech or comparisons between images and words. Like Philip Sidney⁴, however, such statements indicate a sense of aesthetics that can apply to portraiture. Early in her life, Elizabeth gives hints about painting's abilities and limitations. In a letter to Katherine Parr she writes:

of old, from great antiquity...the custom has always prevailed that to preserve the memory of notable things that were done in times past, and likewise to increase their renown, a number of ingenious men...have in many places and in divers ways amused themselves by...putting into memoirs the things done in their time that seemed to them worthiest of commemoration or remembrance. And in order to do this (because the apt and requisite use of letters and the way of writing were not yet invented), they were accustomed to draw out and bring forth their most memorable deeds with certain characters, figures, images, or effigies of men, beasts, birds, fish, trees, or plants, carved out crudely and grossly because they did not care how it was that they labored, provided that the memory of their intention was magnified, diffused, and noted by everyone.”

(Marcus 11).

⁴ . In the *An Apologie for Poetrie*, Philip Sidney attempts to persuade his readers of the efficacy of poetry in creating and improving courtiers and subjects.

She concludes that “excellent painters do not deserve less praise” than engravers, sculptors, etc., but “the invention of letters seems...the most clever, excellent, and ingenious” of the “arts and sciences” because they can “represent...the mind or wit, the speech or understanding” (Marcus 11). To the young Elizabeth, visual arts lacked this capacity. These statements preface a translation presented as a gift, yet they resonate beyond their immediate context. Her early ideas of portraiture’s limits are indicative of her aesthetic framework and the foundation of her royal mix of rhetoric, personal display, and portraiture so thoroughly examined by Montrose. The most important parts of this passage are the assumptions about paintings uses: they commemorate and, more importantly, “magnify” worthy persons or events. It is also noteworthy that Elizabeth saw pictures and language as capable of reaching a wide audience so that “memorable deeds” were “noted by everyone.” This is certainly the aesthetic basis advocated by Sidney and humanist scholars. Combining the commemorative function with particular styles, it becomes possible to create the overwhelming effect on a subject noted by van Mander.

As she aged, and the political climate became more dangerous, Elizabeth’s letters indicate a growing awareness of the power of speech, both popular rumor and official statements. At the same time, she indicates that she understands the effectiveness of appearing in person. This is clearly shown in her letters to Edward Seymour, in which she asks Mary’s Privy Council to redress rumors that she is pregnant with Thomas Seymour’s child. She places her trust in a “proclamation” asserting her innocence. (According to Janel Mueller, there is no known proclamation against rumor-mongering close in date to the letter of March 7, 1549.) However, in contrast to this insistence on

language, Elizabeth also asks Edward Seymour to allow her to “come to the court...that I may show myself there as I am” (Marcus 24). This suggestion predates the desire for a proclamation to repress rumors by nearly two months. Obviously, Elizabeth realized that a personal appearance, appealing to the power of sight, could quash the rumor of her pregnancy more quickly and more easily than any action of the Privy Council. Her insistence on the superior efficacy of language, even legal language is thus shown to be tempered by an acceptance of the immediacy of viewing. Once Queen, she continued to construct herself rhetorically as a scholar of words, but she also supported portraiture that appealed to her subjects’ desire to see her. She turned this desire to her advantage by consistently invoking her work, which could only enhance her subjects’ overall impression of her.

The most quoted indication of Elizabeth’s self-image is her letter to Edward VI, assumed to accompany the Scots portrait. In it, she again displays the tension between the mind and the image. She acknowledges that “colors may fade by time,” (Marcus 35) but asserts that her mind is less susceptible to time and nature. Elizabeth’s expression of how her portrait should be viewed is particularly germane here:

I shall most humbly beseech your majesty that when you shall look on my pictures you will witsafe to think that as you have but the outward shadow of the body afore you, so my inward mind wisheth that the body itself were oftener in your presence. (Marcus 35).

The portrait is both straightforwardly memorial, but also presented such that it assures Edward of *Elizabeth’s desire* to be with him. The style of the Scots painting, which Strong notes is Netherlandish (which becomes incorporated into English styles) suggests

that it is also meant to establish a connection between sitter and viewer. Elizabeth is standing, turned slightly to the side, but gazing forward. Her hands are together, holding a book; beyond the connotations of power and godliness in the painting's composition, the relative lack of deep shadows and the forward gaze give the image directness in keeping with Elizabeth's hope that Edward will see her image and connect it with her inward feelings. In other words, she uses the letter to make the portrait speak and the portrait gives a particular image to the letter's stated desire. The written and the painted combine to create an aesthetic effect that is similar to that of the Tudor monarchs, but with a different focus. In this instance, Elizabeth is not attempting to overawe her brother, but to connect herself to him. Her rhetorical finesse is used in an attempt to guide the aesthetic response to an image that may already be appealing to an English viewer (Edward and, probably, his Court) because of its familiar native style.

During Mary's reign, Mary's suspicion of Elizabeth prompted Elizabeth to combine public appearance with language again. She wrote to Mary in 1554 asking for an audience rather than "trust[ing] [Mary's] councillors" (Marcus 39) to deliver a message. Though Elizabeth's early opinion on the superiority of language is apropos for her translation-as-gift to Katherine Parr, it does not seem to have remained a firm belief. Instead, the political uses of display became increasingly necessary as Elizabeth aged and became a focus for political intriguers. She seems to place great trust in the efficacy of a personal audience with Mary. As Elizabeth began her reign her use of public appearances became a hallmark of her domestic statecraft. Her passage through London before her coronation suggests that Sidney's application of aesthetics, which I suggest Elizabeth accepted, were not confined to the Court. Richard Mulcaster's account of the

procession states that “the queen’s majesty rejoiced marvelously to see it [gladness] toward her grace which all good princes have ever desired: I mean, so earnest love of subjects...the people...were wonderfully ravished with welcoming answers and gestures of their princess” (Marcus 53). Not only does Mulcaster couch the crowd’s reaction in similar terms as Hoby and Sidney, he makes it clear that the aesthetic response could be reciprocal. The Queen “rejoiced marvelously” in response to her subjects’ love. The crowd, in turn, “w[as] wonderfully ravished” by the Queen’s “answers and gestures.” Each participant in an exchange has the power to affect the other. With portraiture, it is the portrait and the person it depicts that have the power to affect. It is tempting to suggest that the original, now-lost coronation portrait was meant to harness some of the energy of Elizabeth’s first major public spectacle as Queen. Janet Arnold has suggested that it “seems very probable...that Elizabeth would have had a portrait painted to commemorate the [coronation] in 1559” (728). Strong accepts this suggestion, adding that “disrepair” (*Gloriana* 163) in the original may have necessitated the later copy. If commemoration was the initial intent of Elizabeth’s public portrayals, remembering her comments to Katherine Parr leads to the conclusion that even at an early date Elizabeth intended to work within an instrumental aesthetic that combined picture, presence, and language. Strong’s work on Elizabethan pageantry makes it clear that the government combined these genres, but he stops short of connecting their style with an aesthetic personalized by Elizabeth. Strong and Montrose both insist on the political stakes of her representation. What is unique about Elizabeth was her focus on the primacy of language while she also sanctioned images that use a strongly English style to create a “ravishing” effect on her subjects. The effectiveness of her own presence is borne out by surviving

descriptions (however exaggerated and flattering) such as Bernard Garter's account of Elizabeth's 1578 progress to Norwich. He recounts how "her majesty....came in such gracious and princely wise as ravished the hearts of all her loving subjects, and might have terrified the stoutest heart of any enemy to behold" (Marcus 174). It is probable that her aesthetic sense was meant to be effective in either speeches or pictures, but *most* effective when the two modes could be combined.

When Elizabeth visited Cambridge in 1564, she addressed the "most learned men" (Marcus 87) in part because of "the intercession of [her] nobles" (87). In the same oration, she cited Demosthenes, reminding her audience that "the words of superiors...are as the books of their inferiors, and the example of a prince has the force of law" (88). This speech reiterates the idea of reciprocal influence between the monarch and her subjects, in this case her Court. She responds to their "intercession" and reiterates that they should use her examples as "a book." The "example" she sets is ostensibly scholarly and linguistic, though the entire exchange also depends on the element of display; the visual impact of the Queen is used to demonstrate her "own goodwill toward the university" (Marcus 87). When the Queen was not on progress, portraits maintained her presence; one portrait now in the possession of Cambridge University indicates the type of portrait likely to be displayed. If originally given to the University, it would have postdated her visit by sixteen years. It is dated c.1580 and uses a popular face pattern, though this particular version is lighter in its shadows. It would be typical of Elizabethan usage to keep portraits of the monarch in important places such as universities. In this case the portrait could also recall the 1564 visit in which Elizabeth "clearly wanted to please as well as to impress" (Hibbert 141). (It is also possible that the

dress depicted in the 1584 Charter for Emmanuel College recalls the “black velvet dress with pink slashes” (Hibbert 140) that Elizabeth wore upon entering Cambridge.) Her own performances and speeches seemed to please and impress and it would reinforce her aesthetic impact if she also sent sanctioned portraits to the University. Elizabeth’s visit to Cambridge was clearly meant to make an impact on many levels.

Elizabeth’s reputation as a scholar and role as monarch were combined with the sense of her presence as licensed holiday. The academically-focused Cambridge was not the only place in which Elizabeth was staged. She also engaged in exchanges with non-academics and those outside the Court. A short exchange in Warwick echoes the reciprocity she invoked in Cambridge while also making it clear that fear or intimidation was understood as part of a correct response to the sovereign. She reportedly told Edward Aglionby, MP from Warwick, in 1572 that she was “told...that you would be afraid to look upon me or to speak boldly; but you were not so fraid of me as I was of you” (Marcus 110). This reply to his speech is remarkable in its easy invocation of the desired effect of the royal persona, awe, and Elizabeth’s reversal of the same effect. Elizabeth emphasizes the reciprocity of her aesthetic by rhetorically fashioning herself in this instance as one of the people of England, equally afraid as fear-inducing. Her insistence on her greater fear was, surely, a pleasant fiction, but the sense of connection engendered by Elizabeth’s equalizing language underscores the gaze found in many of her portraits. The great seals and even some medallions employed this gaze, as did the wood-cut title page to the Bishop’s Bible. Strong insists the woodcut “must have been seen by almost every subject” (*Gloriana* 30-32). In each case, the popular versions of the Cambridge and Warwick exchanges were visualized; each subject had access to images

that would insist on a moment, however brief, in which they were in awe of Elizabeth or her position and in which she gazed back at them, connecting herself to them. Such a forward gaze enjoyed a long tradition as an English stylistic choice. It was a politically charged, native style decision in representation that capitalized on Elizabeth's underlying assumption of a personalized instrumental aesthetic. These forward-gazing images reinforced her insistence on herself as intimately bound to her subjects and their well-being.

The Protestant sympathies which helped keep English visual styles from adopting Italian modes are also present in Elizabeth's own sense of herself as God's instrument and reflection on Earth. In an Italian prayer composed between 1558 and 1572, Elizabeth writes "grant that I may continually have care and regard not to sully nor to abase this Thy holy image restored in me through Jesus Christ...may it reflect in the eyes of everyone the splendor of Thy face" (Marcus 151). The religious argument that places the monarch on the throne through divine election is here translated into an aesthetic in keeping with Elizabeth's portraits and speeches. To look on her face is to see the reflected "splendor" of God's face. To look up at Elizabeth, to be in awe of her, is ultimately to look to God in awe. (This religious application of instrumental aesthetics was strongly followed in Milanese painting, though it was focused on a Counter-Reformation goal.) Certain portraits seem to bear this out; the 'Ditchley' portrait of c.1592 is certainly one such image. Its size alone requires an upward gaze. The placement of the Queen *on* England with her head in the heavens only reinforces the height, both literal and metaphorical, of the image. Making Elizabeth's aesthetic a matter of religiosity is an inspired addition to the various ways in which she induced the

admiration and therefore obedience of her subjects. Another prayer of the same period connects all of these ideas, calling on God “who hast appointed me as monarch to the British kingdom, [to] favor me by Thy goodness to implant piety” and release her from “those who hate me,” which include “all persons who fail to obey Thee and me” (Marcus 163). In a short prayer she establishes her election by God and links her aesthetic end, obedience through charming images and words, to the power of God. He can “implant” the proper response in Elizabeth’s subjects—a most proper response because it would not be directed solely at Elizabeth, but ultimately to the God who made her in “[His] image” (Marcus 153).

However savvy her manipulations of style and aesthetics were, Elizabeth’s portraits were not under her exclusive control. Julia Walker’s work demonstrates that images of the Queen were difficult to manage and often used without government sanction to criticize Elizabeth. Montrose makes it clear that the monarch’s self-fashioning was a discursive process in which public sentiment, court politics and culture, and foreign relations were all in competition to represent the Queen. He reads Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, for example, as a way for the public theatre to imagine the Queen and her reign without mentioning her at all. The Queen saw some of these plays and was certainly familiar with published accounts of her progresses and speeches, some of which were printed by the Privy Council. Much has been made in scholarship of the Council’s attempts to control the royal image as it circulated beyond the Court. Outside of the Court, with its rituals of display, often involving miniatures of the Queen and her courtiers, the government used patents and proclamations to pressure artists into complying with approved models for Elizabeth’s portraits. Theatre

censorship, including closing the theatres, could suppress stage portrayals with more success than the attempts to control wide distribution of images.

Many scholars reference the draft proclamation of 1563 in which Cecil writes that “deformed” (Content 229) images of the Queen should be suppressed. As Rob Content points out, the passage is “striking...[in] its framing of the court’s action as a response to popular demand, hence obscuring any suggestion that the new queen might herself have taken offense” (229) at any such portraits. In fact, the proclamation cites the “natural desire...of subjects...to procure the portrait” (quoted in Montrose 220) of Elizabeth. This “natural desire” is art that hides art. The desire of the subjects was consciously manipulated by Elizabeth and her government to create a demand; unfortunately, that demand was consistently difficult to fulfill in a manner desired by the government. This “desire” and the idea that the Queen “perceiveth that a great number of her loving subjects are much greved” (quoted in Content 229) resonates with the idea of a reciprocal aesthetic. Cecil’s draft assumes the rhetoric of the Queen in connection with her subjects. (This use of her rhetoric is an example of her usages being used by the government to maneuver Elizabeth into a particular action; in this case, sitting for a sanctioned portrait.) The public response (whether real or imaged) to her portraits is as much a cause for concern as their responses to her speeches or laws. The visual images simply have a sustainable immediacy impossible in a public appearance or speech: Elizabeth was not always available to the public, but her portraits were. Many scholars, including Content, assume that the anxiety over “errors and deformities” (quoted in Content 229) in various portraits reflects the political uncertainties of Elizabeth’s early reign. While that view is not wrong, it does not articulate the most basic governmental response: fear that

viewing “‘apparently deformed’” portraits would entice subjects to find the Queen, and thus her rule, repugnant. The first response to a visual stimulus in Elizabethan England was emotional or sensual. The aesthetics of Hoby and Sidney were positive; they presented examples of how to improve Nature to ensure a good effect. Poor quality or ugly portraits could have the opposite effect. The political repercussions of a negative response to a visual image are well analyzed by numerous scholars, most notably Content and Walker. However, their work overlooks the role of aesthetics in the government’s regulatory efforts in relation to portraiture.

In addition to domestic concerns with the Queen’s image, there was considerable contention about the nationality of painters representing the Queen and English subjects. The domestic policy that made use of instrumental aesthetics was based on English styles of painting, but not necessarily English artists. The most easily accessible images of the Queen were often designed by Nicholas Hilliard, but many portraits exchanged at court were executed by foreign-born artists. These artists may have worked within an English tradition, but they caused tension in London and other large artisan centers. According to Susan Foister “the London Company of Painter-Stainers carried on a constant struggle on all fronts throughout the sixteenth century, against foreigners as well as against competitors such as heraldic painters” (21). The popular appetite for images of the Queen overwhelmed the native workshops’ ability to meet the demand. Non-guild painters and foreigners thus hawked poor copies in the streets, which derailed the government’s aesthetic interest and inflamed the native guild members against foreigners. The native desire for images of their native Queen was threatened by unlicensed strangers. This isolationism was obvious to “painters coming from abroad [who] would

also have recognised the barrage of legislation intended to make life for such immigrants as difficult as possible, and to boost the position of native workers” (Foister 21). These nationalist measures to regulate the public image of the Queen, couched in the language of the Queen responding to the grievance of her subjects, were not carried into the Court. There, with well-educated courtiers engaging in their own aesthetic projects, the presence of foreign artists was perhaps intended to suggest internationalism without actually necessitating the adoption of non-English styles of painting.

A main aim of court portraiture during Elizabeth’s reign was to support the revival of a chivalrous pattern of behavior that ultimately depended on “courting” the Queen. She was the Petrarchan ‘cruel fair’ whose favor was required for advancement, monetary gain, and fame. As such, portraits that intensified Elizabeth’s personalized aesthetics were favored. Even foreign artists softened styles that diverged from the Hilliardesque miniatures and portraits. It was not until the final decade of the reign that Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger began to re-introduce shading effects into English painting. The most famous example of his work is the Ditchley portrait; its seemingly realistic portrayal of Elizabeth with an aging face certainly departs from Hilliard’s work of the same period. However, when Hilliard condemns shadows in his *Art of Limning*, he makes an exception for portraits viewed from afar. It is possible that the Gheeraerts panel, as large as it is, could still fall within the accepted style favored by the Queen. Before Gheeraerts, another foreigner, Federigo Zuccaro, was perhaps successful in conforming to Elizabeth’s apparent desire for a shadow-free, luminescent face that would charm the viewer and elicit a desire for devotion.

Roy Strong suggests that Zuccaro painted the ‘Darnley’ portrait of Elizabeth, the face pattern of which was “to remain in use in studios right through the 1580s and into the 1590s” (*Gloriana* 89). There is no documentary evidence that this “eminent Italian painter” (Strong, *Gloriana* 87) produced a portrait from his surviving drawing; Strong’s attribution is based on technique and assumptions about the reason for Zuccaro’s visit to England. However, Strong points out that the composition of the portrait recalls Titian’s work, which is also a source for the Mor portrait of Mary I, except Elizabeth’s face, which is a “carefully composed blanched mask-like rendering” (*Gloriana* 88-89). Elizabeth is also standing, another departure from the Continental style. If Zuccaro produced the ‘Darnley’ portrait, he modified his sources to reflect the needs of an English patron. Strong suggests that Elizabeth’s encounter with Zuccaro caused her to remark that Italians were the best painters. He cites Hilliard’s anecdote, but I disagree with his reading. Hilliard writes that “the Italians who had the name to be cunningest, and to drawe best” (28) were the subject of Elizabeth’s query. He does not say that Elizabeth said Italians drew best, but that they were assumed to be the best. Strong’s desire to align Elizabeth with Italian models and an Italian painter seems a bit extreme: if the ‘Darnley’ face pattern originated with Zuccaro, it still conforms to an English portrayal of the Queen. Zuccaro’s stay in England was brief and he never returned. His extant drawing does not have a known painting produced from it and there are no indications that such a painting existed but was lost. The presence of foreigners as painters of the Queen seems less of a stylistic choice than a political foreign policy performance. The underlying desire for the portraits to convey a powerfully charming English sovereign remained, despite the lack of a single royal painter.

The supposition that Elizabeth chose styles that utilized an explicitly instrumental aesthetic requires acknowledgement of the two major types of painting used at court. The large portraits could be publicly displayed to the Court. Miniatures were carried in the hand and examined close to the eye, as described by Hilliard.⁵ The aesthetic moment in the ‘Ditchley’ or ‘Rainbow’ portraits is perhaps obvious, if understudied in contemporary scholarship. Those portraits, though presumably displayed in different settings, are large and imposing panels. Elizabeth’s desire to appear awe-inspiring as a reflection of God is easily reconcilable with the paintings. Strong, for example, assumes that the ‘Ditchley’ portrait’s “impact must have been *even more* overwhelming” (*Gloriana* 137, emphasis added) in its original, uncut state. It is interesting to note that the ‘Ditchley’ portrait most likely results from collaboration between Sir Henry Lee, Elizabeth, and Gheeraerts. Strong hints at a two-fold instrumentality in the portrait’s aesthetics: the “overwhelming” effect of the Queen herself, but also the idea that the portrait’s setting in Lee’s gallery was “instrumental in setting the fashion for the decoration of long galleries” (*Gloriana* 136). Strong does not connect his sense of “instrumental” with intent on Lee’s part, but it is likely that the size and placement of the picture were meant to have lasting effects; though setting a fashion may or may not have been one. The lasting influence of the ‘Ditchley’ portrait is apparent in derivative portraits but it is noteworthy that in the “related versions...the features are considerably rejuvenated and softened” (Strong, *Gloriana* 140). Strong assumes this results from pressure to adopt the “obligatory Mask of Youth...which was soon to be imposed by the government” (*Gloriana* 140) which was itself created out of anxiety about the heirless,

⁵ . Patricia Fumerton offers a fuller context for the miniature at Court than is possible here. She especially examines its relation to love and eroticism. See Chapter 3 in Fumerton, Patricia. *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1991.

aging Queen. It is also probable that part of the reason for the Mask of Youth was aesthetic. The aesthetic in service of political necessity would dictate that youth is desirable over age. It would also dictate that smooth features are desirable over blemishes. The “rejuvenating” of the Queen is indisputably political, but it is also aesthetic: not only would an aged Queen remind the viewer of the uncertain succession, it would perhaps repulse the viewer such that his or her mind would then be led to contemplate the uncertain future rather than the peaceful past.

Miniatures, especially by Hilliard and viewed closely, were the other major medium at court for depicting Elizabeth. These tiny portraits were subject to even stronger rejuvenation than large panel paintings. The praising poetry of the court reinforces the ideas of Elizabeth as having visual, overwhelming effects that led to particular conclusions about her reign. The miniatures reflect this construction in a style so particularly English that it cannot be simple personal preference that dictated their use. Mary C. Erler extends the acknowledged connection between John Davies’s *Hymnes to Astraea* and the panel ‘Rainbow’ portrait. The portrait offers “some suggestion of [the] idea of heavenly transcendence...in the overarching ray which extends from Elizabeth’s head in the portrait and which fades into the darkness of the background” (Erler 365). Enhancing the portrait’s aura of transcendence are lines from Davies’s poem “A Contention between a Wife, a Widowe, and a Maide for Precedence at an Offringe.” For example, the Wife’s opening lines emphasize the centrality of ‘Astrea’: “You know it is Astrea’s holy day, / The saint to whom all hearts deuotion owe” (3-4). The Queen’s right to command devotion from the heart is reiterated in these lines, as well as later when the Maid tells the Widow that “...maidenhead, that will admit no mate, / Like maiestie itselife

must sacred be” (Davies lines 43-44). Coupled with the Maid’s assertion that being mistress of one’s own desires is preferable to “rul[ing] others wils, and not your owne” (Davies line 48) the Maid’s lines echo Elizabeth’s own self-fashioning in her prayers. She rules her own desire and is worthy of devotion, which comes from her status as God’s chosen representation and, in Davies’s contribution, as Astraea. The luminescence found in the ‘Rainbow’ portrait is also a striking characteristic of Hilliard’s miniatures. Thus, through rhetorical contextualization and a visual similarity, the panel portraits and the portrait miniature are connected by particularly English invocations of light; this particular stylistic choice reinforces the overall aesthetic use of visual representations of the queen.

The light that envelopes Elizabeth and often seems to emanate from her focuses attention on her face, often depicted with a forward gaze. The intended aesthetic is unmistakable. Elizabeth directly holds and engages the viewer in a portrait meant to symbolize the lover-like displays of Court culture. These pictures in little were signs of favor and political currents at court, but they were also used as powerful, charming portrayals of the Queen that radiated her favor on the courtier, who could then respond to that warmth with displays of affection and devotion. The pageantry of court life, with small performances of gift exchange offered a private-public venue for such displays. The immediate connections established through the miniature’s bright, charming style were intended to have long-term, political effects. The pleasure of gazing on the beautiful, benevolent monarch as captured by Hilliard should lead to obedience. The repeated private viewing of the miniature, usually covered, could only reinforce the importance of gazing on the portrait. While panel paintings need not be viewed directly

more than once, the courtly rituals of picture exchange and ostentatious display guaranteed that miniatures would be re-viewed, which could enhance their aesthetic impact by repeating the sensations of the first viewing.

Conclusion

Elizabeth I is the focus of considerable scholarly attention. Even when she is not the focus of a contemporary scholarly work, her presence in late sixteenth-century culture demands attention. The shift in academic work toward a fuller understanding of historic contexts of all kinds has led to a more nuanced and balanced body of work available about Elizabeth's life. The sensationalism of early twentieth-century biographies are now tempered by Strong's huge body of work. Montrose especially has led the field in illuminating the political pressures on Elizabeth. Feminist scholarship has begun to call into question the mythic virginity of the Queen and insists on a more careful understanding of how virginity worked within the "cult" of Elizabeth. Even the concept of a "cult" is not accepted blindly. Within all of these advances, however, the dismissal of English art as art, not immediately propaganda, has generally persisted. Portraiture in Elizabethan England certainly was employed for propagandist ends, but it was still a form of art that could remain outside of the political arena.

This paper has examined the stylistic possibilities available to the Elizabeth government and highlighted the various reasons for their adoption or rejection. I have emphasized the nationalist bent in stylistic choices in order to draw attention to the uses of aesthetics in politics. The allegorical and political ramifications of Elizabeth's portraiture are not disputed; rather this paper has shown that they were not the first aspect of a painting to resonate with a viewer. Though Clark Hulse insists that Renaissance

“paintings become meaningful to their audience not in a moment’s glance, but through a rhetorical process,” (1) it is also true that a moment’s glance was considered powerful and was therefore carefully conditioned by the Elizabethan government. Elizabeth and her councilors commissioned paintings that would elicit strong emotional responses from the subject. These responses would in turn create the desire for knowledge. This was Sidney’s point for poetry. He calls the prince a “poet-monarch,” which only emphasizes the point that Elizabeth was attempting to teach her subjects to view her in particular ways. The strongly English styles she employed were part of her curriculum. Her speeches, appearances, and portraits were the reading, writing, and arithmetic of her subject’s study. She was not always successful in imparting her lesson, but she was thoroughly engaged with the subject-pupil. This paper has focused on the ways in which Elizabeth attempted to position the viewer in front of her image so that that image would have the most powerful effect possible. Her role of poet, in Sidney’s sense of a popular teacher, is bound up with her understanding of pictorial style and its ability to combine with other forms of self-representation to create a persona that fully exploits an instrumental aesthetic.

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