



Fictions of the Pose: Facing the Gaze of Early Modern Portraiture

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**Fictions of the Pose:
Facing the Gaze
of Early Modern Portraiture**

for Mary Price

The face is the index of the mind.
—Old verity

*There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face.*
—Shakespeare's Duncan

A PAINTING OUGHT TO CHANGE as you look at it, and as you think, talk, and write about it.¹ The story it tells will never be more than part of the stories you and others tell about it. The stories—or interpretations, as they are sometimes called—come in different genres, such as the formalist, the iconographic, the connoisseurial, the genetic, the conservatorial, the contextual, and various mixtures of these and other genres.² These interpretive genres are in turn conditioned by the different genres they tell stories about, and in the present essay the generic parameters of the story I tell will be adjusted to—or by—those that move the portrait genre through the changing chronotope of the Early Modern (formerly known as the Renaissance) in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy. My story will also be conditioned by its opposition to a psychological subgenre of genetic interpretation, which I shall baptize *the physiognomic* because it organizes a variable mix of the data constituted in other genres (the formalist, iconographic, and contextual) in the service of a venerable and familiar project: reading the face as the index of the mind.

Portraits tell stories: they are interpretations of their sitters, visual narratives for which we assume sitters and painters are, in varying degrees, responsible. In that sense they are representations of both the sitter's and the painter's self-representation. Additionally, since art history has been going on for a long time, they come to us framed within the interpretations, representations, and self-representations of art historians. The stories that constitute the physiognomic species are woven of four different strands of commentary:

- a) on the sitter's social, political, and/or professional status, and on his or her character, personality, "inner being," moral quality, and state of mind (mood and emotion, "gli affetti");
- b) on the painter's characterization and the means by which he produces it;
- c) on the sitter's pose and appearance as the medium of characterization;
- d) on the archival data that provide the information used to confirm or fill out interpretations of a), b), and c)—historical information (or speculation) about the lives, behavior, and practices of sitters and painters.

Abbreviating these to a) character, b) painter, c) image, and d) archive, we may identify the physiognomic narrative as an ecphrastic practice based on the claim that character may be inferred from image. This claim, which presupposes the possibility that formal and physiognomic indicators may be correlated to produce a determinate interpretation of character, thinly disguises the extent to which the art historian's ecphrasis is influenced and indeed overdetermined by the archive.

Consider, for example, the following comments on Rembrandt's painting of Jan Six:

The shrewd, worldly-wise look in his eye—he was thirty-six at the time—makes him seem much older than his years. His attitude is unaffected, as free and natural as possible. He has just come in from the street and, entering his friend's studio, is taking off his gloves and cape. Thus Rembrandt observed him, and thus revealed his innermost being.³

[The portrait is an epitome of] Rembrandt's ideals—dignified masculinity, a certain quality of cool correctness mingled with an irrepressible warmth. Rembrandt endowed the living subject of his art with traits of an active and contemplative life, for in reality Jan Six was both a successful poet and a politician. . . . The automatic gesture of putting on a glove prefaces his going out into the streets. . . . The actual public face has not as yet been "put on" or arranged, but the subject's features are relaxed in a momentary unawareness of others as his mind is absorbed in gentle reverie.⁴

These and many other accounts of the portrait are organized around the information that Six was a businessman and politician on the one hand and a poet on the other, and epithets describing him are drawn from the conventional stock of qualities attributed to these types of the "active and contemplative life."⁵ Six's character is thus produced by treating the image as an index of the archive. This procedure is identical with that based on the physiognomic formula, the face or body is the index of the mind or soul; only here the face or body is replaced by the image, the mind or soul by the archive, and the divine or natural or social source by the painter.

The example of Rembrandt throws a special light on the physiognomic story because, even more than Titian, he is praised and damned for portraits that are hard to read. As Gary Schwartz uncharitably puts it in a comment on Rembrandt's anonymous half-lengths of the 1650s and 1660s, they "combine the attractions of inscrutability and unassailable artistic reputation," providing "the viewer with a flatteringly fuzzy mirror for his own most profound reflections on the meaning

of life.”⁶ But such criticism is motivated by a commitment to norms of scrutability, a belief that the painter can and should make the sitter’s face an index of his or her mind. “Thus Rembrandt observed him [Six], and thus revealed his innermost being”: Benesch’s statement seems based on a chain of presuppositions—first, that such an entity exists; second, that it can be known; third, that it can be revealed; and fourth, that Benesch knows it and can recognize it when Rembrandt reveals it. I say it *seems* to be based on these presuppositions because I have isolated the grammatical sense of the statement from its rhetorical force. The writer is obviously less interested in Six’s character than in Rembrandt’s accomplishment. Explicitly, the aim of art-historical physiognomy is to draw the character out of the image. Implicitly, however, physiognomic art history seems often to come into conflict with, if not to serve, the aim of converting the image to an allegory of the archive or of the painter.

Emphasis on the painter combined with the notion that the artist’s achievement consists in revealing character strongly suggests that the sitter is construed as the passive site of revelation, perhaps unaware that the painter is extracting the true nature from the appearance. The portrait is an effect of the painter’s interpretation of the soul, which is, in turn, an effect of the commentator’s interpretation of formal and archival evidence. This makes the portrait an epitome of the sitter’s character as it was generally manifested in the life reflected from the archive—an epitome of the being, the substance, inferred from what has been recorded about his or her activity, status, behavior, and so on. The physiognomic construal thus allows the sitter limited agency in constructing the particular self-representation that provides the basis of inference. The effect of reading the image as the allegory of the archive or the painter is a commentary that focuses on the kinds of people sitters are—that is, the kinds they *were*—in the lives they lived apart from those rare, special, and restricted moments during which they sat for their portraits. In the discussion that follows I shall reverse the emphasis of the physiognomic story and concentrate on the portrait as an index—an effect and representation—solely of the sitter’s and painter’s performance in the act of portrayal. In this shift of attention, the act becomes both the referent of the image and its cause.

It will soon become clear, however, that my critique of the rhetoric of physiognomic interpretation is a boomerang that circles back and slices through my own ecphrases, for they rely on the same rhetoric and resort to the same conjectural strategy of representation. I may not read the painted face as an index of the sitter’s mind, but since I do read it as an index of what sitter and painter “have in mind,” an expression of their designs on the observer, I can hardly avoid appealing to the very conventions of inference I object to. Nevertheless, the difference is important in two respects. First, my stories focus on the representation of the act of portrayal and thus depend less on the archive and more on the image. Second, the stories are based on a theoretical stipulation that severely delimits the

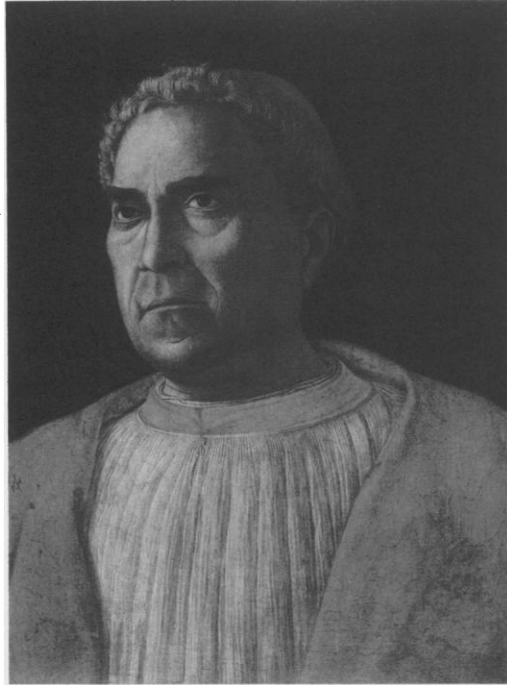


FIGURE 1. Andrea Mantegna, *Cardinal Ludovico Trevisan*, 1458–60. Gemäldigegalerie, Berlin.

mode of representation: the act of portrayal represented by the image is a fiction; it needn't have occurred in that manner; the portrait only *pretends* to represent the manner in which it was produced. This is what was implied above in the statement that I read the image as an index of what sitter and painter “*have in mind*” rather than what they “*had in mind*.” The reasons for this stipulation are complicated and will be discussed below.

Most of the standard stories art historians tell about Early Modern portraiture trace its emergence from the family archive that includes such commemorative icons as the death mask. The death mask as image of origin: both the profound insight of the standard story and its blindness may be grasped by framing this image in the following passage from an unlikely and apparently anachronistic source, Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*.

The portrait-photograph is a closed field of forces. Four image repertoires intersect here, oppose and distort each other. In front of the lens, I am at the same time: the one I think I am, the one I want others to think I am, the one the photographer thinks I am, and the one he makes use of to exhibit his art. In other words, a strange action: I do not stop imitating myself, and because of this, each time I am (or let myself be) photographed, I invariably suffer from a sensation of inauthenticity, sometimes of imposture. . . . In terms of image-repertoire, the Photograph . . . represents that very subtle moment when, to tell

the truth, I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object: I then experience a micro-version of death . . . : I am truly becoming a specter.⁷

My story aims to recuperate this spectral deathlike process of objectification as both the starting point and the continuing baseline of Early Modern portraiture, the history of which plays out a kind of reversal of Barthes's schema. In this reversal, painters and sitters produce effects of subjectivity by diverging from and alluding to an initial set of conventions for objectifying subjects; conventions that are "mortiferous," as Barthes puts it, death-bearing, because they turn sitters into icons. With the painter's help, sitters become living subjects by seeming either to resist objectivity or to fail to achieve it.

I begin this journey toward Barthes's insight *in medias res* with a scatter of quotations that suggest the pervasive and uncritical commitment to physiognomic interpretation among mainstream art historians. Figure 1 is an early work by Mantegna, dated around 1459 or 1460, and the sitter is Cardinal Ludovico Trevisan, also known as Mezzarota Scarampo.⁸ John Pope-Hennessy follows Vasari in being a little critical of Mantegna's enthusiasm for a painting style "based on the Roman bust" and for his ability to turn men to stone. The cardinal, he tells us, was "a warrior prelate who . . . owned a famous collection of antiques," and he finds that this portrait, with its petrific and Roman air, "is commemorative" rather than analytical "and is designed to isolate Mezzarota's historic personality."⁹ More recently, Ronald Lightbown has written that with its evocation "of a Roman bust" and "its ironical compression of the mouth," the painting "does full justice to the Cardinal's stern and resolute character." He adds that "although the portrait is objective, in that there is no attempt to render mood or expression . . . Mantegna's image does more than record the Cardinal's features, for it suggests the strength of will, the severe habit of command, the disillusioned experience of affairs that had stamped the countenance of this exceptional sitter."¹⁰ Now—to pop the money question that will lead to the rest of this essay—just how does he know all that? Obviously, he could have extracted some of his information from the archive. He also could have found, as another scholar did, that Cardinal Trevisan "began as a simple physician and rose to be" the pope's chamberlain thanks in part to his "unscrupulous managerial skills."¹¹ Is the face painted by Mantegna the index of this quality of mind as well as the others? If we had the same face and different archival data could we adjust our reading of the face to accommodate a different physiognomic story? To shift from Mantegna to Bellini, on what grounds does one writer claim that the portrait of Doge Loredan is "a convincing presentation of his character" and another that the portrait of Jörg Fugger is a "penetrating depiction of the sitter's physiognomy"?¹² Art historians dispense judgments of this sort pretty openhandedly, but they also exercise commendable prudence in their refusal to elaborate, or share with us, the inside knowledge that enables them to read the face as an index of the mind. There must be a reason

why good art historians, who clearly know what they are doing, continue to give themselves permission to read faces as indices of mind, and I want to suggest what it may be by glancing at the practice of another historian of Venetian painting.

One of the many valuable features of Norbert Huse's excellent contribution to his and Wolfgang Wolters's *The Art of Renaissance Venice* is the attention he pays to generational shifts of style and taste in portraiture. Huse comments, for example, on the "closed, uniform way in which up to about 1500 the ruling class had presented a calm, serious front, thanks to an obligatory portrait type and an obligatory bearing" (see fig. 2). And he goes on to argue that the portraits of the early sixteenth century reveal "the younger men's dissatisfaction with the way their fathers had themselves painted." "Possibly," he speculates, "as a consequence of the grave political and moral crisis that Venice and its ruling class passed through at the beginning of the century, the portraits from these years reveal a far more restless group of people than those of the preceding generation [see fig. 3]. We meet with nervousness, melancholy, and resignation. . . . Entirely new provinces of the psyche came into view for painting. People like these had certainly existed before, but now, for the first time, they found artists who had an eye for them." Huse connects this change with an increase in formal reflexiveness: the new portraits "give away more about how they were produced. The attentive observer . . . is kept aware of the situation that one person is sitting for another, presenting himself or herself to be painted." New effects of lighting, composition, and posing "remind observers that the portrait in front of them is the result of the artistic interpretation of one person by another, and so does not show the sitter 'objectively', not 'as he or she really is', but as Palma, Giorgione, or Lotto saw the sitter."¹³

These statements are inconsistent. Why should credit for the new effects be assigned exclusively to the painter if it is true that the painter shows sitters not only as *he* saw them but also as *they* wanted to be seen? And, as he suggests, they wanted to be seen *being seen*, that is, aware of posing for painters and observers. So we should add, as Palma, Giorgione, Lotto, *and the sitter* saw the sitter. And how does the critic know the new portraits didn't show the sitter "objectively"—or, to back up a step, how is he using that word? There is a clue in his comment on portraits of the preceding generation by Bellini: the painter "normally showed his people slightly from below, from a perspective of respect. His investigation was not of the surface of the faces, but of the person's essential nature"—this presumably amounts to saying that Bellini represented each sitter "'objectively' . . . 'as he or she really is.'" But how does Huse know what the sitter's—any sitter's—essential nature or objective reality is? As I read his analysis, the new fashion in representing "states of mind" tells us less about the effects on individual psyches of "grave political and moral crisis" than about the effects of a new fashion in representing the act of portrayal—the act of posing and painting. Signs of

“nervousness, melancholy, and resignation” may be intended to represent reactions to more direct scopic encounter; they may flag the decision to dramatize “new provinces of the psyche,” innovations in posing jointly arrived at by sitter and painter; they needn’t be more than that. The aim of such representation may be insight not into the psychology of the sitter but into the psychology of self-representation and scopic encounter; in a word, posing.

It appears, then, that art historians often don’t hesitate to guide us through the faces of long-dead sitters and into their minds and souls. They do this using an undigested mix of archival evidence, the intuitions of lay psychology, and the record of past beliefs—physiognomy, for example—that often strike even them—the art historians themselves—as quaint, obsolete, bizarre, or merely tedious, significant mainly as research opportunities. I think we should assume that they aren’t merely indulging in metaphysical fantasies but making some kind of descriptive sense, and that their own physiognomic interpretations, however laconic or impressionistic, belong to a code in which the members of the profession exchange information about matters other than the sitters’ characters. Those



FIGURE 2 (left). Giovanni Bellini, *Doge Leonardo Loredan*, c. 1501. National Gallery, London. From Lorne Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits* (New Haven, 1990), 31, plate 39. Reproduced by permission.

FIGURE 3 (right). Lorenzo Lotto, *Young Man Against a White Curtain*, 1506–8. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

other matters are obviously art-historical matters. The art historians are more interested in the achievements of painters than in the characters of sitters, and if the conventions that govern their psychological descriptions produce facile accounts of the face as in index of the mind, it is probably because the primary rhetorical purpose of the conventions is to praise the painter, not characterize the sitter. Sharing insights into *who the sitter was* is ancillary to demonstrating *what the painter was trying to do*.

Let's grant that in the final analysis, what we confront is the painter's interpretation and our interpretations of the painter's interpretation; a picture of Paul III is a Titian, a picture of Jan Six a Rembrandt. But since this tendency in art-historical practice correlates with a tendency to fire off casual, irresponsible, and undemonstrable assertions about the inner states of sitters, there must be something wrong with the framework of interpretive assumptions that supports the practice. My purpose in this essay is to unpack an alternative approach to portraiture and to show how it works. The approach consists in redirecting attention from the style and performance of the painter to the style and performance of the sitter *as* sitter—that is, not as a character in some historical fiction naturalized by the art historian, but only as the subject of and participant in a particular act of portrayal. My aim is to develop a theory of posing that will recuperate the sitter's contribution and, more generally, the activity that produced the portrait—will recuperate them as part of the content represented by the portrait.

The first step in this procedure is to try to sketch out as quickly and simply as possible, and at the most general level, the social and aesthetic norms that conditioned the various styles of early modern portraiture. As everyone knows, the main aesthetic factor is the dramatic improvement in representational techniques that took place initially in Italy from the early fifteenth century on; the increased naturalism or realism (or whatever) that results from what is usually termed the *mimetic* interest. The sociopolitical factor is the growing demand not only for accurate resemblances to store in the family archive but also, and more importantly, for exemplary images; images that commemorate the individual as the model, the embodiment, of the status, values, norms, and authority of a particular class, lineage, institution, or profession.

These images provide visualizations of what psychologists call ego ideals; they serve to inscribe an ideal soul or personality in the appearance—to inscribe the inside on the outside—and to provide icons of identification. In Michel Foucault's terms they are instruments of normalization; in Louis Althusser's terms instruments of interpellation; and in Lacanian terms, they are *orthopsychic* images (the term comes from Gaston Bachelard), that is, images of correct psyche, soul, or personality.¹⁴ They provide embodiments of what Lacan calls *the gaze*. To reduce his complex notion of the gaze to my vulgar understanding, the gaze is the visual or scopic dimension of the dominant discourses by which a culture constructs its subjects to imagine and represent themselves, *to give themselves to be seen*, and to

model themselves on the exemplary or orthopsychic norms of the group: the gaze “circumscribes us” and constitutes us “as beings who are looked at, in the spectacle of the world.”¹⁵ The gaze is thus internalized by socialization as the object of identificatory desire. In the process of internalization, tuition becomes intuition, the exemplary other becomes the inner self. The mirror stage, Lacan writes, “is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation . . . and . . . to the assumption of the armor of an alienating identity.”¹⁶ The alienating identity is the ego ideal, and in the patronage system of Early Modern elites painting was among the means by which orthopsychic norms were visualized and communicated. Given this function, it is clear that the mimetic interest was necessary but not sufficient, since its chief effect was to individualize the sitter, whereas what the patronage system required in addition was idealization. A “good” likeness was good in both senses; it was both accurate and exemplary.

Vasari beautifully expresses the orthopsychic function in his account of the Bellini. He notes (in Plinian fashion) that the houses of Venetian gentlemen are full of portraits of

fathers and grandfathers, up to the fourth generation, and in some of the more noble [families] they go still farther back—a fashion which has ever been truly worthy of the greatest praise, and existed even among the ancients. Who does not feel infinite pleasure and contentment, to say nothing of the honor and adornment they confer, at seeing the images of his ancestors, particularly if they have been famous and illustrious for their part in governing their republics, for noble deeds performed in peace or war, or for learning, or any other notable and distinguished talent? And to what other end . . . did the ancients set up images of their great men in public places, with honorable inscriptions, than to kindle in the minds of their successors a love of excellence and of glory?¹⁷

Vasari also has a lot to say about mimetic skills and values (anatomy, modeling, perspective, the ability to emulate nature and make figures seem alive) but in the melioristic schema that imposes at least superficial order on the narrative of the *Lives*, the mimetic accomplishments that distinguish the second *età* of the modern *rinascita* are sublated by the idealizing *grazia* and *maniera* of the third. The schematic emphasis on the progress of art isn’t allowed to conceal the conflict of norms that drives it. Viewed from the standpoint of the third period, the mimetic precursors—like John the Baptist—grow smaller as their successors grow larger. Vasari thus mythologizes—but doesn’t falsify—the structure of values that emerges in the practice and discourse of Early Modern visual art and is discernible in its portraiture. David Summers offers a compact description of this ideology:

Renaissance images were presumed to make us see more than we are shown and, more specifically, to make us see something higher than we are shown. We see a higher, spiritual inwardness in external forms. . . . The apparent sitter in a Renaissance portrait was thus an external appearance showing an inward truth, and so, it might be said, were Renaissance works of art in general.¹⁸

I shall call this the general thesis of *mimetic idealism* in order to pay my respects to the story of Renaissance art that has its roots in the theory and practice of Vasari and his predecessors, and versions of which are still going strong today. I suspect, in fact, that the comments of the art historians I cited earlier are informed by the ideology and illustrate it. Even if they don't believe it, they act as if it were the case, and they continually deliver themselves of insights into the inward truth of external forms.

The story of mimetic idealism is shaped by the conflicts and compromises of the two stylistic impulses that are its protagonists: on the one hand, the new mimetic power generated by the relatively rapid development of graphic technology and the science of art from the early fifteenth century on;¹⁹ on the other hand, the pressure toward orthopsychic idealization imposed by the motives of those who commission paintings. The question that needs to be asked about this ideology and about the portraits that reproduce it is, just what sort of inward truth is revealed? Is it some generalized human truth, or the truth of an elite class, or a moral truth, or a political truth, or the truth of an individual subject, or the truth of the artist's vision? Did Renaissance sitters really hold—and do their portraits represent—the assumptions attributed to them by John Pope-Hennessy, that “appearance is inseparable from personality,” that fidelity to nature is more than skin deep, and that there is a consonance between “what can be perceived and what lies concealed within”?²⁰

At this point I think it is worth pausing to ask whether and why, confronted from the start by the highly evolved skills of Homo Hypocriticus, people accepted the opinion of the experts that the face is a totally reliable and authoritative index of the mind, or that the body is necessarily an index of the soul. I have no idea whether ordinary folks spent several eons stupidly believing this sort of thing; no idea whether, if they could read or be read to, they paid any attention to high-brows like Plato, Aristotle, Galen, and the rest of that learned tribe. I suspect they took the credo for granted and did not give it a second thought except when they got sick and doctors cast their horoscopes. And conceivably they were as skeptical of the credo as they were of the rhetoric of the self-styled experts whose diagnoses and prognoses were based on it. Nevertheless, even if they knew nothing about it, the credo affected their lives. For example, physiognomic assumptions based on some version of the outside/inside or body/soul linkage have always had an important ideological function in helping to naturalize the inequities of gender, rank or class, and race or ethnicity. The standing cultural order that the male is both different from and superior to the female gets support from the standing order that their bodily differences index inalterable mental and psychic differences. So it seems likely that regardless of what people thought or believed, the credo was operative, was influential, at the level of those discourse networks that continuously transform exploitation into hierarchy. At this level, the credo main-

tains its ideological force precisely because it belongs to the uncontested background of daily life.

Probably, then, the credo assumes another kind of importance when it is forced from the background to the foreground by developments that convert it from an ideological *deposit* to a cultural *posit*, an ideal—and a threatened ideal. By “developments,” I mean the convergence of two sorts of changes: first, the political and economic changes that were destabilizing established social arrangements, and threatening traditional discourses and iconographies of status, rank, gender, and group membership in general; second, the proliferation, from the fourteenth century on, of new representational techniques and technologies (in the visual arts, printing and literacy, mercantile practices, mathematics, cartography, anatomy and medicine, pedagogy and the regulation of conduct, and parliamentary organization) in what amounted to a graphic revolution. These changes interfered with traditional patterns of cultural transmission in which forms of interiority were inscribed on the body by customary practices while being ascribed to natural forces. They help disengage the construction/representation of mind or soul from the prediscursive dominance of social reproduction and begin to resuscitate it within discursive fields of pedagogy, art, and conduct literature, where both the human capacity and the motivation for inscribing the soul on the body are more precariously exposed. The ancient association of physiognomy with medicine meant that analysis of the signifying activity of the body was traditionally a sort of symptomatology focused on the involuntary emission of soul signs—signs of the soul’s medical or ethical or humoral condition. By contrast the emphasis in courtesy books is not only on controlled behavior but also on the voluntary performance of “involuntary” soul signs. The message conveyed by the behavioral technique Castiglione called *sprezzatura* is, “Look how artfully I pretend to be natural.” (Or is it, “Look how naturally I pretend to be artful”?)

It is when a rival credo challenges the old physiognomic formula, the face is the index of the mind, that the latter is compelled to abandon its comfortable hiding place of power within the tacit background of customary practices, to come forward and assert itself, and to defend its virtue. The face *should* be the index of the mind, the natural expression of the subject’s inner nature, but in Early Modern Europe the interpenetration of technical with social change imposes a new and unsettling semiotic task: the face is now required to be the index of the mind’s ability to make the face the index of the mind. The representation of an inner self can no longer be left or delegated to nature; it gets promoted as a skill to be cultivated, a technique of performance essential to successful participation in public life; something princes, courtiers, statesmen, lawyers, merchants, prelates, doctors, and even artists and poets have to learn—not to mention their daughters, wives, and mothers.

My argument about commissioned or official portraiture is that it both contributes to and is affected by this context of change, which largely accounts for the pressure to modify the mimesis of physical forms in accordance with orthopsychic norms. But the argument calls for a mode of interpretation sensitive to the effect of the conflict between the traditional credo and its rival, and this means a mode sensitive to the signifiers of technique and intentional performance that constitute the evidence of the new semiotic task of self-representation; sensitive, in a word, to *posing*. One of the flaws of physiognomic ephrasis in art history is that in treating the image as an allegory of the archive it bypasses the act of posing, which, in the prephotographic era, must always be an intentional act. The intention to be represented representing oneself breaks or at least loosens the linkage that makes the face the index of the mind in the kind of prediscursive or natural relation of effect to cause premised by such “sciences” as physiognomy, pathognomy, metoposcopy, astrology, and humoral psychology.

The main challenge to easy acceptance of the traditional credo comes from the conditions of portraiture, to which I now turn as a prelude to discussing the fictions of the pose. In normal practice, a portrait presupposes a desire and decision to be portrayed. If we read the sitter’s image in the light of that assumption, we make the further assumption that the portrait signifies the act of portrayal that produced it. This in turn generates a third assumption, which is that the portrait not only signifies but also represents its cause. It is an image of the act of portrayal that produced it. Perhaps I should say that it represents *an* act of portrayal, since the image of the sitter posing for the painter couldn’t be assumed by the sitter’s contemporaries—and shouldn’t be assumed by us—to be a faithful copy of the actual event. We know, for example, that painters worked from casual observation, from other paintings, from portrait miniatures and medals, and from verbal descriptions. And even if we assume that painter and sitter were present to each other our fantasies of what was likely to have taken place during the production of the image lead us to premise that the image may screen out or disguise or distort many details of the actual productive process. For example, interruptions, substitutions (of another’s body), and changes of design: if we take these to be generic concomitants of normal practice, our awareness that they are unrepresented doesn’t dispel them. Rather it places them in reserve, marks them as conspicuously excluded, and the effect of this move is to throw into sharp relief the fictiveness of the represented situation.

What actual posing is like can be grasped from the following anecdotes reported by Lorne Campbell:

A bored sitter obviously presents problems and not all portraitists were able to paint and at the same time to keep the sitters entertained. In 1494, Cardinal Ippolito d’Este informed his sister Isabella that it was only for the love of her that he would submit to the tedium of sitting. . . . Isabella herself found the patience involved in staying still so much of an annoyance that she resolved in 1511 never again to make the sacrifice of sitting for her

portrait. In 1516, she wrote that “we no longer wish to endure that boredom of staying patient and sitting for our portrait.” Vasari was conscious of the “melancholy” frequently found in portraits of abstracted sitters and claimed that “while Leonardo was painting Mona Lisa’s portrait, he engaged people to play and sing, and jesters to keep her cheerful and remove that melancholy which painting usually gives to portraits.”²¹

I conclude from such evidence that the image we see is not the mere consequence of the productive act. It is not merely an *icon*—here I use the word *icon* in C. S. Peirce’s sense of a sign that denotes by resemblance. It is an *index*, which Peirce defines as a sign that denotes some dynamic or causal relation between itself and its referent (the standard example: smoke is an index of fire). The portrait is an index in that it represents the act of portrayal that produced it. Indeed, it is an *indexical icon* in that it purports to denote by resemblance the act of portrayal that produced it. But in spite of what it purports we know that its indexical iconicity is in that respect misleading. For what it indexes is a *normative* act of portrayal rather than the normal or actual process we imagine. In terms of what we assume about the actual painting and posing process, the portrait gives us a selectively abstracted and idealized image of posing. It creates a referential illusion. What it pretends only to reflect and refer to is in fact something it constitutes. Thus it represents the three-way diachronic transaction between painter, sitter, and observer in a purely fictional field. This is the basic plot, scenario, or fiction of Early Modern portraiture, and I call it *the fiction of the pose*. Its claim is that the sitter and painter were present to each other during the act of painting; that the sitter did in the studio (or wherever) what she or he appears to be doing in the portrait; and that in posing before the painter he or she was projecting the self-representation aimed at future observers.

I am only giving a name to this scenario. Leonardo and his contemporaries invented it. The best way to grasp the significance of the invention—the way suggested by Martin Kemp in his book on Leonardo—is to contrast Leonardo’s parade of caricatures, both satiric and heroic, to his painted portraits.²² Kemp remarks on the artist’s predilection for “satirically grotesque drawings of bizarre characters . . . particularly those of a narrative nature,” and on his interest in searching “for extremes of physiognomy and expression.” “By these means he commanded an inexhaustible parade of characters, each evoking through its facial ‘signs’ an ‘air’ expressive of its inner temperament” (156, 159). Whether these studies were gratuitous and self-delighting or sketches for such projects as the *Last Supper*, *Adoration*, and *Battle of Anghiari*, they depict precisely the convergence of physiognomic with melodramatic simplification that the surviving portraits so melodramatically renounce, though not without teasing observers to reach for one or another clue to a recognizable “inner temperament.” As generic statements, the portraits take exception to the rule that the way to represent the face as an index of the mind is for painters to help sitters reduce themselves to symbols or reveal their true identities with emblems or impersonate exemplary

historical figures. Under this rule, the semblance produced by the more or less accomplished mimesis of a corporeal presence indexically transforms that presence, the referent of the semblance, from sitter to model. That is, the person who posed for the picture becomes, through its representation, little more than the quasi-anonymous bearer of allegorical, dynastic, and narrative (or textual) meanings; a dead image. The “real” face/mind relation of a model, as opposed to that of a sitter, is irrelevant noise. Its absence, entailed by the model’s theatrical function, may of course be inscribed in any sitter as the defining condition of the subject in representation, but I don’t think this helps us much with Leonardo. Something is conspicuously withheld; an absence presents itself. But if the charged and explicit manner with which he enhances the anonymity of his sitters represents that absence as a problem for the observer, it shifts attention from the absence embedded in being-in-the-world to the absence embedded in being-in-the-pose. Leonardo thus offers us a critical standpoint from which to view the ideological pressure imposed on portraiture by contexts of patronage that encourage the equation of physiognomic identity with orthopsychic exemplarity.

Kemp argues that in the *Mona Lisa* Leonardo was “playing upon . . . our irresistible tendency to read facial signs of character in everyone we meet” (fig. 4). The *sfumato* that prevents “the physiognomic signs” from constituting “a single, fixed, definite image” arouses and frustrates the desire to read the face as the index of the mind. What is new and important in the portrait, Kemp argues, is the “communicative liaison” it establishes, the representation of ongoing scopic encounter in which “she reacts to us, and we cannot but react to her.”²³ To this I add that if the *Mona Lisa* has always made observers conscious of her consciousness of posing—conscious, in the Lacanian formula, of giving herself to be seen—the fiction of the pose reminds us that the sitter’s first observer is the painter. Imagine, then, that she is watching the painter paint her. The turn of the body and barrier of the arms seem a little guarded at the same time that the understated modeling of the hands makes them appear relaxed, as if they had been in the same position long enough for her to have forgotten about them. The expression on her face bears traces of a similar tendency toward relaxation, but one that is being patiently, obligingly, and benevolently resisted. To view the sitter as if she is being portrayed in the act of being portrayed is to sense a protracted and very slightly strained or wearied but courageous attempt to continue looking at the birdie and continue saying “cheese.” When, however, we shift roles and imagine that the observer rather than the painter is the sitter’s partner in scopic interaction, everything changes. Now the product of the protracted effort of posing and painting conforms more closely to Cecil Gould’s sense of “regal relaxation,” “superb confidence and tranquillity,” but veiled by the attitude of “prolonged equivocation” or, in Kemp’s phrase, the “knowing reticence” of expression Leonardo achieves by ambiguating “the crucial clues” to physiognomic apprehension.²⁴ The difference between these two scenarios is evidence of a scopic

encounter at once so ambiguous in its cues and so sharply particularized in its functions (being painted versus being observed) that its range of possible meanings changes.

The romance of the *Mona Lisa* that has been going on for nearly half a millennium testifies to the success of devices that hide the mind's construction from the face. Leonardo accentuates the drama of scopic interaction by making the fiction of the pose conspicuous enough to occlude the kind of access to inner truth that physiognomy promises. The indexical cues to the sitter's temperament, status, or emotional state are obscured by another set of indexical cues, those that focus attention on the sitter's reaction to painter and observers. This portrait, which is without identifying emblems or attributes, which abjures the inert likeness of a family portrait, and which also abjures the kind of background that would support a historical or religious event and delimit the meaning of the expression—this portrait seems totally dedicated to representing the hiddenness and complicating the drama of the posing consciousness.²⁵

A painting that makes palpable the presence of observers to the sitter expresses a theatrical or rhetorical intention to pose. No equivalent of the candid camera, no voyeuristic disclosure, is possible here *except* within the context of deliberate self-representation. It will be obvious to anyone familiar with Michael Fried's *Absorption and Theatricality* that I am beginning to trespass on his property, since I am concerned here with a version of the contrast he draws between the-



FIGURE 4. Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*, c. 1505–14. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

atricality and absorption. By absorption Fried means the representation of figures in “the state or condition of rapt attention, of being completely occupied or . . . absorbed in what [they are] . . . doing, hearing, thinking, feeling.”²⁶ Absorption implies inattention to, or the absence of, the observer, and for Denis Diderot, on whose opinions Fried centers, this unself-conscious spontaneity guarantees the truthfulness of representation: “The state of our soul,” he wrote, “is one thing, the account we give of it, to ourselves and others, is another” (91). Thus if the painter wants to persuade beholders that the body they see is a true index of its mind, he will also have to persuade them to accept the fiction of their absence or nonexistence as beholders. Diderot and his contemporaries were made uneasy by the “inherent theatricality” of portraiture, the constitutive conventions of which “call for exhibiting a subject, the sitter, to the public gaze; put another way, the basic action depicted in a portrait is the sitter’s presentation of himself or herself to be beheld.” This formulation corresponds exactly to what I refer to as the fiction of the pose, and it raises the question whether it is possible, as Fried puts it, for the portrait painter “to *detheatricalize beholding* and so make it once again a mode of access to truth and conviction” (104).

Fried is careful to note that the terms of his contrast are developed in response to a particular discursive context, and perhaps for that reason they don’t quite work for me as they stand. If the fiction of the pose as I’ve defined it is basic to portraiture, then so is theatricality. From the premise that the portrait indexes an intentional act of portrayal, it follows that absorption can only be a variation on, or a conspicuously posed rejection of, the fiction of the pose. The absorption that neutralizes the presence of the observer must therefore be construed as *posing so as to appear not to be posing*. The pictorial evidence suggests at least two different versions of this scenario: the voyeuristic fiction of candor (as in “candid camera”), posing so as to appear otherwise engaged and oblivious of being painted or observed; and the fiction of distraction, posing so as to make it appear that after setting up to be portrayed and observed, one’s body holds the pose but one’s mind has wandered.²⁷

These variations or counterplots of the normative fiction appear with great frequency in Dutch painting, especially where portraiture verges on genre, and genre on portraiture, and some of the most complex performances are those of Vermeer and Rembrandt.²⁸ But my interest in the present discussion is in still another variation that transgresses Fried’s categories: it is possible for a sitter to appear “unconscious or oblivious of everything but the object of his . . . absorption” *and* to make it appear that this object is precisely his “consciousness of being beheld.”²⁹ The presence of the observer, far from being neutralized, is fundamental to this fiction: the sitter preemptively offers herself or himself as an object of attention, indeed, an object rewarding attention, and in this respect the pose is theatrical. But while conspicuously posing, the sitters enacting this fiction just

FIGURE 5. Agnolo Bronzino, *Lucrezia Panciatichi*, c. 1540. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.



as conspicuously avoid eye contact. The looks they solicit go unreturned; the spectators they acknowledge go unrecognized.

Paradoxically, this theatrical refusal to engage or interact with spectators may serve a detheatricalizing function if it stages a corresponding refusal to try to control response by “feignings or impostures addressed to the beholder.”³⁰ The sitter might then appear to entrust to the painter the task of objectively portraying features in a manner that guarantees transparent “access to truth and conviction.” For reasons that will soon emerge, I call this *the fiction of objectivity*. I distinguish it from the fiction of distraction by noting that in the latter the sitter’s look tends to appear unfixed or unfocused, while in the fiction of objectivity it tends to appear fixed, as if responding to the instruction not to move. In the three-quarters view, the sitter’s look is fixed away from the observer, to the left or to the right. But there is also a more engaged frontal variant of the fiction of objectivity in which the eyes are expressly averted; and another in which the sitter looks fixedly in the observer’s direction but seems to stare—vacantly, or impassively, or complacently, or disdainfully (see fig. 5).

The aim of the signifiers of absorption in Fried’s account is to neutralize the position of empirical beholder in order to constitute “a new sort of beholder,” an observer position founded on the conviction of its “absence from the scene of representation.”³¹ The signifiers of objectivity in Early Modern portraiture produce a different effect: they serve to make the face the index of exemplary value,

the transparent embodiment of “ideals of public virtue” presenting itself for the observer’s admiration, veneration, and edification. Since it does the work of holy icons, classical statues, and ancestral masks, the exemplary portrait doesn’t want to neutralize the observer. On the contrary, it represents a figure that presents itself to be looked at but refuses to return the favor. Remember the less famous of Walter Benjamin’s two definitions of aura: “To perceive the aura of an object we look at means to invest it with the ability to look at us in return.”³² The aura is strangely enhanced when the object is invested with that ability precisely in order to dramatize its refusal to use it. For then, the sitter’s look dies into the gaze.

The two sources from which art historians derive the Early Modern portrait suggest why this is so: history paintings on the one hand, and, on the other, such commemorative images as the death mask, the sculptured portrait bust, the relief profile, and the medallion. As to the former, I have in mind not only donor portraits in religious and other narratives but also the later development described by Johannes Wilde when he remarks that because “the new portrait of the Cinquecento was a creation of monumental painters, not of specialists . . . you no longer have a record of each individual feature, no longer a map of every wrinkle in the face,” but rather a totalizing impression that conveys social position, profession, character, and personality.³³ The effect of monumentality and restraint is to distance the image and discourage the observer from coming up close to get a better view of what Vasari calls “the coarseness of living bodies.”³⁴ In terms of the conflict built into the general thesis of mimetic idealism, this entailed—according to contemporary writers on art—a double conquest of nature. First you conquered nature in the sense that you mastered natural appearances through the science of art; then you conquered it (or her) in the sense that you produced more perfect images than nature did. This internal contradiction has been well articulated by David Summers, who argues that the achievement of “naturalism,” the ability systematically to reduce imitated forms “to their optical elements,” opened up the possibility of the “aesthetic determination of relationships” that “would finally transform and overthrow naturalism itself.”³⁵

Turning from history painting to the other source of the portrait, the commemorative image, we can see the same logic at work. Correcting the defects of nature, transcending the coarseness of living bodies, doesn’t mean merely touching them up to idealize them. On the contrary, the discourse of art from Alberti to Vasari betrays its commitment to violence against nature—to the necessity to flay, dissect, and dismember natural bodies in order to reconstruct them on a better model. Death in nature—the death *of* nature—is the prerequisite to the glorified state of the body resurrected by art. Again and again in Vasari’s *Lives*, the rhetoric of resurrection, with its promise of a life *ultra naturam*, is displaced to an ideology of artistic creation based on fantasies of violence *contra naturam*. If such fantasies don’t apply directly to the case of the exemplary portrait there are other senses in which the production of the orthopsychic subject may be said to

be born out of death. We can see this in what may be (next to the death mask) the extreme version of the fiction of objectivity, the profile view (see fig. 6). In an important essay published more than a quarter of a century ago, Rab Hatfield analyzed a famous set of male profile portraits that have in common the failure to “convince as representations of the actual physical structure of human faces”—they seem rather to represent relief sculpture—and he noted that “any real sense of intimacy is defeated by the profile view and by the remote flatness of the face.” He claimed that the logic of their design conveys primarily a sense of aesthetic stasis, and he suggested that the ledges in the portraits may be associated with funerary symbolism.³⁶ More recently, David Rosand has developed this idea, connecting the ledge to antique funerary conventions, and arguing that it can signify either a posthumous portrait or else a *memento mori*.³⁷ Rosand unfortunately harps on the *memento mori* theme—unfortunately, because by concentrating on that universal elegiac message he deprives himself of a more context-specific interpretation, one in which the relation of the portrait to the sitter is neither *posthumous* nor—forgive the coinage—*prehumous* but *inhumous*, that is, a death buried, preserved, and represented in the portrait itself, a death signified by the fiction of objectivity.

Hatfield gets us closer to this meaning when he concludes from his survey of the subjects of several profiles that they “made notable contributions to society and . . . in several cases can be held to have died for its sake” (328; this is a euphemism; according to the evidence he cites, some were murdered, and not in recognition of their altruistic public service; but the euphemism suggests the kind of work being done by the profiles). He notes that it isn’t known whether the profiles were painted posthumously or from life, but he claims that it doesn’t matter because everything in the portraits conspires to abstract the semblance from the particularities of physical appearance and encounter: the remoteness of the profile view, its defeat of intimacy, the “ordered beauty” that “seems the fixed condition” of the sitters’ “being,” and the sacrifice of likeness on the altar of exemplarity (318)—together, these features signify that when the look dies into the gaze, when “the stuff of life” is evacuated, and the bodily site prepared to receive the orthopsychic objectivity of an icon, it matters little whether or not the sitters *were* alive since they *are* inhumed in the portrait like the skeleton beneath Christ in Masaccio’s *Trinity*.

These examples of the fiction of objectivity suggest to me that it is a mistake to reduce its meaning, the way Rosand does, to the pathos of the *memento mori* theme and its corollary, the immortality conferred by art.³⁸ Rather, the fiction expresses the desire to transcend what is, from the standpoint of exemplarity, the natural or defective or fragmented self-image which that standpoint relegates to the category of the nonexemplary. Several meanings of the term *objective* characterize the effect of this fiction: thinglike, inanimate; impartial, detached; impassive, not swayed by nor displaying emotion; seen from the outside, the object of

others' attention. Embodying the gaze, disdaining the look, the orthopsychic subject has exchanged his merely natural and sullied flesh for a glorified body of paint, has passed through the looking glass into the pure ideality of an icon. It is as an icon, an other (not a self), that he gives himself to be observed, admired, commemorated, and venerated.

So much, then, for the orthopsychic *he*. But how about the orthopsychic *she*? What Hatfield did for the male profile in 1965 Patricia Simons did for the female profile in 1988, in an important essay from which I quote the following excerpts, excerpts that speak for themselves and need no comment from me (see fig. 7):

Like nuns and donors, the women portrayed in profile are displayed and visible objects . . . inactive objects gazing elsewhere, decorously averting their eyes.

A woman, who was supposedly vain and narcissistic, was nevertheless made an object in a framed "mirror" when a man's worldly wealth and her ideal dowry, rather than her "true" or "real" nature, was on display.



FIGURE 6. Paolo Uccello (?), *Profile of a Young Man*, c. 1530–35. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Chambéry.

FIGURE 7. Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Giovanna Tornabuoni*, c. 1488. Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.

The paradoxical rendering visible of invisible virtues, available to the visual medium as it was not possible in social reality, meant that artistic representation was a contribution to rather than a reflection of social language or control. A woman's painted presence shares with cultural values of the time an ideal signification.

When . . . Verrocchio or Leonardo . . . carved or drew Alexandrine heroes in profile, they elaborated masculinity by way of solid helmets and breastplates even more three-dimensional than the faces which are also modelled in some relief. But Florentine female profiles tend to appear on unstable, spindly bases. . . . The vulnerable and elegantly artificial neck . . . separates the face from its already insubstantial body. . . . In these mostly anonymous profile portraits, face and body are as emblematic as coats of arms.³⁹

Though the portraits of both men and women seem to be committed to reproducing recognizable likenesses, those of women tend to be less mimetic and more idealizing than those of men, and thus their mode of objectivity differs: as heraldic reifications, "carriers of a 'dowry of virtue,'" the women were, like their portraits, "primarily objects of a male discourse which appropriated a kind of female labor or property" (17, 18).

What I have been trying to show in this discussion is that if one approaches Early Modern portraiture through the fictions of the pose one is in a better position to attend to what Hayden White calls "the content of the form"—a better position, that is, to integrate sociopolitical and even, to a limited extent, psychoanalytic interpretation into the sort of formal analysis we call close reading in literature. But so far I have not done much close reading, since I was trying to unpack the theoretical apparatus. Now that it is more or less in place, I shall devote the remainder of the essay to more detailed interpretations of a few portraits that play games with the fiction of objectivity.

Let's begin by returning to our friend Cardinal Mezzarota, or Trevisan (fig. 1), and recalling what the art historian says about him: with its evocation "of a Roman bust" and its "ironical compression of the mouth," the painting "does full justice to the Cardinal's stern and resolute character"; "although the portrait is objective"—his word, not mine—it "does more than record the Cardinal's features, for it suggests the strength of will, the severe habit of command, the disillusioned experience of affairs that had stamped the countenance of this exceptional sinner."⁴⁰ Examining some of the features that contribute to the overall effect will help us see if they support this account of the sitter's character, at least within the confines of the fiction of the pose. The first thing to notice is that the eyes are steadfastly fixed on a spot above and to the left of the observer. Second, the discreet foreshortening reinforces this look by positioning the observer below the head. Third, the tight circumflex of the mouth, corresponding to what Lightbown calls "compression," is accentuated by the incised arrislike furrows curving down to the chin- and necklines. These lines, because they seem to be folds rather than wrinkles, indicate an effort to tuck in the chin. Fourth, there is a subdued clash between the graphic mimesis of sculptural treatment (in texture, contours,

and linear incision) and the painterly infusion of pink tones about the cheeks and eyes; and there's another between the stiff vermilion mantle and the optical or tonal vibrations that animate the finely pleated white shirt. Lorne Campbell argues that the three-quarters view together with the treatment of detail and light suggest that Mantegna may have been influenced by Flemish portraits to "look anew at Roman portrait sculpture and to produce classicizing adaptations of a Netherlandish portrait type."⁴¹

When we frame the image within the fiction of the pose, these four features—the first three more obviously than the clash between graphic and painterly handling—work together to put a peculiar spin on Lightbown's physiognomic analysis: the character he flatly ascribes to the historical sitter is transformed into an impression the sitter in the portrait tries to perform. The scenario indexed by the pose may be phrased as the sitter's instruction to the painter: "Let's do our best to dramatize *gravitas*; to turn me into a Roman hero; to make me look monumental, grand, warlike, exemplary; to make my face the index of a mind intent on controlling what the face reveals about the mind." The fourth feature can now be seen to reinforce this effect: the mingling of stylistic tendencies associated with Northern and Southern practices provides an interpretive code, in which the optical, transitory, nonsculptural passages associated with Netherlandish painting set off the Romanizing of the head, and the contrast marks it as an intentional performance, an effort to freeze the pose in a classical attitude that accords with the preestablished scenario.

Pope-Hennessey uses the portrait to prove his point that Mantegna's commitment to the antique was too academic and inflexible: for Mantegna, the sanction of ancient art "was absolute; it must be transcribed and not transposed."⁴² But the standpoint of the fiction of the pose produces a different reading: the effect of the antique is transposed to a sitter who stages it, gives it to be seen, strives to camouflage himself in it, and reveals the effort by an attitude that isn't entirely comfortable. This portrait cannot be classified simply as an official portrait because its focus is on the effort to perform official portraiture, the ongoing and not yet secure project of seeking refuge in the marble sanctity of the surface of art. When Lightbown claims that the portrait "is objective in that there is no attempt to render mood or expression," he means no attempt by the painter. But what about the sitter? A little torquing will turn the statement toward the cardinal: he doesn't appear to be engaging potential observers with a display of mood or expression aimed in their direction. Rather he appears to trust his face to an interpretation that confers on it the objectifying metaphor of the Roman bust, with its connotations of an achieved and fixed identity appropriately commemorated in durable stone or marble. It is the effect of objectivity that the sitter, cooperating with the painter, and discernibly conscious of being beheld, strives to perform, and it is, in turn, this performative project that the portrait dramatizes.

Notice how our focus on the fiction of the pose affects the kind of question

we put to the portrait. We no longer have the brass to pop the physiognomic question, What is the nature of the mind indexed by the face? or, What does the portrait tell us about the sitter's mind, personality, essential nature, and so on? The question now becomes, How can we isolate the means by which a portrait represents the effort of painter and sitter to make it appear that the face is the index of the mind, regardless of the content we assign to the mind? To pursue this line of questioning is to forgo the attempt to translate the essential nature into a particular description. It is, instead, to search for the pictorial conventions that signify, not the essential nature, but the intent to reveal it. And as I suggested, this intent is best signified by formal devices conventionally associated with the effect of objectivity. In my variation of Fried's absorption formula, these are devices that make sitters appear "unconscious or oblivious of everything but" their "consciousness of being beheld." Sitters who cultivate orthopsychic objectivity do so by refusing eye contact: disdaining the look enables them to embody the cultural gaze. As Mantegna's portrait reveals, this format allows of surprisingly complicated images, and by the middle of the sixteenth century Mannerist variations on the fiction of objectivity produce remarkable effects. I turn now to the work of a painter whose subtly subversive experiments in the fiction are among the most haunting and compelling I know.

Pope-Hennessey writes that in the sixteenth century "the Medici showed an almost morbid interest in self-perpetuation, which resulted from a sense of dynastic insecurity," and he goes on to document this with a reference to the way Baccio Bandinelli's historical statues of the Medici, commissioned by Cosimo I, reveal the patron's "bias in favor of a class of portrait that was durable, timeless, and detached." This bias was what "commended Bronzino to Cosimo I": "He approached the human features as still life. If the ducal physiognomy had to be reproduced in painting and not just in the impassive art of sculpture, this style was the least undignified" (181–83). A similar effect, the substitution of ivory for flesh, accentuates the objectivity of Cosimo's wife and son in Bronzino's great double portrait (see fig. 8), and commentators respond primarily to this effect: Eleanora's "face appears unnaturally pale, smooth, shiny and hard, and her eyes are less luminous than the pearls of her necklace." The eyes are not translucent but "merely lustrous," and she is made "to resemble a highly finished carving of ivory with eyes of semi-opaque gems." This is from Lorne Campbell, who also notes how the sky "pales to an area of almost pure blue pigment around her head, as though she were emitting light like a haloed saint in a religious image."⁴³ Another critic centers on the way the still-life rendering of the dress "accentuates the inanimate quality" of the pose; "the Duchess is as rigidly armed as her husband" in the other portrait.⁴⁴

The emphasis on the formal indicators of objectivity picks out an important aspect of the painting, but it isn't so much Bronzino's subject as it is his target. That is, the painting stages objectivity not to sanctify it but to interrogate it. I

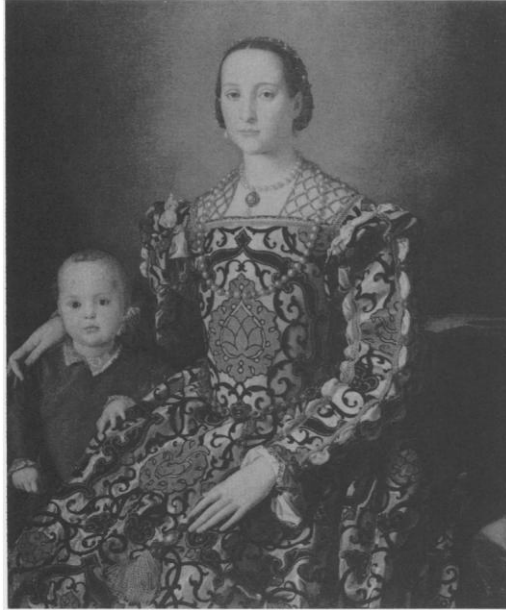


FIGURE 8. Agnolo Bronzino, *Eleanor of Toledo and Son*, c. 1546. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

think you begin to sense its strangeness when you imagine yourself doing something you can't easily do in the little room of the Uffizi in which it is hung, and that is to move back and forth on a perpendicular shuttle in order to respond to its pushes and pulls. For if the rigid armor of Eleanora's gown, pose, and stare warn you to keep your distance, the warning is motivated, intensified, by the powerful attractive force of the still-life detail tempting you to violate the barrier and touch the idol. The smoothness produced by Bronzino's self-effacing brushwork is occasionally, and conspicuously, interrupted by passages of textured pigment that roughen those areas of the panel on which the gold brocade patterns of the gown are painted. Unlike similar effects in medieval devotional panels and altarpieces, they do not fix attention on the preciousness of the actual support that symbolizes the value of the religious context within which the icon functions. Rather they pass through the window of representation to enhance the sensuous and tangible quality of illusory fabric. But in doing so, they bring the fabric forward to the surface, closer to the observer, as if the painter's bid for admiration insidiously compromises—and thus dramatizes—the attempt to ensconce the idol in a *cordon sanitaire* of distanced objectivity. Thus at the same time that scopic dynamism—the theatrical exchange and recognition of looks and glances—is suppressed, the distance protected by suppression is jeopardized. The resultant tension alters our sense of the sitter's attitude. The extended left hand appears more defensive, the eyes more hooded, especially when contrasted to those of her son, who fixedly stares us off.

The painting invites us to pry, dares us to violate the taboo of orthopsychic objectivity, and as it does, the hooded look knowingly inculcates the observer (“You want to see? Well, take a look at this!”),⁴⁵ and Bronzino’s “haloed saint” becomes the gaze. Hers is the calm of a stately, ascetic, and profanely sumptuous madonna with features vaguely evocative of Piero della Francesca’s Marian faces. The pose declares that what she gives to be seen is the essential *she* of courtly culture and its gestures of religious appropriation. Regal, maternal, conjugal, her fate—reversing Galatea’s—is to be transfigured into exemplary artifact.⁴⁶ The artifact is integral: within it there is only matter; its meaning, its soul, is all on the surface. If there is something more than meets the eye, it is of no consequence. Or at least it is none of our business, which begins and concludes in genuflection. She trusts the painter’s art to hide the mind’s construction from the face. Bronzino, however, betrays her recourse to that art, motivates it by the variations in facture that simultaneously establish and threaten the taboo against encroachment, and thus makes a small breach in the fiction of objectivity he and the duchess so flamboyantly perform.

His superb portrayal of the constraints and possibilities of this fiction heavily depends on the ability to represent the suppression of scopic dynamism as an effect at once conspicuous in its denial of eye contact and subtle in the various shades of dramatic meaning he teases out of it. Compare, for example, the spirited refusal of Laura Battiferri with the meditative reluctance of Ugolino Martelli (fig. 9). Both portraits seem meticulously designed and carefully staged to rep-

FIGURE 9. Agnolo Bronzino, *Portrait of Laura Battiferri*, c. 1560. Museo de Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.



resent sitters too preoccupied in mind or spirit to be diverted by trivial interactions with the very observers for whom they so meticulously and carefully pose. The arch display of literary props simultaneously confirms and questions the ascetic commitment to the life of the mind indexed by the pose. At the same time that the sitters simulate absorption in Michael Fried's sense, both give themselves to be seen—the fingers on the books are cues to this motive, more blatant in Laura's case, more ambiguous in Ugolino's. The rendering of flesh tones and facial contours—they seem to have been modeled with a carpenter's plane—further pushes absorption toward objectivity, and leaves the sitters uneasily poised between two fictions, two desires, of self-representation.

The dramatic power of Bronzino's portraiture comes from its coy feints toward and disturbance of the fiction of objectivity. In his hands, the objectivity is literalized as the goal of the posing subject who, striving toward orthopsychic integrity, aspires to the condition of an object fully made by art, an effigy with nothing hidden within, transparently expressing on the surface the *disegno interno* that forms it—turned inside out, so to speak, with its soul shining through the glazes, the observed of all observers. The desire of objectivity is partly conveyed by the visual hyperbole of the Galatean inversion, that is, reversing Pygmalion's act but conforming to his misogynist wish in giving flesh the smoothness, and sometimes the hues and tints, of ivory, marble, porcelain, or wood, an effect augmented by strategically stressed contour lines that further freeze the effigies in place. Yet this feint toward objectivity is only the setting or stage for the Bronzino drama, the force of which is to challenge the impression of objectivity by intensifying the sense of a studied theatrical pose.

No painter was in a better position than Titian, the prince of the painters of princes, to celebrate the values embedded in the fiction of objectivity, and I want to conclude with an example of the way he constructs and subverts the fiction, because it is so different from Bronzino's way. The best account I know of the kind of temptation Titian faced—and overcame—is Jean-Paul Sartre's wry comment on the function of official portraits: they “relieve the prince of the burden of imagining his divine right. . . . Even before meeting his model, the painter already knows the appearance he must fix upon the canvas: quiet strength, serenity, severity, justice.” As part of the apparatus for achieving “solidarity between the prince and his subjects,” the official portrait, “which protects a man against himself, partakes of the nature of a religious object.”⁴⁷ This comment feeds my fantasy that the Cinquecento versions of the orthopsychic ideal may be reactions dialectically motivated by the potential imperfections the new mimetic skill is able to reveal. The function of idealization in portraiture may to some extent resemble the one George Hersey attributes to the classical orders when—in *The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture*—he likens “the classical formulas for symmetry, scale, and proportion to taboos.”⁴⁸ Idealization works to sacralize the image, ward off the observer's evil eye, render the image inviolable. The possi-



FIGURE 10. Titian,
*Francesco Maria della
Rovere, Duke of Urbino*,
1536–38. Galleria degli
Uffizi, Florence.

bility of violation is proportional to the mastery of mimesis. Idealization offers the prince the armor of an alienating identity within which he can secrete what, according to Sartre, he sees reflected in non-Lacanian mirrors, “his only too human mediocrity” and a visage that betrays “only melancholy and confused moods” (157).

Titian’s response to this challenge is to portray sitters whose poses reveal their awareness of and sometimes their difficulty with the demand that they embody the imperious gaze. This has often been noted in the most official of his official portraits, *Charles V at the Battle of Muhlenberg*. Norbert Huse remarks that the sitter is “not entirely at one” with the occasion; David Rosand describes him as “a reluctant warrior whose face appears somewhat oppressed by the surrounding glitter of his armor,” and who seems “physically detached and emotionally distant.”⁴⁹ Even more poignant, in my opinion, is the portrait of the duke of Urbino, who was both an ally of Charles V and a captain of the papal forces (fig. 10).

Commentators have always singled out Titian’s ability to compress character and action in the sitter’s eyes, the look, the scopic encounter with observers.⁵⁰ In this respect, there is something odd about the duke. We should note first that the placement of the catchlight in the eyes diffuses the ocular contact the sitter makes with the painter/observer for whom he holds the pose. From a distance the pupils add their luster to the other precious reflectors of light in the sitter’s panoply, and thus participate in the iconography of ducal power. I am initially tempted to say that the eyes don’t so much *look* as *display themselves*; but on drawing closer I am surprised, and even moved, to discover a facial *Gestalt* that signifies absorption—

but absorption in the revised sense I've given to Fried's concept, absorption in the "consciousness of being beheld." The duke is gravely, thoughtfully, attentive to the task of sustaining a complicated pose that delivers the prearranged symbolic message. According to Harold Wethey, this message may in part be retrospective. Wethey notes that although Titian shows the duke "in the prime of life," he had "reached fifty-six in 1536, when the portrait was begun. His dark hair and beard belie his age, and one must conclude that Titian rolled back the years by a full decade to make this picture commemorative of the career of a man who died in 1538, the year in which the work was completed."⁵¹ This view is supported by the various symbolic attributes in the background which, as another commentator reminds us, had already been identified by Aretino; they signify his papal and imperial commissions and so make the portrait a retrospective "compendium" of the duke's career as "a great *condottiere*."⁵²

Such a program calls not for informal or lively representation but for the kind of statuesque and monumental treatment capable of compressing into the pose the integral totality of the career as the ex-pression of the sitter's *virtù*. It is in accordance with this physiognomic and orthopsychic norm that the duke adopts what the same commentator refers to as "a consciously heroic and celebratory pose" (228). But the duke's countenance, at once determined and reflective, reminds us that the occasion is commemorative as well as celebratory, and this suggests that in the statement I just quoted the adverb, *consciously*, should receive the primary emphasis. The portrait depicts a sitter who solicits—but does not fully sacrifice himself to—an impassive exemplarity; a sitter in the process of trying to memorialize what other commentators have called his "ideal persona" and the "impression of aristocratic poise and magnanimity."⁵³

Robert Hughes has recently praised Titian's portrayal of "the inflexible determination of the military commander."⁵⁴ This comment should be redirected from the military commander to the sitter, whom Titian depicts as determined to produce the effect of inflexible determination; determined to make his face the index of the sort of mind the ideal military commander is supposed to have—determined to lose himself, to vanish into that orthopsychic icon. But not quite making it; falling a little short. What is dramatized instead is the desire and the effort of self-representation. On the side of the sitter, this means that the failure to die into exemplarity, to embody the gaze, brings something else to life—the hint, the rustle, the expression, of something not fully legible in terms of the portrait's iconography. On the side of the painter, the portrait displays both his mastery and his love of the visual rhetoric of mimetic idealism, but it seems to do so primarily to display its resistance to the blandishments of that rhetoric. The resistance is conveyed by the way the painter makes the sitter his partner in exploiting the fiction of the pose to suggest, not the mind's construction *in* the face, but the mind's construction *of* the face; not the transparency of the body revealing the stereotypical soul of the commander, but the controlled activity of a body obeying

the command to deliver that stereotype; not physiognomy, but fiction. With restrained eloquence, Titian's portrait of the duke registers the sitter's attempt and partial failure to transcend the fictiveness of his pose. And if I can be forgiven for indulging a final romantic fantasy about the portrait, Wethey's idea that "Titian rolled back the years" combines with the retrospective iconography to add another dimension to that fictiveness: they make the portrait a souvenir of what has been lost, a farewell to arms that touches the reflective mood of the face with nostalgia.

In the opening pages of this essay I noted that my story of Early Modern portraiture would enact a kind of reversal of the process of objectification described by Barthes in *Camera Lucida* as the effect of photography. Perhaps by now the implications of this reversal are clear. But perhaps also my way of twisting the *Camera Lucida* passage makes those who know that text uneasy. For in the context of reversal the fiction of objectivity becomes a productive sort of metaphoric death and resurrection, a dying into the exemplarity and authenticity of the gaze. Barthes, however, accentuates the negative: in that "subtle moment" when being photographed troubles "a subject who feels he is becoming an object," he invariably suffers "from a sensation of inauthenticity" (13–14). The preceding analyses suggest that the positive and negative accounts are two sides of the same problematic: the problematic of narcissism as dissatisfaction with the inauthenticity of the subject's orthopsychic self-representations. If the death mask of objectivity marks the starting point of my story, what happens after, as I have tried to show, is that sitters begin to rouse themselves, to shake off this death, and to help painters represent them as living subjects by seeming either to try for, or to resist, the effect of objectivity.

I want to end with an anecdote about the end. Cut into the ledge at the base of a famous profile usually attributed to Uccello (fig. 6) is the inscription "ELFIN · FATUTTO," that is, "il fine fa tutto." The literal translation is "The End Does All," but Rab Hatfield argues that its exact meaning in context is unclear and "perhaps deliberately enigmatic." His candidate for the "best interpretation" is an ethical dictum characteristic of humanist thought, "'The Aim Counts' or 'The Purpose Decides.'"⁵⁵ But in view of the notion of objectivity I developed on the basis of Hatfield's research into profiles, I am drawn to another translation. The Italian word *fine* has two forms, masculine and feminine. The masculine *il fine* is predictably the more aggressive, meaning "purpose," "aim," "scope," while the predictably more passive feminine form, *la fine*, means "conclusion," "close," "ending." Let's grant that Hatfield's translation is grammatically and contextually correct: that noble profile is gravely set in an attitude of purposeful determination, and like the inscription its gravity seems engraved in relief. This is the representation not of a living form but of a sculptured form. It brings to a conclusion the project inscribed in but unfulfilled by Titian's duke of Urbino: the evacuation of life in the realization of exemplarity, the attainment of the armor of an alien-

ating identity. When I shift my glance from the duke to the profile, I feel the gathering force of an ungrammatical but deeply appropriate mistranslation: “La fine fa tutto”; the end does, or makes, all; death makes the whole. “Death is the mother of beauty,” the editorializing speaker of Wallace Stevens’s “Sunday Morning” admonishes the musing “she” who longs for paradise. “Death is the mother of beauty; hence from her, / Alone, shall come fulfillment to our dreams / And our desires.” The speaker’s resistance to that longing informs my history of the Early Modern career of portraiture, which falls from the orthopsychic paradise of the death mask and the commemorative profile into the conspicuously unrepresented desires of subjects who give themselves to be seen and watch themselves being watched (fig. 11):



FIGURE 11. Titian, *Portrait of a Woman* (“La Schiavone”), c. 1511–12. National Gallery, London. From David Rosand, *Titian* (New York, 1978), 77, plate 8.

Notes

1. This is a revised version of a lecture delivered before audiences at Stanford University; the Marcus W. Orr Center for the Humanities at Memphis State University; the University of California, San Diego; and the Folger Institute. I’m very grateful to members of these audiences for suggestions and criticisms that helped me with my

revisions. Special thanks go to Michael Baxandall, Catherine Soussloff, Deanna Shemek, Tyrus Miller, Timothy Hampton, Patricia Parker, Catherine Gimelli-Martin, Richard Martin, Gordon Osing, Don Wayne, Sheldon Nodelman, Geoffrey Batchen, Donna Hunter, and Louis Montrose. Thanks also to Prof. Kay Easson, Director of the Marcus W. Orr Center; to Dr. Lena Cowen Orlin, Executive Director of the Folger Institute, and her staff; and to Prof. Lois Potter, for courtesy, interest, and support that made the lectures I gave under their auspices a pleasurable and instructive occasion for me.

During the years in which I was struggling toward some understanding of the issues engaged in this essay, a few friends helped me with criticisms, suggestions, and encouragement at crucial moments, and made it possible for me to go on. The first was Mary Price, whose quiet but firm and bracing impatience with my early flights of nonsense gave me a new start. This essay is fondly dedicated to her. And I'm deeply grateful to Svetlana Alpers and Beth Pittenger for coping with and helping to damp the wings of my more recent flights of nonsense.

2. Under "genetic" I include all historical and archival reconstructions of the motives that condition the production, stylistic influences, theme, and function, of a painting. Under "contextual" I include broader accounts of its social and political ambience—for example, the apparatus of patronage, the place of painters in the occupational or guild structures of particular cities, and the influence of discourses of art on practice.
3. Otto Benesch, *Rembrandt*, trans. James Emmons (1957; reprint ed., Cleveland, 1969), 86.
4. Albert E. Elsen, *Purpose of Art*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1967), 219–20.
5. Such schemes are often introduced or justified on historical grounds as the beliefs and assumptions, and so on, of the past but not ours. The portrait is read as if from the standpoint of Rembrandt's contemporaries. This is a reading not of the portrait but of a seventeenth-century reading of the portrait—a reading sitter and painter "must have intended," since theirs was the *mentalité* of their time. The portrait itself remains to be interpreted in our terms, a procedure that needn't cause any problems once we reject the view that the past was peopled by "cultural dopes," as Anthony Giddens puts it in stigmatizing that view, and acknowledge that "their" terms are always constructed by us. So why not bypass intellectual-historical projections from the present to the past and shift instead to a more open, indeterminate reading that allows the painter and sitter to know as much as we do, to be as ironic or sophisticated about their *mentalité* as we think we are about theirs and ours?
6. Gary Schwartz, *Rembrandt: His Life, His Paintings* (New York, 1985), 305. According to Schwartz, the "iconographic, stylistic, and aesthetic meanings" of Rembrandt's portraits can't be understood without genetic research leading to knowledge of "the character and interests of those for whom they were painted" (358–59). The archive is thus the determinant of the interpretation of character, the painter's story, and the image. Given these premises, one can appreciate his irritation with the fuzzy mirror provided by nobodies who lacked the power of commission. Portraits of sitters who never made it into the archive are doomed to be meaningless. The portrait of Six has many of the formal characteristics Schwartz sneers at. Were it anonymous, it might well have been included in his diatribe.
7. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York, 1981), 13–14. I am very grateful to Prof. Geoffrey Batchen of the Visual Arts Department at the University of California, San Diego, for bringing this passage to my attention and for his own stimulating discussion of the politics and ambiguities of

- the pose in "Le Petit Mort: Photography and Pose," *SF Camerawork Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (1988): 3–6.
8. For a compact bibliographical and biographical profile of Trevisan, see the catalogue entry by Keith Christiansen in *Andrea Mantegna*, ed. Jane Martineau (New York, 1992), 333–35.
 9. John Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance* (New York, 1966), 86.
 10. Ronald Lightbown, *Mantegna* (Berkeley, 1986), 81–82.
 11. Massimo Firpo, "The Cardinal," in *Renaissance Characters*, ed. Eugenio Garin, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago, 1991), 53.
 12. Giles Robertson, *Giovanni Bellini* (London, 1968), 109; Terisio Pignatti, *The Golden Century of Venetian Painting* (Los Angeles, 1979), 34.
 13. Norbert Huse and Wolfgang Wolters, *The Art of Renaissance Venice: Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting, 1460–1590*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago, 1990), 241.
 14. See Joan Copjec, "The Orthopsychic Subject: Film Theory and the Reception of Lacan," *October* 49 (1989): 52–71, for an account of the Bachelardian genesis of *orthopsychic* and a very useful Lacanian critique and appropriation of the term. Semantically rich in its Lacanian context, it can be stretched without much effort toward the notion of *exemplary*; that intersection may be semantically lean but it is historically rich.
 15. Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1978), 74–75; the kernel phrase in the original text is "la préexistence au vu d'un donné-à-voir."
 16. Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1977), 4.
 17. Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, trans. Gaston du C. De Vere, 10 vols. (London, 1912), 3:182–83.
 18. David Summers, *The Judgment of Sense: Renaissance Naturalism and the Rise of Aesthetics* (Cambridge, 1987), 110–11.
 19. See Martin Kemp, *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat* (New Haven, 1990).
 20. Pope-Hennessy, *Portrait in the Renaissance*, 144, 300.
 21. Lorne Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits: European Painting in the 14th, 15th, and 16th Centuries* (New Haven, 1990), 178.
 22. Martin Kemp, *Leonardo da Vinci: The Marvelous Works of Nature and Man* (London, 1981).
 23. *Ibid.*, 266. I should note that when I speak of Leonardo's innovation I do so in the context of the development of Early Modern portraiture. Such effects had of course been produced before. See, for example, Sheldon Nodelman's brilliant account of the Roman veristic portrait, "How to Read a Roman Portrait," *Art in America*, January/February 1975, 27–33, esp. 30–31.
 24. Cecil Gould, *Leonardo: The Artist and the Non-Artist* (Boston, 1975), 113; Kemp, *Leonardo*, 266–67.
 25. This effect would only be enhanced if, as has been proposed, the portrait was cropped and the sitter was originally framed by the columns of a loggia, with the rest of the urban and domestic scene of posing conspicuously excluded. I am grateful to my colleague, Prof. Donna Hunter, for this suggestion.
 26. Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley, 1980), 10.
 27. Examples of the fiction of candor: Vermeer's letter writers, sleeper, and lace maker. Examples of the fiction of distraction: most of Rembrandt's studies of old men and women.

28. See my essays on Vermeer in Harry Berger, Jr., *Second World and Green World: Studies in Renaissance Fiction-Making*, ed. John Patrick Lynch (Berkeley, 1988), 441–509.
29. Michael Fried, *Courbet's Realism* (Chicago, 1990), 7.
30. *Ibid.*, 7.
31. Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality*, 104.
32. Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York, 1969), 188.
33. Johannes Wilde, *Venetian Art from Bellini to Titian* (London, 1974), 212, 224–28.
34. The Italian phrase is "goffe come li naturali": Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori ed architettori*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi (Florence, 1906), 4:9.
35. Summers, *Judgment of Sense*, 3, 8. My exclusive emphasis on idealization as the source of orthopsychic effects may have left the misleading impression that no such effects are produced by unidealized verisimilitude. On the contrary, by their refusal to idealize, many fifteenth-century Florentine portraits make a sociopolitical counter-statement similar to that attributed by Sheldon Nodelman to the Roman veristic portrait in the first century A.D. (see note 23 above). I note on p. 95 that the principal effect of mimetic "naturalism" was individualization. But in such portraits as those of Pietro Mellini, Neri Capponi, Cosimo de' Medici, and Filippo Strozzi, to mention only a few, veristic individualization may well signify the refusal of idealization. These merchants or oligarchs represent themselves as *cittadini* rather than *principi* or *nobili*, and they often minimize or eschew the markers of the patriciate.
36. Rab Hatfield, "Five Early Renaissance Portraits," *Art Bulletin* 47 (1965): 318, 324–27. See also Pope-Hennessy, *Portrait*, 35–48, for a similar but less probing account of male and female profiles.
37. David Rosand, "The Portrait, the Courtier, and Death," in *Castiglione: The Ideal and the Real in Renaissance Culture*, ed. Rosand and Robert W. Hanning (New Haven, 1983), 97–102.
38. *Ibid.*, 101–4.
39. Patricia Simons, "Women in Frames: The Gaze, the Eye, the Profile in Renaissance Portraiture," *History Workshop* 25 (1988): 12, 15, 16. See also two essays by Elizabeth Cropper: "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, *Petrarchismo*, and the Vernacular Style," *Art Bulletin* 58 (1976): 374–94; and "The Beauty of Women: Problems in the Rhetoric of Renaissance Portraiture," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago, 1986), 175–90. I am grateful to Stephen Campbell for directing me to Simons's essay and to the first Cropper essay.
40. Lightbown, *Mantegna*, 82.
41. Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits*, 232.
42. Pope-Hennessy, *Portrait in the Renaissance*, 85–86.
43. Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits*, 27, 25.
44. Charles McCorquodale, *Bronzino* (London, 1981), 93.
45. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, 101.
46. Bronzino's "is a world of flawless beings whose perfect physical and apparent emotional balance places them beyond exigencies of time and place and blurs the division between nature and art; the sitters in his portraits themselves attain to the status of works of art, wholly interchangeable with the *dramatis personae* of his religious, mythological and allegorical pictures"; McCorquodale, *Bronzino*, 9. In Bronzino's painting of Pygmalion and Galatea the statue has clearly crossed the boundary in the other direction; yet, as Beth Pittenger has pointed out to me, this traditional move is com-

- plicated by the fact that her *contrapposto* and especially the positions of her hands compose into a strong allusion to Michelangelo's *David*, thereby producing an ironic commentary on the autoerotic, homoerotic, and misogynist character of Pygmalion's art.
47. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Official Portraits," trans. Anne P. Jones, in *Essays in Phenomenology*, ed. Maurice Natanson (The Hague, 1966), 157–58.
 48. George Hersey, *The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture: Speculations on Ornament from Vitruvius to Venturi* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), 152.
 49. Huse, *Art of Renaissance Venice*, 251; David Rosand, *Titian* (New York, 1978), 126.
 50. See, for example, Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art* (Princeton, N.J., 1987), 312; and Michael Brenson's review of the 1990–91 *Titian, Prince of Painters* exhibit at the National Gallery (Washington), *New York Times*, 29 October 1990, sec. B, p. 4.
 51. Harold Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian*, vol. 2, *The Portraits* (London, 1971), 23. In the full-length preparatory drawing made in 1536 the duke looks older.
 52. Antonio Natale, catalogue entry in *Titian, Prince of Painters* (Munich, 1990), 228.
 53. Antonio Paolucci, "The Portraits of Titian," in *Titian, Prince of Painters*, 101; Charles Hope, *Titian* (New York, 1980), 80.
 54. Robert Hughes, review of the *Titian, Prince of Painters* exhibit in *Time*, 17 September 1990, 87.
 55. Hatfield, "Five Early Renaissance Portraits," 325.

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³⁶ **Five Early Renaissance Portraits**

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