

## ARTICLES AND ESSAYS



Pl. 4 Alesso Baldovinetti, *Portrait of a Lady in Yellow*, detail, London, National Gallery. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees, The National Gallery, London).

### Women in Frames: the gaze, the eye, the profile in Renaissance portraiture.

*by Patricia Simons*

Studies of Renaissance art have had difficulty in accommodating contemporary thinking on sexuality and feminism. The period which is presumed to have witnessed the birth of Modern Man and the discovery of the World does not seem to require investigation. Renaissance art is seen as a naturalistic reflection of a newly discovered reality, rather than as a set of framed myths and gender-based constructions. In its stature as high culture, it tends to be either applauded or ignored (by the political right or left respectively) as an untouchable, elite production. My work on profile portraits of Florentine women attempts to bring theories of the gaze to bear on some of these traditional Master theories, thereby unmasking the apparent inevitability and neutrality of Renaissance art.

Around forty independent panel portraits of women in profile survive from Quattrocento (fifteenth-century) Tuscany (Pl. 1), but it is thought that this genre began in Italy around the years 1425–50 with a cluster of five male portraits.<sup>1</sup> The only extended discussions of the Renaissance profile convention tend to presume a male norm for all surviving panels. Jean Lipman in 1936 wrote of the female figures' 'bulk and weight' and 'buoyant upthrust'. Rab Hatfield's study on the five male profiles of their 'bravura'

and 'strong shapes'.<sup>2</sup> Both writers were imbued by Jacob Burckhardt's interpretation of the Renaissance as a period giving birth to modern, individualistic man.<sup>3</sup> For the art historian specifically, the rise of an individualistic consciousness during the Renaissance, plotted by Burckhardt in 1860, explains the development of individualized and more numerous portraiture at the time.<sup>4</sup> Hence for Lipman these figures – 'completely exposed to the gaze of the spectator'<sup>5</sup> – were self-sufficient, invulnerable, displaying by the surface emphasis of the design only the surface of the self-contained person. Hatfield's later attention to social context shifted the emphasis, for he argued that 'intimacy is deflected' because 'social prestige' is being celebrated and a family 'pedigree' formed in the images. But the portrayed were characterized by their visual order as reasoned, intelligent men whose *virtù*, or public and moral virtue, required 'admiration and respect'.<sup>6</sup> For both writers, the profile portrait celebrates fame, and derives from public pictorial conventions.

Only in one brief footnote did Lipman recognize that 'the persons portrayed' were 'almost all women'. She went on, probably sharing Renaissance assumptions, to say that 'the feminine profile was intrinsically flatter and more decorative'.<sup>7</sup> So, in an article devoted to stylistic analysis, natural and aesthetic reasons 'explained' the predominance of the female in this format. Hatfield's focus on the five male examples meant that he too avoided a problem which my paper insists upon, namely, that civic fame and individualism are not terms applicable to fifteenth-century women and their imaging. The environment can be investigated by way of the kind of 'admiration' and 'gaze' to which the decorative images and the seemingly flattered women were exposed.

Other investigations, such as John Pope-Hennessy's survey of Renaissance portraiture, or Meyer Schapiro's examination of the profile in narrative contexts, also fail to make gender distinctions.<sup>8</sup> Usually, the utilization of the profile in fifteenth-century art is explained by recourse to the revival of the classical medal and the importation of conventions for the portrayal of courtly rulers, evoking the celebration of fame and individualism. Such causal reasoning is inappropriate to the parameters and frames of Quattrocento women. In this paper profile portraits will be viewed as constructions of gender conventions, not as natural, neutral images.

Behind this project lies a late-twentieth century interest in the eye and the gaze, largely investigated so far in terms of psychoanalysis and film theory.<sup>9</sup> Further, various streams of literary criticism and theory make us aware of the construction of myths and images, of the degree to which the reader (and the viewer) are active, so that, in ethnographic terms, the eye is a performing agent. Finally, feminism can be brought to bear on a field and a discipline which are only beginning to adjust to a de-Naturalized, post-humanist world. Burckhardt again looms here, for he believed that 'women stood on a footing of perfect equality with men' in the Italian Renaissance, since 'the educated woman, no less than the man, strove



Pl. 1 Anonymous, *Profile Portrait of a Lady*, Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria.

naturally after a characteristic and complete individuality'.<sup>10</sup> That the 'education given to women in the upper classes was essentially the same as that given to men' is neither true, we would now say, nor adequate proof of their social equality.<sup>11</sup>

Joan Kelly's essay of 1977, 'Did Women have a Renaissance?', opened a debate amongst historians of literature, religion and society but art historians have been slower to enter the discussion.<sup>12</sup> A patriarchal historiography which sees the Renaissance as the Beginning of Modernism continues to dominate art history and studies of Renaissance painting are little touched by feminist enterprise.<sup>13</sup> Whilst images of or for women are now beginning to be treated as a category, some of this work perpetuates women's isolation in a separate sphere and takes little account of gender analysis. Instead, we can examine relationships between the sexes and think of gender as 'a primary field with which or by means of which power is articulated'.<sup>14</sup> So we need to consider the visual construction of sexual difference and how men and women were able to operate as viewers. Further, attention can be paid to the visual specifics of form rather than content or 'iconography', so that theory can be related to practice.

The body of this paper investigates the gaze in the display culture of Quattrocento Florence to explicate further ways in which the profile, presenting an averted eye and a face available to scrutiny, was suited to the representation of an ordered, chaste and decorous piece of property. An historical investigation of the gaze which has usually been discussed in psychoanalytic terms, this study might be an example of what Joan Scott recently called for when she worried about 'the universal claim of psychoanalysis'. She wants historians 'instead to examine the ways in which gendered identities are substantively constructed and relate their findings to a range of activities, social organizations, and historically specific cultural representations'.<sup>15</sup> So my localized focus could be a supplement, perhaps a counter, to Freudian universalizing, and to neutered generalizations previously made about Renaissance portraiture. On the other hand, I would prefer to attempt a dialogue rather than a confrontation between historical and psychoanalytic interpretations. Here an interdisciplinary foray will characterize the gaze as a social and historical agency as well as a psycho-sexual one.

The history of the profile to c. 1440 was a male history, except for the occasional inclusion of women in altarpieces as donor portraits, that is, portraits of those making their pious offering to the almighty. But from c. 1440 nearly all Florentine painted profile portraits depicting a single figure are of women (except for a few studies of male heads on paper, probably sketches for medals and sculpture when they are portraits and not studio exercises). By c. 1450 the male was shown in three-quarter length and view, first perhaps in Andrea Castagno's sturdy view of an unknown man whose gaze, hand and facial structure intrude through the frame into the viewer's space.<sup>16</sup> Often this spatial occupation and bodily assertion

were appropriately captured in the more three-dimensional medium of sculpture, using either relatively cheap terracotta or more prestigious, expensive marble. The first dated bust from the period is Piero de' Medici's, executed by Mino da Fiesole in 1453.<sup>17</sup>

For some time, however, women were still predominantly restricted to the profile and most examples of this format are dated after the mid-century. Only in the later 1470s do portraits of women once more follow conventions for the male counterparts, moving out from the restraining control of the profile format, turning towards the viewer and tending to be views of women both older and less ostentatiously dressed than their female predecessors had been. Such a change has not been investigated and cannot be my subject here, which is to highlight the predominance of a female presence in Florentine profile portraits.

Painted by male artists for male patrons, these objects primarily addressed male viewers. Necessarily members of the ruling and wealthy class in patrician Florence, the patrons held restrictive notions of proper female behaviour for women of their class. Elsewhere in Italy, especially in the northern courts, princesses were also restrained by rules of female decorum but were portrayed because they were noble, exceptional women.<sup>18</sup> In mercantile Florence, however, that women who were not royal were recognized in portraiture at all appears puzzling, and I think can only be understood in terms of the visual or optic modes of what can be called a 'display culture'. By this I mean a culture where the outward display of honour, magnificence and wealth was vital to one's social prestige and definition, so that visual language was a crucial mode of discourse. I will briefly treat the conditions of a woman's social visibility and then, having considered why a woman was portrayed, turn to the particular form of the resultant portrait.

To be a woman in the world was/is to be the object of the male gaze: to 'appear in public' is 'to be looked upon' wrote Giovanni Boccaccio.<sup>19</sup> The Dominican nun Clare Gambacorta (d. 1419) wished to avoid such scrutiny and establish a convent 'beyond the gaze of men and free from worldly distractions'.<sup>20</sup> The gaze, then a metaphor for worldliness and virility, made of Renaissance woman an object of public discourse, exposed to scrutiny and framed by the parameters of propriety, display and 'impression management'.<sup>21</sup> Put simply, why else paint a woman except as an object of display within male discourse?

Only at certain key moments could she be seen, whether at a window or in the 'window' of a panel painting, seen and thereby represented. These centred on her rite of passage from one male house to another upon her marriage, usually at an age between fifteen and twenty, to a man as much as fifteen years her senior.<sup>22</sup> Her very existence and definition at this time was a function of her outward appearance. Pleading for extra finery and household linen, rather than merely functional clothing, to be included in her dowry, one widow implored her children, when her brothers forced her

into a second marriage, 'Give me a way to be dressed'.<sup>23</sup> This woman virtually pictures herself as naked and undefined unless a certain level (*modo*) of (ad)dress or representation as well as wealth can be attained. Costume was what Diane Owen Hughes calls 'a metaphorical mode' for social distinction and regulation. The 'emblematic significance' of dress made possible the visible marking out of one's parental and marital identity.<sup>24</sup> A bearer of her natal inheritance and an emblem also of her conjugal line once she had entered the latter's boundaries, a woman was an adorned Other who was defined into existence when she entered patriarchal discourse primarily as an object of exchange.<sup>25</sup>

Without what Christiane Klapisch-Zuber calls 'publicity', the important alliance forged between two households or lineages by a marriage was not adequately established.<sup>26</sup> Without witnesses, the contract was not finalised. By contrast, a priest's presence at this time was not legally necessary. Visual display was an essential component of the ritual, a performance which allowed, indeed expected, a woman's visible presentation in social display and required an appropriately honourable degree of adornment.

The age of the women in these profile portraits, along with the lavish presence of jewellery and fine costumes (usually outlawed by sumptuary legislation and rules of morality and decorum), with multiple rings on her fingers when her hands are shown, and hair bound rather than free-flowing, are all visible signs of her newly married (or perhaps sometimes betrothed) state. The woman was a spectacle when she was an object of public display at the time of her marriage but otherwise she was rarely visible, whether on the streets or in monumental works of art. In panels displayed in areas of the palace open to common interchange, she was portrayed as a sign of the ritual's performance, the alliance's formation and its honourable nature.

An example of a father's attention to his daughter before marriage, however, also points up attitudes taken to a woman's public appearance.<sup>27</sup> Whilst Giovanni Tornabuoni granted jewellery to his daughter Ludovica as part of her lavish dowry, his will of 1490 nevertheless stipulated that two of the valuable, carefully described, items ultimately remain part of his male patrimony, for they were to return to his estate upon her decease. A cross surrounded by pearls, probably the 'crocettina' mentioned in Giovanni's will, hangs from Ludovica's neck in her portrait by Domenico Ghirlandaio within the family chapel at S. Maria Novella, decorated at her father's expense between 1486 and 1490. She also wears a dress richly brocaded with the triangular Tornabuoni emblem. So, at the time when she was betrothed but not yet married, not long before she passed beyond their confines, she is displayed forever as a Tornabuoni woman, wearing their emblem and wealth.

Ludovica is also represented as a virginal Tornabuoni exemplar, attendant at the *Birth of the Virgin* and with her hair still hanging loose, as it had in her earlier medal where a unicorn on the reverse again

emphasized her honourable virginity. In the chapel fresco Ludovica is presented as the perfect bride-to-be, from a noble and substantial family, about to become a child-bearing woman. Her father's solicitude and family pride oversaw the construction of a public image declaring her value and thereby increasing Tornabuoni honour. Soon her husband will conduct her on her rite of passage, collect his dowry and appropriate her honour to the needs of his own lineage.

When the bride went *fuori* ('outside') and was 'led' or 'taken away' by her husband, she bore a counter-dowry of goods supplied by him.<sup>28</sup> One mother, Alessandra Strozzi, happily reported of her daughter in 1447 that 'When she goes out of the house, she'll have more than 400 florins on her back' because the groom Marco Parenti 'is never satisfied having things made for her, for she is beautiful and he wants her to look at her best'.<sup>29</sup> That same Marco later recovered his investment, one which doubtless weighed heavily on the back of his adolescent wife, by having each garment unpicked and selling every gem and sleeve.<sup>30</sup> Neither dowry nor counter-dowry seem to have become entirely a woman's property.

In wanting his bride 'to look at her best' Macro was seeking a visible, displayable sign of his honour. Indeed a wife's costume was considered by jurists a sign of the husband's rank.<sup>31</sup> 'Being beautiful and belonging to Filippo Strozzi' Alessandra wrote to her son of a potential bride in 1465, 'she must have beautiful jewels, for just as you have won honour in many things, you cannot fall short in this'.<sup>32</sup> Like the 'golden facade' of a palace, 'such adornments . . . are taken as evidence of the wealth of the husband more than as a desire to impress wanton eyes' wrote Francesco Barbaro in his treatise *On Wifely Duties* of 1416.<sup>33</sup> To Barbaro, a wife's public appearance was a sign of her propriety and her husband's trust: wives 'should not be shut up in their bedrooms as in a prison but should be permitted to go out [*in apertum*], and this privilege should be taken as evidence of their virtue and probity'.<sup>34</sup>

He then went on, 'By maintaining a decorous and honest gaze in their eyes, the most acute of senses, they can communicate as in painting, which is called silent poetry'.<sup>35</sup> Just such uprightness is silently communicated by the profile panel where, as Lipman noted, 'the head was kept to the quality of still life, often as objectively characterized and as inanimate as the cloth of the dress'.<sup>36</sup> Attributes of costume, jewellery and honourable bearing are as much signs as the occasional coats of arms in these portraits. And in Florence, these heraldic devices are the husband's, for the woman has been renamed and inscribed into a new lineage. Hence in Filippo Lippi's *Double Portrait of a Man and Woman* (Pl. 2), the Scolari man's coat of arms is matched not by her own natal heraldry but by her motto, embroidered in his pearls on the sleeve she has been given, which avows 'Loyalty' to him.<sup>37</sup>

Perhaps we can find an explanation for those numerous donor portraits represented in profile by considering the earlier cited linkage, by the nun Clare Gambacorta, between 'the gaze of men' and 'worldly distractions'.



**Pl. 2** Filippo Lippi, *Double Portrait of a Man and Woman*, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Particularly when shown in profile, the donor's faces are visible to both divine and 'worldly', sacred and 'secular' (yet sacralized) realms, seen by the adored sanctities yet also viewed by priests and devotees including the donors themselves. Like nuns and donors, the women portrayed in profile are displayed and visible objects, and yet they are removed from 'worldly distractions'. They are inactive objects gazing elsewhere, decorously averting their eyes. In this sense they are chaste, if not virginal, framed if not (quite) cloistered. However, unlike nuns, these idealized women are very much not 'beyond the gaze of men'.

A young Florentine patrician girl rarely became anything other than a nun or a wife.<sup>38</sup> In each instance she was defined in relation to her engagement with men, either marrying Christ or a worldly husband and eschewing all other men. Girls who entered a convent sometimes made their own choice, but often they were ugly, infirm or deformed, or else they might be surplus girls in a family overburdened by the potential costs of expensive dowries. When assessing future wives, the groom's lineage carefully weighed the ties of kinship (*parentado*) to be formed and the dowry's value, with other matters such as the woman's beauty and the purity and fertility of her female ancestors.<sup>39</sup> 'Beauty in a woman', wrote Leon Battista Alberti,

must be judged not only by the charm and refinement of her face, but still more by the grace of her person and her aptitude for bearing and giving birth to many fine children . . . In a bride . . . a man must first seek beauty of mind (*le bellezze dell'animo*), that is, good conduct and virtue.<sup>40</sup>

It is this 'beauty of mind' which is displayed in the idealizing profile portrait as it was earlier exhibited (*mostrare*, to exhibit, is the verb)<sup>41</sup> to selectors before her marriage. Since Alessandra Strozzi and others spoke of the bride as 'merchandise' ('who wants a wife wants ready cash' she said)<sup>42</sup> we can speak of an economics of display in fifteenth-century Florence. Alberti advised that the future groom

should act as do wise heads of families before they acquire some property – they like to look it over (*rivedere*) several times before they actually sign a contract.<sup>43</sup>

The girl was an object of depersonalized exchange by which means a mutual *parentado* was established, a dowry of capital was brought by the girl and a husband's honour became hers to display. She also supplied an unsullied heritage and 'beauty of mind'.

The late fifteenth-century Florentine bookseller Vespasiano da Bisticci also wrote of a woman's virtue as a possession or dowry. He ended his *Life of the exemplary Alessandra de' Bardi* exhorting women to

realise that a dowry of virtue is infinitely more valuable than one of money, which may be lost, but virtue is a secure possession which may be retained to the end of their lives.<sup>44</sup>

Alberti has the elderly husband didactically address his new, very young wife in terms even more closely related to portraits:

nothing is so important for yourself, so acceptable to God, so pleasing to me, and precious in the sight of your children as your chastity (*onestà*). The woman's character is the jewel (*ornamento*) of her family; the mother's purity has always been a part of the dowry she passes on to her daughters; her purity has always far outweighed her [physical] beauty.<sup>45</sup>

Visually, the strict orderliness of the profile portrait can be seen as a surprising contradiction of contemporary misogynist literature. Supposedly 'inconstant', like 'irrational animals' without 'any set proportion', living 'without order or measure',<sup>46</sup> women were transformed by their 'beauty of mind' and 'dowry of virtue' into ordered, constant, geometrically proportioned and unchangeable images, bearers of an inheritance which would be 'precious' to their children. A woman, who was supposedly vain and narcissistic,<sup>47</sup> 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.

Giovanna Tornabuoni's portrait by Domenico Ghirlandaio (Pl. 3) contains an inscription, with the date 1488, indicating that 'conduct and soul' were valuable, laudable commodities carried by the woman.<sup>48</sup> Further, depiction strove for the problematic representation of these invisible virtues: 'O art, if thou were able to depict the conduct and soul, no lovelier painting would exist on earth'. Having died whilst pregnant in 1488, the now dead Giovanna née Albizzi is here immortalized as noble and pious, bearing her husband's initial, L for Lorenzo, on her shoulder and his family's simplified, triangular emblem on her garment. She is forever absorbed as part of the Tornabuoni heritage, displayed in their palace to be seen by their visitors and themselves, including her son who bore their name.

Within the panel, she is framed by a simple, closed-off room; within the palace, we know from an inventory, she was actually framed in 'a cornice made of gold' on show in a splendid 'room of golden stalls'.<sup>49</sup> Sealed in a niche like her accoutrements of piety and propriety, she is an eternally static spectacle held decorously firm by her gilded costume and by the architecture of her arm, neck and spine. Giovanna's very body becomes a sign, attempting to articulate her intangible but valuable 'conduct and soul'. The 'dowry of virtue' is encased and contained within her husband's finery, each enhancing the other. Forever framed in a state of idealized



Pl. 3 Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Giovanna Tornabuoni née Albizzi*, Lugano, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection.

preservation, she is constructed as a female exemplar for Tornabuoni viewers and others they wished to impress with this *ornamento*.

Profile portraits such as Giovanna's participate in a language of visual and social conventions. They are not simply reflections of a pre-existent social or visual reality. Neither in the streets nor in the poetry of Renaissance Florence was a patrician woman like Giovanna capable of the sort of independent existence she might seem to have in her portrait. Invisible virtues, impossible to depict unless one were in paradise according to the poetry written by Petrarch and Lorenzo de' Medici,<sup>50</sup> are paradoxically the realm of these highly visible portraits on show in a display culture keen to engage in impression management. In these portraits a woman can wear cosmetics and extravagant decoration forbidden by legal and moral codes.<sup>51</sup> There this orderly creature was visible at or near a window, yet she was explicitly banished from public appearance at such windows.<sup>52</sup> There a dead wife or absent daughter or newly incorporated, deflowered wife was made an object of commemoration, as eternally alive and chaste.

Perhaps the profile form became increasingly contradictory and archaic, leading to its partial abandonment in favour of the three-quarter format already available for male portraiture. At times, however, the profile's memorable and remote nature still suited requirements for the visual preservation and enhancement of what Elizabeth Cropper has called a 'memory image that fills the void of her absence'.<sup>53</sup> Portraits, said Biondo in the sixteenth century as Alberti had in the fifteenth, 'represent the absent and show us the dead as if they were alive'.<sup>54</sup> Such a contradiction, or at least tension, could both explicate the profile's eventual demise and lead us to comprehend its earlier existence. 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 idealized signification. Indeed, it increases the stock of impressive, manipulative language available within Quattrocento culture. Visual art, it can be argued, both shared and shaped social language and need not be seen as a passive reflection of pre-determining reality. For the representation of women, the profile form and its particulars were well suited to the construction, rather than reflection, of an invisible 'reality'.

It is not only the display of attributes like jewellery and costume (perhaps often more splendid fantasies than were the actual possessions) which pronounce the portrayed woman as the bearer of 'wealth' both earthly and invisible. The profile form itself is amenable to the construction of a display object since the viewed is rendered static by an impersonal, typifying structure. A ruler (such as Jean Le Bon or Henry V) or Leonine Warrior<sup>55</sup> can be powerful, iconic images in profile, but the decorative,

generalizing and idealizing potential of the profile made it an apt and numerically predominant convention for the reification of Florentine women.

When the Florentines Andrea Verrocchio or Leonardo da Vinci 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.<sup>56</sup> But Florentine female profiles tend to appear on unstable, spindly bases, with an elongated neck exaggerating their attenuation. The vulnerable and elegantly artificial neck also separates the face from its already insubstantial body. Fine, isolated features exist precariously in a flat sea of pale flesh. Volume is repressed in portraits such as Alesso Baldovinetti's *Portrait of a Lady in Yellow* (Pl. 4),<sup>57</sup> cheek bones and shoulder blades are denied by an image caught on the painted surface like a butterfly. In Baldovinetti's production, the hair (probably a false, fashionable adornment at the back) and the lively yellow sleeve bearing a husband's large heraldic device, are each more capable of energetic mobility through space than the woman seems to be.

'Individuality' appears to the degree that simplifying silhouettes can represent particular faces. But full characterization depends upon facial asymmetry and momentary moods are also denied by the timeless patterning profile. In these mostly anonymous profile portraits, face and body are as emblematic as coats of arms. They mark a renaming, a remaking, in which individual names are omitted. The face contributes to identification, as legislators realised when they banned the use of a veil by all women other than prostitutes.<sup>58</sup> The latter were marked as bodies granted sexual licence, their potential lack of control hence brought under masculine and visual rein. Through the regulatory language of facial display, all women were sexually labelled and controlled. Officials could interrogate a veiled woman, seeking her identity not by first name but by naming her father, husband and neighbourhood.<sup>59</sup> Occasionally a first name is included in a three-quarter view of a woman by such means as the juniper (*ginepro*) behind Leonardo's portrait of Ginevra de' Benci,<sup>60</sup> but in the profile portraits the family name, never a matrilineal one, is paramount.

The traditional immortalizing of a dead man or a male ruler by use of the profile was appropriated for female representation, yet the form's restrictive capacity was accentuated. One of the few surviving pairs in which both the male and female portraits are in profile, Piero della Francesca's depiction of the Duke and Duchess of Urbino (Pls. 5 and 6), couples a ruler with a woman.<sup>61</sup> Because the duke suffered from a battle wound to his right eye he had to be shown in profile. This necessity is turned to advantage by strong blocks of colour (which are especially balanced either side of the stabilized face), hard virile silhouette, massive neck and swarthy, modelled flesh. This is contrasted with a pale, heavily decorated lady who has been plucked, powdered and adorned into a chaste

emblem. On the reverse of her portrait rides the Triumph of 'feminine virtues', on his the Triumph of Fame.<sup>62</sup> Both ruler and woman are typecast and stand for more than their individual selves, but the male is constructed as a more active, dominant figure.

Giovanna Tornabuoni and her peers lived and died in a Mediterranean display culture where honour and reputation were vital commodities and appearance was always under scrutiny. Sumptuary legislation, for instance, governed adornment 'inside the home or without',<sup>63</sup> acting on the belief that state actions could, as well as should, enter various spaces and determine the rules of display. Neither the woman, nor her accoutrements, nor her portrait, had much 'private' space. 'Shun every sort of dishonour, my dear wife' counselled Alberti's elder. 'Use every means to appear to all people as a highly respectable woman'.<sup>64</sup>

In an oligarchic, patrilineal society where little value was ascribed to women except as carriers of a 'dowry of virtue', women were encouraged to stress their restraint and seemly inheritance. Their own complicit investment in their 'secure possession' appears extensive, judging by the relatively few records which survive. Patriarchal definitions of proper, obedient behaviour were accepted by literate matrons like Alessandra Strozzi. When advising her son about being a husband she wrote 'a man, when he really is a man, makes a woman a woman'.<sup>65</sup> Where then might we find a woman's 'view' of her profile portrait?

Two distinctions made recently by historians of Renaissance culture can guide us; first, Klapisch-Zuber's between the dowry and the trousseau.<sup>66</sup> Whilst the dowry passed from father to husband, the bride could carry a few minor, intimate items from her mother. Mostly for personal use and often associated with a procreative role, these goods could be dolls, Books of Hours, sewing tools and articles for her toilette. Klapisch-Zuber argues that 'the trousseau is the principle channel by which feminine goods, often heavily symbolic, passed from mother to daughter' and these were 'the fragments of a hidden or incomplete feminine discourse'.<sup>67</sup> In a sense, a profile portrait could be one such 'fragment'. A young female viewer was instructed by her mother's portrait and shaped herself in her mother's image.<sup>68</sup> When preparing her own 'dowry of virtue', which was informed by both the maternal and paternal inheritance, she was also attending to a kind of 'trousseau of *onestà*'.

The second set of distinctions is one pointed to by Hughes, between *meretrice* (prostitute), *matrona* (matron), daughter, and wife. When a liminal border was crossed and a woman was recognized as sexually mature, for instance, she became subject to sumptuary legislation.<sup>69</sup> The older woman could also wittily contravene sumptuary restrictions, and argue with her husband over clothing expenses.<sup>70</sup> As one Bolognese woman claimed in the mid-fifteenth century, men could win success and honour in many fields but only ornamentation and dress were available to women as 'signs of their valour'.<sup>71</sup> Older women performed a kind of

labour, converting their 'dowry of virtue' into an investment 'retained to the end of their lives'.<sup>72</sup> When nubile daughters were in the house, mothers assisted with the trousseau's collection. Maternal guardians of their sons, they assessed the virtue and appearance of potential brides. With or without the presence of children and grandchildren nearby, a woman continually defended her respectability and image, resorting like men to 'signs' in a display culture. The commodity of virtue was circulated amongst a female economy, from grandmother to mother, to daughter, to her children. For instance, a woman could boast about the 'nobility and magnificence of her family', especially to other women, and her 'upbringing' was carefully assessed by her female elders.<sup>73</sup> Guardians of their family's honour and piety, including their own,<sup>74</sup> women when portrayed in profile were often visually addressing their daughters as exemplars, reinforcing, even enlarging, standards of virtue.

But women were daughters or matrons in a man's world, these very distinctions being ones (like nun or wife) formed by a woman's relationship to men. Again we must analyse gender, not to negate a 'hidden . . . feminine discourse', but to comprehend visual artifacts which were not hidden, not only seen as personal female 'fragments'. Profile portraits were primarily objects of a male discourse which appropriated a kind of female labour or property. When wives were charged under the sumptuary laws, it was men who paid the fines, just as they had paid for the jewels and dresses in the first place. Men also paid for the portraits, on which they appended male coats of arms.

When young, women were cordoned off in the profile form which could later instruct their own daughters. When older, women became informed actors in the selection of a bride, scrutinizing others' daughters.<sup>75</sup> The active female eye was virtually always that of an elderly guardian. The choice and examination of a possible bride necessitated the gathering of information about her appearance. A well-known instance of this process from Britain is Hans Holbein's deceptive portrait of Anne of Cleves, sent to Henry VIII before their marriage in 1540. Some Florentine letters survive, several by women, which contain verbal portraits of prospective brides when (rarely) one of the partners was away from the city. In 1467 Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Lorenzo de' Medici's mother, travelled to Rome to examine Clarice Orsini, who did become Lorenzo's wife (Sandro Botticelli's panel in the Pitti Palace may represent Clarice about ten years later: Pl.7):<sup>76</sup> She was

fair and tall . . . of good height and has a nice complexion, her manners are gentle, but not so winning as those of our girls, but she is very modest . . . her hair is reddish . . . her face rather round . . . Her throat is fairly elegant, but it seems to me a little meagre or . . . slight. Her bosom I could not see, as here the women are entirely covered up, but it appeared to me of good proportions. She does not carry her head



Pl. 5 Piero della Francesca, *The Duchess of Urbino*, Florence, Uffizi Gallery.



Pl. 6 Piero della Francesca, *The Duke of Urbino*, Florence, Uffizi Gallery.



Pl. 7 Sandro Botticelli, *Profile Portrait of a Lady*, Florence, Palazzo Pitti.



Pl. 8 Anonymous, *Profile Portrait of a Lady*, London, National Gallery. (Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees, the National Gallery, London).



proudly like our girls, but pokes it a little forward; I think she was shy, indeed I see no fault in her save shyness. Her hands are long and delicate . . .

Well might she have been shy under Lucrezia's merciless eye!

In 1486 a male report to Lorenzo de' Medici on his son's future wife in Naples noted her 'neck which is somewhat thick at the back' and said that her guardians 'would sooner show one of their girls to ten men than to one woman'.<sup>77</sup> Virtually taking on a surrogate male position, these fierce female observers were also defending their stake in their own economy. But they were adopting standards convenient to a patriarchy, using 'male language in order to be heard'.<sup>78</sup> To some as yet unknown extent they may have refined definitions, avoided or flaunted others, but women's 'culture' or 'networks', currently being investigated by social historians, do not readily appear in what are usually categorized as 'domestic', but should be termed 'palatial', representations produced for and by men.

Like the detailed epistolary reports, ideal descriptions of the Beloved or the Ideal personification, especially in poetry, were 'anatomizing', as Ruth Kelso, Nancy Vickers and others have argued.<sup>79</sup> The female body is scattered into separate areas such as neck, eyes, skin, mouth and hair, and other factors like her size and bearing are also examined. The profile form, already a fragmentary statement fixing one side of the upper body but absenting the rest, complements such an aesthetic typology due to its simplifying clarity. Hence it easily became an early format for caricature in the work of artists like Leonardo or Gian Lorenzo Bernini.<sup>80</sup> Lipman noted a clear colour division in the profile portraits between hair, head, corsage and sleeves,<sup>81</sup> but other features, like the silhouette of neck and nose, lips, jawline and untainted skin colour, are also marked out distinctly (Pl. 8).

A 'rounded' or integrated, plastic character is denied by the impersonal, claustrophobic presentation of a face which has no space or volume of its own. The groom and girl in Lippi's double portrait, for instance (Pl. 2), are each framed by a series of windows which allow our merciless scrutiny but cannot enable their own engagement with each other or with the viewer. The averted eye and face open to scrutiny, necessarily presented by the profile view, permit the close, cool and extended exposure of the body reported in fifteenth-century letters and poems. Barbara Kruger's recent comment on the eye's intrusion and violence, using the caption 'Your gaze hits the side of my face', aptly chose a female profile as accompaniment.<sup>82</sup>

In fifteenth-century society, lowered or averted eyes were the sign of a woman's modesty, chastity and obeisance.<sup>83</sup> A loose woman, on the other hand, looked at men in the street.<sup>84</sup> Temptation or a lover were avoided or discouraged if a virtuous woman did not return the gaze.<sup>85</sup> Whilst actual behaviour doubtless included surreptitious glances or longing looks, it is indicative that the poet Veronica Gambara, when she explicitly looked on

her object of 'desire', was comforted not by a man but, unexpectedly and ironically, by 'hills', 'waters' and a 'gracious site'.<sup>86</sup> Being a noble woman, she was not allowed an optic engagement with men nor had poetic conventions left space for female poets who could actively look. With wit, her sonnet slips between contradictions, not even requiring an unavailable male object of the gaze: 'desire is spent except for you alone' she said to her 'blest places'.

'Bury your eyes' exhorted San Bernardino addressing women from the pulpit, in what was only a particularly concrete version of a commonplace concerning the decorum of the viewed eye.<sup>87</sup> In the profile form eyes cannot be obviously downcast, for this would disturb the strict patterning, but the woman's eye and face is deflected, buried, to the extent that they are averted. Thence she is decorously chaste, the depersonalized and passionless object of passion.

Passion leads us to the poetics and psychology of the eye. The poetic convention of 'love's fatal glance', especially since Petrarch's writings, imaged the dangerous woman whose 'arrows' of love from her eyes could aggressively pierce the lover.<sup>88</sup> In a sonnet by Petrarch 'her eyes have the power to turn [him] to marble' and Pietro Bembo later plays with the same optic fear.<sup>89</sup> In one poem 'I gaze defencelessly' into a woman's 'lovely eyes' and 'lose myself', in another of c. 1500 he 'sculpted [her image] in my heart' yet 'you burn me, if I gaze on you, you who are cold stone'. Around 1542 his fellow Venetian Pietro Aretino also worked with the popular, Petrarchan conventions, writing of Titian's 'brushes' as equivalent to Love's 'arrow', so that male tools are capable of some control over a danger of their own making.<sup>90</sup> The beloved's wounding glance, voiced in poetry, is especially made modest and mute by the profile format; the male lover can behold and possess without being seen and hence without becoming vulnerable. The ideally passive and modest young woman appropriately 'appears' rather than 'acts'<sup>91</sup> in the static form, unable to arouse, distract or engage with the authoritative ocular presence. Any potential 'Medusa effect',<sup>92</sup> the unmaning caused by Medusa's stony and fatal gaze, is defused.

The male profile was a short-lived form in panel portraiture, perhaps because it presented too inactive and disengaged a view of these virile family exemplars.<sup>93</sup> In psychoanalytic terms, further, the near 'blindness', implicit in the profile form's 'buried' eye, threatened any male portrayed in profile with impotence or castration.<sup>94</sup> In classic Freudian terms, a blind man can no longer see a woman's lack of the phallus. He cannot then be aware of his own sexual and potent difference, so he is in a sense castrated, undifferentiated. Scopophilia, a sexual gaze, is constructed as a masculine activity in Renaissance poetry and Freudian psychoanalysis. The viewing active male, outside the profile's frame and looking on, was virile. When a sixteenth century Siennese novelist wanted to characterize Florentines, famed for 'sodomy', he wrote of them 'not wanting to look at women in the

face'.<sup>95</sup> A century earlier his compatriot San Bernardino frequently spoke of homosexual or uninterested husbands not looking at their wives.<sup>96</sup> The Dominican Fra Giovanni Dominici also interpreted face-to-face contact in heterosexual terms. He adapted a Biblical injunction against a father's indulgence of his daughter (Sirach 7:24) by casting it in the language of the eye and face and extending the distrust to the mother: the father is not to smile on the daughter 'lest she fall in love with his virile countenance', nor must the mother 'ever . . . show [her son] a face which will cause him while still little to love women before knowing what they are'.<sup>97</sup> The language of the eye could be a sensual and hence feared, even repressed one. The passionless, chaste state of a woman in profile is the product of this burden.

The de-eroticised portrayal of women in profile meant female eyes no longer threaten the seeing man with castration. Her eyes can not ward off his, nor send 'arrows' to the lover's heart. Castration anxieties are also displaced by fetishisation, by the way in which a woman's neck, eye and other features are rendered safe commodities through fragmentation and distancing, excessive idealisation.<sup>98</sup> A psychoanalytic level of interpretation can also be offered for viewers who were female. When the female guardian assessed other women, or when the exemplary mother was visually presented to her daughters, it may be that a feminine parallel to masculine fetishism, that is, narcissism, was operating. But the 'maternal gaze' posited by the film theorist E. Ann Kaplan or the narcissistic desire to see one's self in one's children posited by Sigmund Freud, do not adequately fit the evidence left to us in Quattrocento artifacts.<sup>99</sup> Remembering the degree of female complicity in an extreme patriarchy, we could take account of a summarizing phrase employed by Linda Williams in her study of female spectators of film, 'her look even here becomes a form of not seeing anything more than the castration she so exclusively represents for the male'.<sup>100</sup>

The potential instability of sexual identity is controlled by a fixed and immutable sign of difference constructed in the profile portrait. Female impotence is contrasted with the potent flesh or brush of the male viewer or artist. Lacking both phallus and any genitalia of her own in these truncated images, the woman is seen as an absence of an absence. As Diane Owen Hughes suggests in her study of family portraiture in early modern Europe, images of women can be interpreted 'not as reflections . . . but rather as idealized or admonitory representations of what is desired or what is feared'.<sup>101</sup>

To turn now from sensuality to politics, from one form of potency to another, is not to suggest that the divisions are clear or absolute between seemingly interior and exterior acts. Whilst contemporary studies of the gaze, most recently Jacqueline Rose's *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*, focus upon psychic theories, the investigation above has tried to excavate an historical dimension. When theories of the gaze are applied to physical objects like paintings, especially those from pre-Freudian times when the

language of sexuality and codes for the eye's conduct were different from ours, we need to consider a range of cultural and historical factors. Here Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, particularly derived from a study of ancient Greece and Rome, has done much to alert us to the changing and historically determined nature of what is unthinkable, what performed.<sup>102</sup> Jeffrey Weeks also has argued for a contextual understanding of sexuality, supported by his own studies of nineteenth and twentieth-century Britain.<sup>103</sup> Sexuality and the operation of the gaze in fifteenth-century Italy will have their own histories and contexts too.<sup>104</sup> Castration anxiety may be an ahistorical or transhistorical phenomenon, for instance,<sup>105</sup> but profile portraits are far more than specific manifestations of a universal fear. They existed for a relatively short time in a particular region and 'display culture' for a variety of reasons. Feminist historians can use their practice to question, refine or deconstruct Freudian orthodoxy and patriarchy's appearance of natural inevitability.

We could, for instance, recall Foucault's investigation of the 'Eye of Power' in post-Enlightenment France, which observed 'captive silhouettes' in the Panopticon or viewing machine, built mainly as schools, army dormitories and prisons.<sup>106</sup> But we could speak of ocular politics in terms of patriarchy and gender as Foucault does not. The gaze as an instrument of control and supervision, particularly over women, operated earlier than Foucault would seem to believe, in less technological or awesome architecture.<sup>107</sup> The peep-hole in monastery, nunnery and asylum doors, for instance, or the wrought-iron grill behind which cloistered folk were incarcerated yet seen, allowed the regulatory eye's performance. In the first decade of the sixteenth century a man versed in courtly practice advised cardinals to hide viewing or listening tubes in their audience chambers 'so that men's speech, gestures and expressions can be more clearly studied by means of observation'.<sup>108</sup> Deception was necessary, otherwise 'those who come to pay their court are moved to abandon their natural behaviour'.<sup>109</sup>

Earlier architectural advice concerning the observation of young women did not seem to require a hidden eye, perhaps because 'natural behaviour' was not allowed or desired from women anyway. Around 1464 the Florentine architect Antonio Filarete, who worked often in ducal Milan, described a proto-Panopticon for the housing and education of very young girls.

From the outside one can look into the rooms where the skills are being learned and can see what is being done . . . they need to be seen, so they can be married . . . [but] no man can enter for any reason.<sup>110</sup>

Here is the protective, potent male eye operating.

The power of the female gaze, especially that of girls and widows (both

of whom were considered sexually available), was feared or denied when it was likely to be engaged with the male look. But older women had more authority when their gaze operated for the purposes of protecting and augmenting the reputation of the lineage. The young woman was anatomized by scopic, patriarchal scrutiny when she was the bearer or potential bearer of assessable property. The profile portrait of a woman presented a sign of kinship exchange, displaying the nobility of her natal line, the exemplary nature of her own virtue and then her husband's honour and possession. The female eye was disempowered and her body an emblem for the display of rank, honour and chastity.

By the late fifteenth century the profile portrait had been displaced. Florentine women portrayed in three-quarter view and length began to include older exemplars dressed in plainer costume, such as Lorenzo de' Medici's relatively influential mother Lucrezia Tornabuoni, who is probably shown mourning her husband's death.<sup>111</sup> But the profile was still utilized on occasion. Leonardo's portrayal of another powerful woman, Isabella d'Este, belongs to the tradition of north Italian ruler portraits in profile, as had an earlier profile portrait of a princess, possibly also of an Este woman, by Pisanello.<sup>112</sup>

In Florence, paired portraits of married couples, such as the one by Sebastiano Mainardi in the Huntington Library, San Marino, showed the male in three-quarter view in front of a landscape with a city and worldly activity, but the female was in profile, painted in a flatter, more absent manner, cut off in a loggia and housebound.<sup>113</sup> Artists of the sixteenth century at times reverted to the archaic profile. Hence the poet Laura Battiferi was shown in striking profile by Agnolo Bronzino in the mid-century<sup>114</sup> and Jacopo Pontormo's Alessandro de' Medici draws his beloved lady in profile as a sign of his singular regard for (i.e. of) her.<sup>115</sup> The male gaze continued in its triumphant potency while the female gaze remained repressed: one reason, we may speculate, why the female artist has, until very recently, been a rare creature.

## NOTES

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1 Jean Lipman, 'The Florentine Profile Portrait in the Quattrocento', *Art Bulletin*, 18, 1936, pp. 54–102 remains the basic survey and catalogue. Much of her argument is repeated in J. Mambour, 'L'évolution esthétique des profils florentins du Quattrocento', *Revue Belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'art*, 38, 1969, pp. 43–60. The five male portraits are considered by Rab Hatfield, 'Five Early Renaissance Portraits', *Art Bulletin*, 47, 1965, pp. 315–34.

2 Lipman, 'The Florentine Portrait', pp. 64, 75; Hatfield, 'Five Early Renaissance Portraits', p. 317.

3 Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, S.G.C. Middlemore (trans.), London, 1960, especially Part II 'The Development of the Individual' and Part IV 'The Discovery of the World and of Man' (first published in German in 1860).

4 The chief survey of Renaissance portraiture is John Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, London, 1966.

5 Lipman, 'The Florentine Profile Portrait', p. 96.

6 Hatfield, 'Five Early Renaissance Portraits', pp. 319, 321, 326.

7 Lipman, 'The Florentine Profile Portrait', n. 69.

8 Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*; Meyer Schapiro, *Words and Pictures. On the literal and the symbolic in the illustration of a text*, The Hague, 1973.

9 See, for instance, Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, 16, no. 3, Autumn 1975, pp. 6–18; Laura Mulvey, 'Afterthoughts on "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" inspired by *Duel in the Sun*', *Framework*, nos. 15–17, 1981; Mary Ann Doane, 'Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator', *Screen*, 23, nos. 3–4, 1982, pp. 74–87; E. Ann Kaplan, *Women and Film. Both sides of the camera*, London, 1983; L. Mykyta, 'Lacan, Literature and the Look: Woman in the Eye of Psychoanalysis', *SubStance*, 39, 1983, pp. 49–57; Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*, London, 1986.

10 Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance*, pp. 240, 241.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 240. Studies on education relevant here include Margaret King, 'Thwarted Ambitions: Six Learned Women of the Italian Renaissance', *Soundings*, 59, Fall 1976, pp. 280–304; Gloria Kaufman, 'Juan Luis Vives on the Education of Women', *Signs*, 3, 1978, pp. 891–6; *Beyond their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past*, Patricia Labalme (ed.), New York, 1980.

12 Joan Kelly, 'Did Women have a Renaissance?' in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (eds.), Boston, 1977, repr. in Joan Kelly, *Women, History and Theory*, Chicago, 1984. For an introduction to current thinking, with a few essays on art after the Quattrocento, see *Rewriting the Renaissance. The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan and Nancy J. Vickers (eds.), Chicago, 1986.

13 Svetlana Alpers, 'Art History and Its Exclusions: The Example of Dutch Art' in *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany*, Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (eds.), New York, 1982; Patricia Simons, 'The Italian Connection: Another Sunrise? The place of the Renaissance in current Australian art practice', *Art-Network*, nos. 19–20, Winter–Spring 1986, pp. 37–42.

14 Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *American Historical Review*, 91, 1986, p. 1069.

15 Scott, 'Gender', p. 1068. The interaction between psychoanalysis and history is a complex and controversial issue; see Elizabeth Wilson, 'Psychoanalysis: Physic Law and Order?' and Jacqueline Rose's response, 'Femininity and its Discontents', each reprinted in *Sexuality. A Reader*, Feminist Review (ed.), London, 1987. The latter is also reprinted in Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*.

16 Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1979, vol. 1, pp. 127–9; Marita Horster, *Andrea del Castagno*, Oxford, 1980, pp. 32–3, 180–1, pl. 93.

17 John Pope-Hennessy, 'The Portrait Bust' in his *Italian Renaissance Sculpture*, London, 1958. Irving Lavin, 'On the Sources and Meaning of the Renaissance Portrait Bust', *Art Quarterly*, 33, 1970, pp. 207–26, by arguing that a presentation of *totus homo* was the aim of these busts, does not consider issues of gender.

18 These portraits of women (mainly from Ferrara or Milan) are also usually in profile, as are several portraits of north Italian male rulers. A separate study could be done of the courtly, imported profile convention for such powerful aristocrats, and of the occasional use of the profile for male portraiture in fifteenth-century Venice, where very few women at all are portrayed before the sixteenth century.

19 Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Corbaccio*, A.K. Cassell (trans.), Urbana, 1975, p. 68.

20 Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls. Fourteenth-century saints and their religious milieu*, Chicago, 1984, p. 47.

21 The last phrase is a major category used by the sociologist Erving Goffman in his *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Garden City, New York, 1959.

22 Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy*, Lydia

Cochrane (trans.), Chicago, 1985, especially pp. 19–20, 101f, 110–11, 170.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 127, 226.

24 Diane Owen Hughes, 'La moda proibita. La legislazione suntuaria nell'Italia rinascimentale', *Memoria*, nos. 11–12, 1984, pp. 95, 97, with the example of women dressed in Albizzi family insignia on pp. 94–5.

25 I am here applying the interpretations offered in Gayle Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex' in *Towards an Anthropology of Women*, Rayna Reiter (ed.), New York, 1975, and Elizabeth Cowie, 'Woman as Sign', *m/f*, no. 1, 1978, pp. 50–64.

26 Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family, and Ritual*, pp. 183ff, 188, 190, 218.

27 The following is drawn from Patricia Simons, 'Portraiture and Patronage in Quattrocento Florence, with special reference to the Tornaquinci and their chapel in S. Maria Novella', Ph.D. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1985, especially pp. 139, 299.

28 Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family, and Ritual*, ch. 10, 'The Griselda Complex: Dowry and Marriage Gifts in the Quattrocento'.

29 Alessandra Macinghi negli Strozzi, *Lettere di una gentildonna fiorentina del secolo XV*, Cesare Guasti (ed.), Florence, 1877, p. 5, translated in Lauro Martines, 'A Way of Looking at Women in Renaissance Florence', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 4, 1974, p. 25.

30 Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family, and Ritual*, p. 277.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 245 n. 101; Hughes, 'La moda proibita', pp. 89, 102–3.

32 Strozzi, *Lettere*, p. 446, translated in Martines, 'A Way of Looking at Women', p. 26.

33 Francesco da Barbaro, *De re uxoria*, Attilio Gnesotto (ed.), Padua, 1915, p. 79; translated in *The Earthly Republic. Italian Humanists on Government and Society*, Benjamin G. Kohl and Ronald G. Witt (eds.), Manchester, 1978, p. 208.

34 Barbaro, *De re uxoria*, p. 74; Kohl and Witt, *The Earthly Republic*, p. 204, adapted slightly here.

35 Barbaro, *De re uxoria*, p. 74; Kohl and Witt, *The Earthly Republic*, p. 204, again adjusted.

36 Lipman, 'The Florentine Profile Portrait', p. 97.

37 Federico Zeri with the assistance of Elizabeth E. Gardner, *Italian Paintings. A Catalogue of the Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Florentine School*, New York, 1971, pp. 85–7. Ringbom has argued that the man's position looking in through a window is usually the location occupied by a painting's donor: Sixten Ringbom, 'Filippo Lippis New Yorker Doppelporträt: Eine Deutung der Fenstersymbolik', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 48, 1985, pp. 133–7. If this is the case, then a visual convention is also constructing him as the painting's patron, a man of wealth and status.

38 Richard Trexler, 'Le célibat à la fin du Moyen Age: les religieuses de Florence', *Annales E.S.C.*, 27, 1972, pp. 1329–50.

39 Paolo da Certaldo, for instance, advised that one check a woman's family, health, sanity, honour and 'bel viso' or beautiful face: quoted in Giovanni Morelli, *Ricordi*, Vittore Branca (ed.), Florence, 1956, p. 210 n. 1, with other references.

40 Leon Battista Alberti, 'I libri della famiglia' in his *Opere volgari*, Cecil Grayson (ed.), Bari, 1960, vol.1, pp. 110–11, translated in *The Family in Renaissance Florence*, René Neu Watkins (trans.), Columbia, S.C., 1969, pp. 115–16.

41 For instance, Strozzi, *Lettere*, p. 445; B. Buser, *Lorenzo de' Medici als italienischer Staatsmann*, Leipzig, 1879, p. 171.

42 Strozzi, *Lettere*, p. 4; Baldassar Castiglione, *Le lettere*, Guido La Rocca (ed.), Milan, 1978, vol. 1, p. 265.

43 Alberti, 'I libri della famiglia', p. 110; translated in *The Family in Renaissance Florence*, p. 115.

44 *Renaissance Princes, Popes and Prelates: The Vespasiano Memoirs, Lives of Illustrious Men of the XVth Century*, William George and Emily Waters (trans.), New York, 1963, p. 462.

45 Alberti, 'I libri della famiglia', p. 224; translated in *The Family in Renaissance Florence*, p. 213. Paolo da Certaldo, *Libro di buoni costumi*, Alfredo Schiaffini (ed.), Florence, 1945, p. 129, said that 'a good wife is a husband's crown, his honour and status (*stato*)'.

46 The phrases are from Paolo da Certaldo, *Libro*, p. 105 ('La femina è cosa molto vana e leggiera a muovere', that is, very vain and inconstant, or easily swayed; see also

p. 239), Cennino Cennini, *The Craftsman's Handbook*, Daniel V. Thompson, Jr. (trans.), New York, 1960. p. 48–9, and Marsilio Ficino in David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Tuscans and Their Families. A Study of the Florentine Catasto of 1427*, New Haven, 1985, p. 148.

47 Boccaccio, *The Corbaccio*, *passim*, with other references to misogynist literature of the time.

48 Philip Hendy, *Some Italian Renaissance Pictures in the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection*, Lugano, 1964, pp. 43–5; Simons, 'Portraiture and Patronage', pp. 142–5.

49 Archivio di Stato, Florence, Pupilli avanti il Principato, 181, folio 148 recto.

50 *Petrarch's Lyric Poems. The 'Rime sparse' and other lyrics*, R.M. Durling (trans.), Cambridge, Mass., 1976, sonnets 77 and 78; Lorenzo de' Medici, 'Comento' in his *Scritti e scelti*, Emilio Bigi (ed.), Turin, 1955, pp. 364f.

51 Boccaccio, *The Corbaccio*, *passim*; Diane Owen Hughes, 'Sumptuary Law and Social Relations in Renaissance Italy', in *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West*, John Bossy (ed.), Cambridge, 1983; Hughes, 'La moda proibita'.

52 For instance, Diane Bornstein, *The Lady in the Tower: Medieval Courtly Literature for Women*, Hamden, Conn., 1983, pp. 24, 74. Doris Lessing's comment on another context might be pertinent here: 'In Purdah women gaze out of windows and keep opening doors quickly a little way to see what might be happening on the other side; it is a place where you listen and watch for the big events going on outside the room you are imprisoned in': *The Wind Blows Away our Words and Other Documents Relating to the Afghan Resistance*, London, 1987, p. 134.

53 Elizabeth Cropper, 'The Beauty of Woman: Problems in the Rhetoric of Renaissance Portraiture' in Ferguson, Quilligan and Vickers, *Rewriting the Renaissance*, p. 188.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 188; Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, John R. Spencer (trans.), New Haven, 1966 revised edition, p. 63: 'Painting contains a divine force which not only makes absent men present . . . but moreover makes the dead seem almost alive'.

55 Anonymous French School, *Jean II Le Bon*, Paris, Louvre (second half of the fourteenth century); Anonymous English School, *Henry V* (1387–1422), London, National Portrait Gallery (the latter however is a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century panel, probably derived from a larger votive or donor portrait). For the Leonine Warrior see n. 56 below.

56 Peter Meller, 'Physiognomical theory in Renaissance Heroic Portraits' in *Studies in Western Art. Acts of the XX International Congress of the History of Art*, Princeton, 1963, vol.2, pp. 53–69. Titian's portrait of the Duke of Urbino (c.1537) was compared with 'Alexander's face and torso' by Pietro Aretino, whose sonnet mentions such features as the Duke's 'fiery spirit in his eyes' and the 'courage' burning 'in his breastplate and in his ready arms'. For the text and translation see Mary Rogers, 'Sonnets on female portraits from Renaissance North Italy', *Word and Image*, 2, 1986, pp. 303–4.

57 Martin Davies, *The earlier Italian Schools*, National Gallery, London, revised edition, 1961, pp. 42–3; Eliot Rowlands, 'Baldovinetti's "Portrait of a Lady in Yellow"', *Burlington Magazine*, 122, 1980, pp. 624, 627.

58 Hughes, 'La moda proibita', pp. 97–8.

59 *Loc. cit.* An interesting comparison could be made with strict Muslim practice, where women are veiled and only the husband can permit photography of a wife's face. The faces of old women and children seem less solely the man's to possess: Lessing, *The Wind Blows*, pp. 78, 80, 108.

60 Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, pp. 251–5, pl. 171.

61 Kenneth Clark, *Piero della Francesca*, London, 1951, pp. 206–7, Pls. 101–10, who notes that the Duke's neck was thickened so that 'the present outline accentuates the monumental character of the silhouette'. Derived from this pairing of a ruler with a wife, each in profile, are Ercole Roberti's portrait of the Bolognese despot *Giovanni II Bentivoglio* with *Ginevra Bentivoglio*: Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, pp. 406–7, Pls. 288–9. A third pair by Lorenzo Costa, from Ferrara, emphasises the woman's profile by posing her face before a dark window: G. Szabo, *The Robert Lehman Collection*, New York, 1975, p. 58. David Buckland's photographic portrait of *The Numerologist* (1984), displayed with *The Wife* (1985) in his exhibition *On a Grand Scale* at The Photographers' Gallery, London (20 March–25 April 1987), consciously refers to Piero's paintings. The woman's pale flesh, decoratively curled hair, thin body and neck projecting less into space than the man's, for instance, all recall the representation of the Duchess of Urbino.



- 62 Clark, *Piero della Francesca*, p. 206.
- 63 Florentine legislation of 1355/6, translated in Boccaccio, *The Corbaccio*, pp. 154–62 *passim*.
- 64 Alberti, 'I libri della famiglia', p. 224; translated in *The Family in Renaissance Florence*, p. 213. Similar advice was given by Paolo da Certaldo, in the context of which he wrote of a woman's 'fame of chastity' being 'like a beautiful flower': *Libro*, p. 73.
- 65 Strozzi, *Lettere*, p. 471; translated in Martines, 'A Way of Looking at Women', p. 22.
- 66 Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, 'Le "zane" della sposa. La fiorentina e il suo corredo nel Rinascimento', *Memoria*, nos. 11–12, 1984, pp. 12–23.
- 67 *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 21.
- 68 See, for example, Alberti, quoted at n. 45 above; Kaufman, 'Juan Luis Vives', p. 892; Bornstein, *The Lady in the Tower*, p. 70.
- 69 Hughes, 'La moda proibita', pp. 98–9; also Diane Owen Hughes, 'Representing the Family: Portraits and Purposes in Early Modern Italy', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 17, Summer 1986, pp. 7–38.
- 70 Hughes, 'La moda proibita', pp. 82, 93–6 *passim*.
- 71 *Ibid.*, pp. 93–4, translated here from Hughes' paraphrase.
- 72 Bisticci, quoted at n. 44 above.
- 73 For the first quotation see Boccaccio, *The Corbaccio*, pp. 38–9, 50–1, 69f; for the second, Alberti, *The Family in the Renaissance*, p. 115.
- 74 See, for example, Elizabeth Swain, 'Faith in the Family: The Practice of Religion by the Gonzaga', *Journal of Family History*, 8, 1983, pp. 177–89. Male Afghan refugees also leave 'an old woman in command of everything' including the children and wives, when the men return to battle: Lessing, *The Wind Blows*, pp. 107, 109, see also pp. 113, 149, and n. 59 above.
- 75 Alberti, *The Family in Renaissance Florence*, p. 115.
- 76 *Lives of the early Medici as told in their correspondence*, Janet Ross (trans. and ed.), London, 1910, pp. 108–9; Gabriele Mandel, *The Complete Paintings of Botticelli*, London, 1970, no. 49.
- 77 Buser, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, p. 171.
- 78 Lisa Tickner, 'Nancy Spero. Images of women and *la peinture féminine*' in *Nancy Spero*, London, 1987, p. 5, referring in particular to the ideas of Luce Irigaray.
- 79 Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance*, Urbana, 1956, especially p. 195; Elizabeth Cropper, 'On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, *Petrarchismo*, and the Vernacular Style', *Art Bulletin*, 58, 1976, pp. 374–94; Nancy Vickers, 'Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme', *Critical Inquiry*, 8, Winter 1981, pp. 265–79; see also Rodolfo Renier, *Il tipo estetico della donna nel medio evo*, Ancona, 1885; Emmanuel Rodocanachi, *La femme italienne avant, pendant et après la Renaissance*, Paris, 1922 (reprint of the 1907 edition), pp. 89f; Giovanni Pozzi, 'Il ritratto della donna nella poesia d'inizio Cinquecento e la pittura di Giorgione', *Lettere Italiane*, 31, 1979, pp. 3–30.
- 80 Schapiro, *Words and Pictures*, p. 45; A.E. Popham, *The Drawings of Leonardo da Vinci*, London, 1946, especially Pls. 133ff, *passim*; Irving Lavin, 'Bernini and the Art of Social Satire' in *Drawings by Gianlorenzo Bernini: from the Museum der Bildenden Künste Leipzig, German Democratic Republic*, Irving Lavin *et al.*, Princeton, 1981.
- 81 Lipman, 'The Florentine Profile Portrait', p. 76.
- 82 Barbara Kruger, *We won't play nature to your culture*, London, 1983.
- 83 For example, Barbaro, *De re uxoria*, pp. 72–3, 74 (the latter is quoted at n. 34 above). The restriction has a long history. Celie's sister wrote to her from Africa: 'To "look in a man's face" is a brazen thing to do . . . it is our own behaviour around Pa' (Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*, London, 1983, p. 137).
- 84 Gene Brucker, *Giovanni and Lusanna. Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence*, Berkeley, 1986, p. 27. In an Italian ceramic trencher of about 1525–30, a man and a woman looking at each other are accompanied by the inscription 'All things are done by money', which probably indicates an ocular and monetary exchange with a prostitute: A.V.B. Norman, *Wallace Collection. Catalogue of Ceramics I. Pottery, Maiolica, Faience, Stoneware*, London, 1976, pp. 117–8. Pornography often shows the woman directly looking at the viewer: Rosalind Coward, 'Sexual Violence and Sexuality' in *Sexuality. A Reader*, p. 318. However, complicity or equality can be the point of the mutual gaze, depending on the context's gender loading, narrative, and so on. Thus, the Virgin Mary sometimes looks out at the viewer (of

either sex) in Renaissance paintings to suggest her intercessory role. The usual presence of the (Christ) child with her reinforces the foreclosed possibility of a taboo sexual encounter with the Mother.

85 For example, Judith Brown, *Immodest Acts. The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy*, Oxford, 1986, p. 55; Bisticci, *Renaissance Princes, Popes and Prelates*, p. 453.

86 Veronica Gambarà, 'Since I, by my fortune, return to look on' in *The Defiant Muse. Italian Feminist Poems from the Middle Ages to the Present*, Beverly Allen, Muriel Kittel and Keala Jane Jewell (eds.), New York, 1986, pp. 4–5 (with Italian text too).

87 Iris Origo, *The World of San Bernardino*, London, 1964, p. 68.

88 Ruth Cline, 'Heart and Eyes', *Romance Philology*, 25, 1971–72, pp. 263–97; Lance Donaldson-Evans, *Love's Fatal Glance: A Study of Eye Imagery in the Poets of the 'Ecole Lyonnaise'*, Place University, 1980; Rogers, 'Sonnets on female portraits', p. 291. A bowl of about 1535 mildly illustrates the convention: a young couple look at each other whilst Cupid's arrow is about to be released very close to the man's head (Norman, *Wallace Collection*, pp. 91–2).

89 *Petrarch's Lyric Poems*, no. 197 (pp. 342–3); for Bembo see Rogers, 'Sonnets on female portraits', p. 301.

90 *Ibid.*, p. 303. On the phallic brush in modern painting see Carol Duncan, 'Virility and Domination in Early Twentieth-Century Vanguard Painting' in *Feminism and Art History*.

91 The distinction between depicted female and male figures is drawn in John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, Harmondsworth, 1972, p. 47.

92 Craig Owens, 'The Medusa Effect or, The Spectacular Ruse' in Kruger, *We won't play nature*.

93 Of course many men continue to be portrayed in profile within larger works, as donors in altarpieces or as onlookers in religious and historical narratives. Donor and 'courtly' portraiture conventions are in part being utilised in such works, but it could be said also that the men are shown as active, at times scopical, viewers. Engaged with the artifact's entire action or focus, these men are not contained within the tight frame of an independent profile which provides no object for the portrayed person's gaze.

94 For the importance of visual evidence to Freud's theories, see Stephen Heath, 'Difference', *Screen*, 19, Autumn 1978, pp. 51–112. On the loss of an eye symbolising impotence in medieval France see Jacqueline Cerquiglini, '“Le Clerc et le Louche”': *Sociology of an Esthetic*', *Poetics Today*, 5, 1984, p. 481.

95 Pietro Fortini, *Novelle di Pietro Fortini Senese*, T. Rughì (ed.), Milan, 1923, p. 64.

96 Origo, *The World of San Bernardino*, pp. 50, 53, 70. For a man's virile and 'fiery spirit in his eyes' see n. 56 above.

97 Giovanni Dominici, *Regola del governo di cura familiare compilata dal Beato Giovanni Dominici fiorentino*, Donato Salvi (ed.), Florence, 1869, p. 144. The first phase is translated in Origo, *The World of San Bernardino*, p. 64, the second in David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Tuscans and Their Families*, p. 255, but neither text treats both injunctions to the male and female partner.

98 On fragmentation see Coward, 'Sexual Violence and Sexuality', pp. 318–9.

99 Kaplan, *Women and Film*; reviewed by D. Waldman and J. Walker, 'Is the Gaze Maternal?', *Camera Obscura*, nos. 13–14, 1985, pp. 195–214.

100 Linda Williams, 'When the Woman Looks' in *Re-Vision. Essays in Feminist Film Criticism*, Mary Ann Doane, Patricia Mellencamp and Linda Williams (eds.), Los Angeles, 1984, p. 88.

101 Diane Owen Hughes, 'Representing the Family', p. 11.

102 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Robert Hurley (trans.), London, 1979, vol. 1: *An Introduction*.

103 Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: the regulation of sexuality since 1800*, London, 1981; Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality*, Chichester, 1986.

104 The possibility, in relation to profile portraiture, is raised in n. 17 and 93 above.

105 Scott, 'Gender', p. 1068.

106 Michel Foucault, 'The Eye of Power' in his *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and other Writings 1972–77*, C. Gordon (ed.), Brighton, 1980.

107 For instance, see n. 83 above. An unveiled woman away from Purdah was probably observed by 'the area Eye, the little policeman' in Peshawar: Lessing, *The Wind Blows*, pp. 118–9. Interesting implications about politics and the eye are raised by the texts cited in

Marc Bensimon, 'The Significance of Eye Imagery in the Renaissance from Bosch to Montaigne', *Yale French Studies*, 47, 1972, pp. 266–90, and Cerquiglini, 'Le Clerc et le Louche', pp. 479–91.

108 Kathleen Weil-Garris and John F. D'Amico, 'The Renaissance Cardinal's Ideal Palace: A Chapter from Cortesi's *De Cardinalatu*' in *Studies in Italian Art and Architecture*, Henry A. Millon (ed.), Rome, 1980, p. 83.

109 *Ibid.*, p. 83; see also p. 95, on ways of conducting an audience and 'judging the motion of their eyes'.

110 Antonio Filarete, *Treatise on Architecture*, John R. Spencer (trans.), New Haven, 1965, pp. 242–3.

111 Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, pp. 203–4, pl. 140.

112 Popham, *The Drawings of Leonardo*, pl. 172; Germain Bazin, *The Louvre*, M.I. Martin (trans.), London, 1979, revised edition, pp. 131–2 on Pisanello's *A Princess of the House of Este*.

113 Raimond van Marle, *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting*, The Hague, 1931, vol. 13, pp. 209f, Pls. 142–3, 145, who illustrates the male half of the Huntington pair and both portraits of a similar pair in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin.

114 Elizabeth Cropper, 'Prolegomena to a New Interpretation of Bronzino's Florentine Portraits' in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Craig Hugh Smyth*, Andrew Morrogh *et al.* (eds.), Florence, 1985, vol. 2, p. 158 n. 4 cites L. Bellosi and relates this portrait to the typological profiles of Dante not to the gender conventions discussed above.

115 Leo Steinberg, 'Pontormo's Alessandro de' Medici, or, I only have eyes for you', *Art in America*, 63, January–February 1975, pp. 62–5, which could be taken further in the light of the argument offered above.