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**‘This Painted Child of Dirt’: Dissident Aristocratic Masculinities in early  
Eighteenth-Century British Portraiture, 1717-1745**

By

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A thesis submitted to  
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## Abstract

Portraits of Lord John Hervey (1696-1743) and the 'coterie' of men associated with the court of George II of England are examined to demonstrate that their likenesses contain traces of dissident performances of masculinity. Artists under discussion include William Hogarth, Enoch Seeman, Jean-Baptiste van Loo, and the miniaturist C.F. Zincke. The appearance, demeanour and costuming of Hervey's circle in their portraiture illustrates the kinds of gendered subversion that early 18<sup>th</sup>-century portraiture can express. Drawing on archival research, I argue that the juxtaposition of biographical detail with art historical analyses of early Georgian portraiture contributes to a more sensitive, inclusive and historically accurate understanding of these men and their milieu.

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## Introduction

“I shall renew my attack when you come to town,” writes Lord John Hervey (1696-1743), heir of the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Bristol, to young Henry Fox (1705-1774) in 1727, shortly after making his acquaintance at the resort town of Bath, where many courtiers fled from time to time to enjoy, under the veil of health-seeking treatments, aristocratic sociality unfettered by the heavy restraints of life at court. “I shall ply you frequently with Letters to keep a place in Your Remembrance tho’ I lose ground in your Heart, an Exchange nothing could induce me to make but the fear of losing You all.”<sup>1</sup> While these sentiments are not flagrantly opposed to the usual manner in which educated young men communicated, Hervey, in the same letter, takes the astonishing step of sending Fox “a dozen preservatives from Claps and impediments to procreation,” i.e. condoms, which are, in the letter, rationed by Hervey “at the rate of two doses a week,” which will then last him until he comes to London, “and as these evacuations may be of use to your Constitution when sparingly repeated, so I solve my Conscience by telling myself I have only acted the part of a wise physician & not performed the office of a Pimp.”<sup>2</sup>

Such suggestive references by Hervey, while part of a larger culture of aristocratic masculine sexuality, do however become suspect when contrasted with references to his performance of liminal gender. Short, slender, delicately-featured, frequently wracked with ill health that left him marked by a pallor he reinforced with fashionable French cosmetics,<sup>3</sup> Lord John Hervey was characterized by behavioral mannerisms, preferences

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Hervey to Henry Fox, late 1726, in Robert Halsband, *Lord Hervey: Eighteenth Century Courtier* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pg. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 63.

<sup>3</sup> Camille A. Paglia, 'Lord Hervey and Pope,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 6, No. 3 (Spring, 1973), pg. 353.

and talents many observers read, or gendered, as feminine.<sup>4</sup> His father, with whom, by all accounts, he had a consistently excellent relationship throughout his life, spoke of it as early as 1713, when he wrote of ‘dear Jack’ to his wife, calling her reluctance to allow the boy to jockey one of the Earl’s racehorses at Newmarket as a weakness that “tends nothing but to effeminacy, the worst of education; his age, strength and stature is now at such a crisis that you must determine to be content to see him live a shrimp or risqué [sic] something to inable him to commence man.”<sup>5</sup>

Political writers, through counter-pamphleteering, would use Hervey’s anachronistic performance of masculinity as an attempt to discredit his administrative abilities, largely through the charge of effeminacy. “You know that he is a Lady himself,” one such pamphlet twitters, “or at least such a nice Composition of the two Sexes, that it is difficult to distinguish which is the most praedominant... such a delicate hermaphrodite, such a pretty, little, Master Miss,” the pamphlet continues, ending by a hardly-veiled allusion to “a certain, unnatural, reigning Vice (indecent and almost shocking to mention)”.<sup>6</sup> Most famous of all the disparaging references to Lord Hervey’s gender comes from the acid-dipped pen of Alexander Pope (1688-1744), whose virulent caricature of Hervey as ‘Sporus,’ the castrated slave-husband of a debauched Emperor Nero, left such a lasting imprint on his memory in the public eye. “Yet let me flap this Bug with gilded wings/ This painted child of dirt that stinks and stings,” Pope wrote. “...Fop at the Toilet,

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Delanoy, *The House of Hervey: A History of Tainted Talent* (London: Constable, 200), pg. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Lord Bristol to Lady Bristol, spring 1713, in Robert Halsband, *Lord Hervey: Eighteenth Century Courtier* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pg. 14.

<sup>6</sup> William Pulteney, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Bath, *A Proper Reply to a Late Scurrilous Libel, Intituled Sedition and Defamation Display’d*, (London: Richard Francklin, January 20, 1731), in *Ibid.*, pg. 109.

Flatt'rer at the Board/ Now trips a Lady, and now struts a Lord.”<sup>7</sup> Even his closest friends were not above referring to him in enigmatic terms: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), wife of the former Ambassador to the Turkish Sultanate, said there were three sexes: Men, Women, and Herveys.<sup>8</sup>

But how were these performances of liminal gender represented in the visual media? Is it even possible that some echo of homoeroticism in life can, whether by direct or unconscious intent, penetrate the representation of that individual by an artist? In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, iconographic references in the visual arts to homosexuality, liminal modes of gender, or even ‘sentimental sodomy’ were necessarily vague and oblique, given the legal and social stigmas attached to what we today call ‘queer’ categories of lived behaviour. The nature of the surviving material evidence is such that, due to period of censorship and erasure that lasted over two hundred years, any attempt at ‘queering’ 18<sup>th</sup>-century British portraiture must necessarily remain at least partially speculative.

I believe that, by extending biographical detail onto the playing field of art history, juxtaposing relevant archival material culled from sitters’ letters with art historical analyses of their likenesses, it is possible to construct a more sensitive, nuanced and inclusive discussion of the physical works of art themselves. By taking the portraits of Lord Hervey and his set as case studies with which to interrogate the conditions of possibility that channeled performances of dissident gender at the court of King George II (1683-1760), an enriched understanding of early Georgian portraiture is revealed, one

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<sup>7</sup> Alexander Pope and Jack Lynch (ed.), *Epistle to Doctor Arbuthnot* <<http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/arbuthnot.html>>, Accessed January 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Lord Carr Hervey, c. 1720, qtd. in Carola Hicks, *Improper Pursuits: The Scandalous Life of an earlier Lady Diana Spencer* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002), pg. 40.

that contributes to much-needed processes of re-including, reinserting and reclaiming a queer historical presence into official narratives of 18<sup>th</sup>-century history.

Over the course of these case studies, I discuss the work of a number of different artists, all of which were patronized by the Hervey set, including French artists Jean-Baptiste van Loo (1684-1745), his brother Carle (Charles-André van Loo, 1705-1765), and the sculptor Edme Bouchardon (1698-1762). Dresden-born Christian Frederick Zincke (1683/5-1767), miniaturist to King George II, and the gem-engraver Johann Lorenz Natter (1705-1763) created small-scale likenesses of Lord Hervey, while he and his friends also employed painters Enoch Seeman (c.1694-c. 1745), John Fayram (fl. 1727-1743), and the ever-popular William Hogarth (1697-1764), whose sparkling group-portrait of the Hervey circle, painted c. 1740, is the most notoriously homoerotic portrait to emerge out of 18th-century England. The men in the *Hervey Conversation-Piece* (Figure Sixteen), painted some thirteen years after Hervey first met a young Henry Fox in Bath, formed part of an inner clique that were, in Paulson's words, "in part, if not altogether, connected by homoerotic bonding".<sup>9</sup>

These men's relative dissidence with and subversion of the normalized structures of aristocratic masculinity that surrounded them, such as compulsory heterosexuality, patriarchal economics, and high-Church Anglicanism, found expression in the artistic, religious and sexual choices they made. I argue that these choices are reflected in their surviving portraiture, drawing on artist-specific inquiries such as have been engaged in by Ronald Paulson, Jenny Uglow, and Alistair Laing, through biographical research such as articulated by Robert Halsband, Camille Paglia and Lucy Moore, and through archival

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<sup>9</sup> Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth: Volume Two, High Art and Low. 1732-1750* (New Brunswick and New York: Rutgers University Press, 1992), pg. 176.

research I undertook in Suffolk and in London, consisting mainly of the letters of Lord Hervey and of the Fox family.

In the years following 1727, Henry Fox's role as emotional confidant to Lord John Hervey was supplanted by his elder brother, whom he introduced to Lord Hervey on a visit in late January 1728. Planning to come earlier, the young man had delayed his trip because of his elder brother Stephen's reluctance to travel, and Hervey, learning of it, wrote that "I hate your brother without knowing him (which is perhaps the only way one can hate him) for postponing another Week a pleasure I have waited for so long, and expected with so much impatience."<sup>10</sup>

By the time Stephen Fox returned to the familial estate at Redlynch at the end of May, however, Hervey's letters to Henry Fox are no more than friendly missives spattered with court gossip and political news: those to Stephen, on the other hand, are "simply love letters."<sup>11</sup> "My mind never goes naked but in your territories," a later letter reads, or another, "God forbid any mortal should ever have the power over me that you do."<sup>12</sup> Lord Hervey's public performance of liminal gender, so remarked upon in the literary press and in contemporary memoirs, was rapidly complemented by the intensity of his personal relationship with Stephen Fox. I strongly feel that to examine portraits of these men, especially including their mutual likeness by Hogarth, without making any mention of the interconnectivity of their emotional or sexual relationships results in an elision from the historical record that maintains exclusionary, and highly repressive, tactics of erasing,

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<sup>10</sup> Lord Hervey to Henry Fox, Jan 1727, *Lord Hervey: Eighteenth Century Courtier* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pg. 64.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 90, footnote.

<sup>12</sup> Lord Hervey to Stephen Fox, Hampton Court, August 1731, *Hervey MSS 941/47/4*, pg. 164.

suppressing and making silent the queer historical presence.

Part of the process of rectifying these and similar omissions must include an attempt to understand significant shifts in attitude that yawn between the world of early 18th-century Britain, where individual negotiations for sexual autonomy were largely conditioned by hereditary status, and the politicized history of queer activism today, where nascent sub-cultural units as such, with self-governing traditions, have emerged to channel the avenues of possibilities for the performing of same-sex eroticism. Most, if not all, of the men whose likenesses are surveyed in this study were married, had children and actively participated in the patriarchal processes of genetic and cultural regeneration that attempted to ensure not only the biological, but the also the political and spiritual continuity of the great land-owning families.

Many scholars, however, such as Moore, Halsband, and Norton, have already pointed out that some evidence does indeed exist to strongly suggest a physical relationship between Lord Hervey and Stephen Fox (later raised to the peerage to become the 1st Earl of Ilchester). "You have left some such remembrance behind you," wrote Hervey to Stephen Fox after the latter's return from London to Redlynch, " that

I assure you (if 'tis any satisfaction to you to know it) you are not in the least danger of being forgotten. The favours I have received at Your Honour's Hands are of such a Nature that tho' the impression might wear out of my Mind, yet they are written in such lasting characters upon every Limb, that 'tis impossible for me to look on a Leg or an Arm without having my Memory refresh'd. I have some thoughts of exposing the marks of your pollisonerie [lewdness] to move

Compassion, as the Beggars that have been Slaves at Jerusalem doe the burnt Crucifix upon their Arms, they have remain'd so long that I begin to think they are equally indelible.<sup>13</sup>

In terms of method, my focus in this project has been centered around, but not limited to, the application of relevant biographical detail as a critical lens with which to view 18<sup>th</sup>-century aristocratic portraiture, extending or stretching the usual limits of the art historical discipline regarding biography by giving the life histories of the individual an increased focus. Although biased, biographical sources can, I believe, simultaneously complicate and enhance customary accounts of art history by providing a greater wealth of detail than is usually included in these object-specific narratives. I have synthesized biographical accounts with theoretical paradigms developed in queer studies to organize and interpret orthodox stories of 18th-century art history, such as journal articles, monographs, catalogue publications, and the like.

'Orthodox' is perhaps a misnomer, for some of the most recent research in the field of 18th-century British portraiture, such as the excellent work done by Marcia Pointon, Angela Rosenthal, and Kate Retford, has been brilliantly innovative in pushing ceaselessly against the rigid boundaries of an admittedly hierarchical and difficult genre. At times, these scholarly works have been less removed from queer studies than might otherwise have been expected, with Baker, Laing and Harrison's meticulous account of the British patrons of Rome-based Edme Bouchardon, Hervey's portraitist in marble,

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<sup>13</sup> Lord Hervey to Stephen Fox, c. 1728, in Rictor Norton, *Mother Clap's Mollyhouse: The Gay Subculture in England, 1700—1830*. (London: GMP, 1992), pg. 149

only one instance of an art historical analysis that is specifically relevant to discussions of same-sex eroticism.<sup>14</sup> Many of Marcia Pointon's writings are concerned with various modes of gender and social interaction, as are those of Lynn Festa, Dror Wahrman, Angela Rosenthal, Patricia Crown and Canadian scholar Alison Conway.

In drawing on biography to flesh out my analysis of the portraits of Lord Hervey and his "coterie" (a word he himself used), I am building on precedents elaborated in the most contemporary scholarship available. For example, Retford, in her recent book, begins her discussion of Sir Joshua Reynolds's 1786 portrait of Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire (1757-1806) by noting the circumstances of the sitter immediately preceding the commission, pointing to the unprecedented barrage of criticism the Duchess received in 1784 for her high profile during the turbulent election of that year. Since the most poisonous attacks on Lady Devonshire concerned her presumed lack of maternal affection, Retford juxtaposes known biographical references concerning the Duchess' excellent, life-long relationship with her daughter with visual material to construct a thoughtful, sensitive and well-informed analysis of Reynolds's work.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, when explaining the compositional strategies of John Closterman in a c. 1693 family group of John and Sarah Churchill, the 1st Duke and Duchess of Marlborough (1650-1722 and 1660-1744), Retford sees clear links between the unusually prominent figure of the Duchess and the "abundant evidence that survives to demonstrate the singularly

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<sup>14</sup> Malcolm Baker, Alistair Laing and Colin Harrison, 'Bouchardon's British Sitters: Sculptural Portraiture in Rome and the Classicizing Bust around 1730,' *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 142, No. 1173 (Dec., 2000), pg. 762.

<sup>15</sup> Kate Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pg. 202.

ambitious, assertive and domineering character" of the woman herself.<sup>16</sup>

My methodology has also been informed by the curatorial strategies I have witnessed in numerous exhibitions of portraiture, the most striking of which is recorded in Colin Bailey's exhaustively researched catalogue for the record-setting *Renoir's Portraits: Impressions of an Age* show at the National Gallery of Canada in 1997.<sup>17</sup> This catalogue, as Frank Herbert pointed out in his discussion of Bailey's work for the *New York Review of Books*,<sup>18</sup> is a traditionalist account that express the author's pleasure in setting out the life histories of the persons depicted by Renoir, and as Herbert remarked, privileges a very thorough sense of historical scholarship, sometimes at the expense of some of the more theoretical aspects of the art-historical discipline. Bailey's model recovers lost or forgotten narratives of human experience to enhance a reading of the physical works of art, and I have endeavored to follow in his path.

Besides using archival sources, biographical detail and art historical writing to construct an analysis of the likenesses of Hervey and his friends, I have also resorted to queer theory to address some of the issues I feel are present in most of the accounts that deal with representations of Hervey and his circle. Gaps in the historical record or deliberately suppressed stories (we know, for example, that Hervey and Fox's descendants engaged in processes of suppression and elision through the physical destruction of the more controversial letters) are often best addressed by using theoretical models drawn from queer studies. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's seminal postulation of

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 222.

<sup>17</sup> Colin Bailey, *Renoir: Impressions of an Age* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1994).

<sup>18</sup> Frank Herbert, 'Renoir: Impressions of an Age, Review,' *New York Times Review of Books*, vol. 44, No. 18, (November 18, 1997), par. 3.

homosociality as a type of interaction between men that can dangerously blur the lines between affection and eroticism has been particularly valuable in this case, while Rictor Norton, Randolph Trumbach, Laurence Senelick, Richard Meyer and others have done extensive work on liminally-gendered figures from the eighteenth century, such as the molly, the rake, and the macaroni.<sup>19</sup>

The most immediately striking representations of the Hervey circle are to be found in the format of the quintessential British portrait, or the full or three-quarter length painting in oil on canvas, examples of which are discussed in Chapter One, along with interrelating issues of image production and dissemination. Oil painting itself has a rich potentiality to convey popular paradigms of gender and standards of sexual morality. For example, when comparing the prodigious output of the studio-factories of Sir Peter Lely (1618-1680) and Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723), both of whom employed dozens of specialized artists, it quickly becomes apparent that, although the formal composition, sizing and general repertoire of stylistic motifs expressed by many of these works remains considerably homogenous, subtle differences in temperament and palette in Kneller's work present a noticeably more restrained version of sexuality. Such restraint mirrors the inauguration of "moral changes in English society in the 1690s, which included the foundation of the *Society for the Reformation of Manners*,"<sup>20</sup> an repressive institution that, from its inception, took the lead in prosecuting known, suspected or

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<sup>19</sup> See Rictor Norton, *Mother Clap's Mollyhouse: The Gay Subculture in England, 1700—1830*. (London: GMP, 1992), pg. 149; see also Richard Meyer, ' "Nature Revers'd": Satire and Homosexual Difference in Hogarth's London,' Bernadette Fort and Angela Rosenthal, eds., *The Other Hogarth: Aesthetics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pg. 166, and Lynn M. Festa, 'Personal Effects: Wigs and Possessive Individualism in the Long Eighteenth Century, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, vol. 29, No. 2, (Spring 2005) pg. 62.

potential queer individuals and collectives. Eroticization is felt in formal terms: the immediate precedents of portrait-painting in early 18th-century England, as represented by Kneller and Lely, offered opposing models of sensuality and restraint.

A genealogy of popular morals can therefore be traced by reference to aesthetic concerns, since shifts in popular morality are commemorated through the formal strategies used to depict the hereditary elite. Hervey's portraitists who were commissioned to paint him in the full- or half-length format were all building on a rich painting tradition that translated Stuart sexuality into the careful classicism of the Augustan age. Certainly the work of Hogarth, or even Fayram, displays a self-conscious, light-hearted informality that, through reactionary aesthetics, rejects Baroque solidity for a more ephemeral, effervescent approach.

Hervey's gender, the way he looked, talked and acted, had no small share in his political career, since this is what had singled him out in the eyes of the Queen, Caroline of Brandenburg-Ansbach(1683-1737). Lord Hervey and Queen Caroline enjoyed each other's confidence from the dawn of their professional relationship. Hervey is said to have engaged her initial trust and affection by behaving differently than the majority of the other members of the household, sometimes by riding beside her carriage when the court was out hunting, talking to her about philosophy, fashion and the latest gossip, catering to her desires and needs instead of concentrating his attention on the King. Hervey's appearance and demeanour, then, were important tools in his professional life as a courtier, and I argue that large-scale portraiture of this kind, despite its official nature, can when compared to earlier images be said to retain traces of the kind of divergent masculinity that characterized his rise to power.

My second chapter discusses representations of Lord Hervey and his friends in miniature and in marble. The exchange of small, hand-held portraits was commonplace at the early Georgian court.<sup>20</sup> Many of these exquisite miniatures come from the studio of noted court miniaturist Christian Frederick Zincke, enameller to George II, and I am particularly interested in working through notions of the miniature as functioning as a visual indicators of ‘interest’ between men, or, more explicitly, as visual manifestations of their relationships. The literature from Hervey’s surviving letters is particularly intriguing in this respect, as is indicated from a letter dated 1728 to Stephen Fox, in which Hervey discusses how Zincke’s work functioned for the two men. I argue that the exchange of portrait miniaturists by Lord Hervey and his immediate circle are the visual manifestations of gendered alterity, of a particular group of aristocratic men whose collective performances of masculinity were characterized by a high degree of subversion.

At times, these acts of subversion could play out in entirely acceptable ways that had been ritualized through continual enactment by the elite. Headgear and the wearing of wigs and powder, for example, had great potential to convey an immediately-recognizable sense of status and power. To publicly discard the customary insignia of power and wealth was in itself subversion, and yet some few men did in fact choose to be depicted without the usual trappings of a man of substance, self-consciously eschewing the wig for a swathe of brightly-coloured fabric that acted as a cap. Zincke’s portrait of Lord Thomas Winnington (1696-1746), with whom Hervey frequently exchanged portraits, has the future Lord Treasurer garbed in a cap of sumptuous colouring. Reminiscent of the informal garb aristocratic men slept and spent their private hours in,

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<sup>20</sup> Richard Charlton-Jones, *The British Portrait 1660 - 1960* (Woodbridge: Antique Collector’s Club, 1991), pg. 112.

public display of informality such as this is in itself suspect, since it usually harkens to alternate kinds of sophistication and learning. Akin to playing a bohemian role, the wearing of the cap, instead of the wig, was a potent signal of alterity, of a dissidence that was internalized, naturalized and rendered acceptable through association with the requisite cultural capital.<sup>21</sup>

To conclude the second chapter, I also discuss the presciently neoclassical portrait bust of Lord Hervey by Prix-de-Rome winner Edme Bouchardon, executed from the life in Naples and commissioned by Stephen Fox, who retained the original after its arrival in England.<sup>22</sup> As a near-historiated or mythologized portrait bust, with the sitter stripped of his contemporary trappings and recast as a Roman patrician, the bust points to the oddly syncretic, transnational character of some early 18<sup>th</sup>-century portraits. Made in Italy by a French artist for an English sitter, and subsequently displayed and internalized it in Britain, to the extent that became the tradition for each successive Marquess of Bristol to have himself depicted in a similar style, Bouchardon's bust is a highly potent sign of dissident masculinity, commemorative of the time Hervey and Fox shared in Italy during 1728. Despite the potency of this statue and the circumstances surrounding its production, the image itself could simultaneously function as a symbol of homosocial and heterosexual affection, as the statue's early classicism was 'translated' by Johann Lorenz

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<sup>21</sup> I include youth as a kind of cultural capital that is also found, during this period, in educated foreigners, such as Europeans working in London, and especially in those *virtuosi* members of the aristocracy, including the famous Lord Burlington. See Richardson's c.1719 portrait at the National Portrait Gallery in London of Lord Burlington (Richard Boyle, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl Burlington and 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Cork, whose hugely influential collection eventually formed a substantial augment to the core of the present-day Devonshire holdings at Chatsworth), which is one of the watersheds of this prototype.

<sup>22</sup> Alistair Laing, *In Trust for the Nation: Paintings from National Trust Houses* (London: National Gallery, 1995), pgs. 62, 63.

Natter into a side-relief miniature intaglio portrait of Hervey, the interior of which still contains a later portrait of Lady Hervey.

In my third chapter, I examine William Hogarth's informal group portrait of the Hervey circle. This painting, one of Hogarth's most enigmatic examples of the 'conversation piece' genre he helped to establish in the English painting tradition,<sup>23</sup> was recently included in an extensive exhibition of Hogarth's portraiture that traveled to Paris and Madrid as well as London,<sup>24</sup> marking the garnering attention to and interdisciplinary interest in gender, sexuality and strategies of performative identity in early 18<sup>th</sup>-century culture.

Hogarth's work is particularly rich in problematized paradigms of gender, and is reflective of the heightened sense of attention and concern paid to discourses of sexuality during the establishment of the British colonial enterprise. Dipesh Chakrabarty's exhortation to the academic community at large to begin strategies of rereading, to reinterpret history from the point of view of the marginal or provincial, is just one instance of a successful theoretical model that is agitating for the re-conceptualization of history. By engaging in the "politics of despair" or 'mining' the historical record' for lost, suppressed or elided histories, a richer, broader and balanced interpretation of the past can be presented for a heightened sense of nuance, sensitivity and inclusion.<sup>25</sup> I argue that

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<sup>23</sup> Jill Campbell points out that "the most curious aspect of this odd painting is the chair on which the clergyman stands," highlighting Hogarth's unprecedented use of esoteric motifs in the *Hervey Conversation Piece*. See 'Politics and Sexuality in Portraits of John, Lord Hervey,' *Word and Image* 4 (1990), pg. 291.

<sup>24</sup> Tate Britain, *William Hogarth*, <<http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/hogarth/rooms/room4.shtm>>, Accessed May 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000). As Chakrabarty

the references in Lord Hervey's letters to Maddington, the physical place depicted in Hogarth's group portrait, run parallel to the ambiguously homosocial structures of gender that are represented in the piece itself. Since these structures are couched in the terms of esoteric iconographical connotation, some of which, it has been suggested, are tinged with nonconformist spiritual (specifically Masonic) associations, the painting can be theorized to be both a very strong gesture of social dissidence and an exemplary demonstration of sophistication, intellectualism, and connoisseurship.

The literary references, where Hervey calls Maddington "your Little Trianon, sacred to sweat and spaniels,"<sup>26</sup> are tinged with a kind of eroticism that, I argue (drawing on the arguments of Hogarthian scholars) engages in processes of legitimization, just as the miniatures do. Hogarth's view of Hervey and his friends mimics dynastic compositional and narrative elements of the informal group portrait to subvert the monolithic political and social responsibilities that were associated with aristocratic patriarchy. I use similar methods of inquiry to speak about absences, about who is not represented, included or commemorated in a particular work of art when all the letters, memoirs and visual evidences suggest that they should be. I refer specifically to the sudden elision of William, 1st Viscount Bateman (c. 1703-1744) from the Hervey circle in the years following 1735, and of his startling absence from the *Hervey Conversation Piece* by Hogarth, which is an absence that can be structured through careful reference to historical documentation.

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writes, "subaltern pasts are like stubborn knots that stand out and break up the otherwise evenly woven surface of the fabric," pg. 106, a simile that illustrates the necessity for historians to "be imaginative and creative both in their research and their narrative strategies. How do you write the histories of suppressed groups? How do you construct a narrative of a group or a class who has not left their own sources?" pg. 98.

<sup>26</sup> Lord Hervey to Steven Fox, Hampton Court, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1731, *Hervey MSS* 497/47/4, pg 98.

Much of the excellent scholarship on subversive performances of masculinity in 18<sup>th</sup>-century England has justifiably been concerned with the so-called 'molly' subculture, a loosely organized underground collective of adult men who met at the houses or inns of a few key women, and whose nocturnal behaviour was notoriously effeminate, homoerotic and liminal. The widespread publicity this collective received following the arrest, trial and humiliation or execution of several of its key figureheads eventually resulted in the term being applied as a pejorative insult to any man whose behaviour was read as effete. In reality, the work of several scholars, such as Leonard Senelekin and Randolph Trumbach, has done much to deconstruct the myth of the 'essential' molly, arguing that the prison lists of the time, and the chilling records compiled by criminal investigators associated with the prosecution, indicate that flagrantly effete performances of masculinity were confined to relatively small section of the molly populace; the vast majority were simply ordinary men, "solid fathers of families, hitherto respectable tradesmen, schoolmasters, and clerics, generally mature in age."<sup>27</sup> Potentially seamless characteristics of conventional masculinity could and did veil a private world of hidden participation within an underground community of dissidence, much akin to the Masonic community.

Certainly it is possible that these men associated with the Queen and her powerful prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole (1676-1745) visited a molly-house in London, likely in some form of incognito, but the connections, embodied in portraiture, that are under

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<sup>27</sup> Laurence Senelick, 'Mollies or Men of Mode? Sodomy and the Eighteenth-Century London Stage,' *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Jul., 1990), pgs. 50, 51 qtd. in Richard Meyer, ' "Nature Revers'd": Satire and Homosexual Difference in Hogarth's London,' Bernadette Fort and Angela Rosenthal, eds., *The Other Hogarth: Aesthetics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pg. 166.

investigation in this essay are the ties of aristocratic homosociality, which I believe were largely played out in the aristocratic venues of the palace, the theatre, and the country house, to say nothing of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. The notoriety garnered by semi-public transvestism in a popular mollyhouse was likely to have been anathema to these well-born and well-known men. As Rictor Norton has written, "there is really no evidence to suggest that Lord Hervey would ever have entered a mollyhouse."<sup>28</sup>

Lucy Moore goes so far as to split modes of dissident masculinity between the mollies and those men who "belonged to the educated aristocratic elite. In the licentious tradition of Lord Rochester, these men saw themselves as above society's conventions,"<sup>29</sup> highlighting the earlier 17th-century precedents established in aristocratic London by the wilder Restoration-era courtiers, exemplified by John Wilmot, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Rochester (1647-1680). Mollyhouses, in Moore's words, "were risky for men of aristocratic background: they were vulnerable to blackmail to start with, and for a fastidious man like Hervey, who insisted on bathing once a day, one suspects it would have been a bit rough (although that may well have been one of its attractions). This is not to say that these two groups never overlapped, simply that there were two groups."<sup>30</sup>

Early 18th-century portraiture, in all its diverse ways of conveying a likeness, has a fascinating flexibility to it behind all the apparent hierarchical formality of the Baroque visual idiom. The era was a time of potent social change, with new modes of informal representation, fertilized by cross-cultural interaction with Francophile aesthetics, driving

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<sup>28</sup> Rictor Norton, *Mother Clap's Molly House: The Gay Subculture in England, 1700—1830*. (London: GMP, 1992), pg. 154.

<sup>29</sup> Lucy Moore, *Amphibious Thing: The Life of Lord Hervey*, (London: Viking Press, 2000), pg. 47.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 47.

a new manner of thinking, writing and talking about the act of painting another's face and body. Through the juxtaposition of archival, biographical, and canonical research, I attempt to illustrate some of the ways in which members of the English aristocracy whose performances of masculinity were notoriously subversive elaborated their dissidence to the expected social norms. This dissidence in gender finds expression in the narrative and compositional devices employed by their artists of choice, while an analysis of the body of visual material produced by their portraitists can "provincialize" an area of study that has been long neglected. Lord Hervey is simply the most notorious, most visible and most politically successful of an entire group of men who found themselves bound by these ties of dissidence, which I have taken as an organizing principle to talk about masculinity in early Georgian portraiture.

## Chapter One

It is most certainly true, that your dancing master is at this time the man in all of Europe of the greatest importance to you. You must dance well, in order to sit, stand, and walk well; and you must do all these well in order to please.<sup>1</sup>

Originally penned by the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Chesterfield, the above advice amply demonstrates both the discursive importance of cultural figures who served a didactic role to the Georgian aristocracy, like the dancing master, and the importance of performance as a status-delineating device, where elite men moved, talked and behaved in distinctive ways that set them apart from other men. Masculinity, or rather an elite masculinity conditioned by education, experience and breeding, was articulated through various physical poses, most of which could be learned, and which were prized as visible signs of power. To ‘please,’ an aristocratic man must move, talk and interact in a manner that marked him as a member of a class who possessed sufficient leisure to acquire the skills of aristocratic self-presentation. Lord Hervey, as a courtier, needed to be particularly adept at these skills, which, as I argue in this chapter, can be discerned in his surviving portraits in oil. Hervey’s role as a transmitter of aristocrat forms of masculine gender is given a queer context, as the circumstances surrounding the physical creation of these portraits, and of those of Stephen Fox, are interrogated in order to speak about, firstly, the precedents of the mannerisms that are displayed in the likenesses of both men, and secondly, the role that same-sex relationships (potentially, although not necessarily, problematized by eroticism) played

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<sup>1</sup>Letter dated January 8, 1751, Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield and C. Strachey (ed.), *The Letters of Lord Chesterfield to His Son* (London: 1901), vol. 2, pg. 100, in Desmond Shawe-Taylor, *The Georgians: Eighteenth-Century Portraiture and Society* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1990) pg. 66.

in the appearance of Hervey and Fox's portraiture. I conclude by examining the disparate forms of dissidence in gender expressed by both men through a discussion of hunting or 'sporting' pictures, favoured by Fox, as a contrast to the sophistication of the courtier images of Hervey.

The period following Sir Godfrey Kneller's domination of the practice of portraiture was one of consolidation and reform for the country at large, not just artistic practice, which in fact severely felt the failure of the cultured Stuart dynasty and the imposition of the Germanic House of Hanover. Stuart monarchs had been great patrons of art, and although the triumph of the Protestant aristocracy over James II during the Glorious Revolution of 1689 put a damper on the lavishness of early Stuart patronage, Kneller's success was still due in large measure to his monopolization of the office of Principal Painter to the Crown, a position he held from 1688, but which was aggrandized following his knighthood by William III. Although portraiture was Kneller's specialty, and a lucrative specialty at that, enabling him to live like a gentleman, his success also seems due to his political adroitness, as he was rapidly established as the favorite painter of the powerful Whig oligarchs in their social face of the 'Kit-Cat Club.'

The state of the arts in England was, at this time, lagging far behind continental developments, although several autochthonous advances in style appeared during this period of comparative isolation. Kneller, consciously moving away from Stuart decadence and eroticism, pandered to the tastes of the British aristocrats epitomized by the Kit-Cat club, who, via their mouthpiece of Addison and the periodical *Spectator*, rejected the 'toujours gai' of Largillierre and Rigaud, court painters of Versailles, in favour of the *gravitas* that was thought more suitable for the

Protestant oligarchy.<sup>2</sup> The so-called ‘Kneller’ mask, or the perfectly ovoid, austere and homogenous visage of his likenesses, “shows its male subject engaged in a theatrical and implicitly public display of good-breeding; the main purpose of such a representation is to endow the gentleman with what might best be termed the character of ‘politeness.’”<sup>3</sup>

Kneller’s role was seminal, even during his advanced old age. Nothing along the lines of the *Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture*, founded in France in 1648 under the auspices of Anne of Austria, existed in England to protect, or to control, the careers of visual artists, and many of the painters of the second generation after the Revolution were massively indebted to Kneller not only in matters of style, studio practice and processes of patronage, but also to the intellectual paradigms he attempted to establish. During the last years of Queen Anne’s rule, Kneller and his pupil, the theorist Jonathan Richardson, established an Academy in his studio on Great Queen Street, which consisted “of an informal gathering of some sixty members, each subscribing a guinea a head, it met to provide for and discuss the interests of professional (and some amateur) painters.”<sup>4</sup> Artists like Kneller and Richardson were, at this time, some of the only individuals whose collections of great art were open to a larger public, and although the Great Queen Street academy did not survive much longer than Kneller’s death, it provided an important precedent to later developments under Reynolds, and, most intriguingly, was a grassroots organization operating outside of the external control of the Court, something unthinkable in absolutist France.

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<sup>2</sup>A.C. Sewter, ‘Kneller and the English Augustan Portrait,’ *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Vol. 77, No. 451. (Oct., 1940) pg. 106; see also Samuel Klinger, *Whig Aesthetics: A Phase of Eighteenth-Century Style*, *ELH*, Vol. 16, No. 2. (Jun., 1949), pg. 135.

<sup>3</sup>David H. Solkin, ‘Great Pictures or Great Men? Reynolds, Male Portraiture, and the Power of Art’, *The Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 9, No.2 (1986), pg. 42.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Charlton-Jones, *The British Portrait 1660 - 1960* (Woodbridge: Antique Collector’s Club, 1991), pg. 127.

While the dearth of viewing opportunities of art in early 18th-century England provided much-needed impetus to the acquisitive tendencies of the aristocracy, the Grand Tour, proving ever more popular from the late seventeenth century on, was stimulating the flow of transnational cultural commerce, with the rising wealth of the English landowner resulting in a huge influx of paintings, sculpture, statuary, carvings and other products of visual culture into England. More than this, fundamental changes in English society were breathing new life into the genre of portrait-painting. “The increased frequency with which Parliament met after 1689 may well have had some bearing on the growing popularity of portrait painting. The solid patronage provided by over 500 members of Parliament and their wives and families undoubtedly boosted the income of the portrait painters of Kneller’s generation as well as swelling the audience for theatre and fuelling the market for new upper class housing developments in the Piccadilly and St. James area.”<sup>5</sup>

As might be expected, the convergence of nobility on London and the increasing urbanism and sophistication of the London art market created something of a crisis for indigenous painters, who were, as the indifferent success of the Great Queen Street Academy indicates, struggling to fulfill the needs of the patrons. George Vertue, in the beginning of his notes on living British painters, provides us with a list of those painters then in the public eye. Of the new names the most significant were John Vanderbruck (1694-1739), the young Joseph Highmore (1692-1780), and Enoch Seeman (c. 1694-1745).<sup>6</sup> The latter painter was apparently favoured by Lord Hervey and was certainly patronized by Stephen Fox and their immediate social circle, including members of the Marlborough family such as Lord William Bateman, and his wife Lady Anne.

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<sup>5</sup>Brian Allen, ‘The Age of Hogarth 1720-1760’, in *Ibid*, pg. 130.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pg 131.

Danzig-born Enoch Seeman was brought to London by his father in 1704, and within a decade he had executed portraits for many of the leading members of the English aristocracy, such as the Dukes of Buccleugh. In 1717, he gained his first royal commission when he painted George I, while his portrait of George II resides in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle. Seeman's best patronage occurred comparatively early in his career, coinciding with the creation of the prototype of an early image of Lord Hervey (See Figure One).

Part of the Melbury collection and thus owned by Stephen Fox and his descendants, the earliest known adult portrait of Lord Hervey in oils was attributed by the 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Ilchester to the hand of Enoch Seeman. By virtue of comparison of this portrait to others done in Seeman's rather wooden, static early style, and noting the evident youth of the sitter, the dating of the painting can be placed to no later than 1730, and indeed probably as early as 1717, when the young 'Jack' Hervey achieved his 21<sup>st</sup> year. Lord Hervey's mother, Lady Bristol, was maintaining the Hervey family profile at court throughout the 1720s in her capacity of Lady-in-Waiting to Caroline of Ansbach, then Princess of Wales, while Molly, Lady Hervey, his wife, had served a similar function up until the couple's marriage in 1720, so the family had ample opportunity to patronize Seeman, at that time the most eminent court artist in the wake of Kneller's decrepitude.

Regardless of the attribution of the Melbury portrait, the composition of the presumed Seeman image, and in particular the posing and surrounds of the figure, closely parallel the codes of upper-class masculinity that were advocated by French author Francois Nivelon in his *Rudiments of Genteel Behaviour*, a popular guidebook to etiquette and manners that appeared in 1737.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Arline Meyer, 'Redressing Classical Statuary: The Eighteenth-Century "Hand in Waistcoat" Portrait,' *Art Bulletin*, March 1995, Volume LXXVII, No. 1, pg. 53

Nivelon, fresh from the glories of the Paris Opera, enjoyed a meteoric career in his youth in England, first as a dancer and then as a choreographer on the London stage. The publication of his book “coincides with his absence from the London stage (the first since his arrival in 1723), and most likely is related to the announcement in the *Daily Post* (Jan. 17, 1739) that he had set up a school at Stamford in Lincolnshire, which was supported by all the gentry in the neighbourhood.”<sup>8</sup>

Accompanied by engravings by Louis-Philippe Boitard after designs by Bartholomew Dandridge, the book simply presented, via literary format, the repertoire of attitudes that were already concurrent among the aristocracy to a wider public audience, and can be seen as an indication of projected social desire on the part of the increasingly prosperous middle classes. Arline Meyer’s article in a 1995 issue of *Art Bulletin* points out how much of this social desire was heightened by the potent cross-channel winds of transnational cultural exchange, as influences emanating from Versailles were assimilated by English artists. Meyer displays how Boitard’s companion images to Nivelon’s book are iconographically indebted to the precedents established in French court culture by Philippe I d’Orléans, called Monsieur, and his entourage, whose representation in contemporary fashion plates from the 1680s are the first instances of the poses that would be codified by the English in the early eighteenth century.

Meyer’s glancing references to the in/famously queer brother of Louis le Grand serve to highlight Monsieur’s little-known role as a kind of progenitor of aristocratic masculinities that were (ironically!) subsequently adopted, revised and naturalized by the English. Portraits of Lord Hervey that specify his excellence in expressing these attitudes, or in performing a similar kind of gender first advocated by Monsieur, indicate the depth and breadth of the interconnectivity of

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<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, footnote pg. 53

queer aristocrats among the nobility of 18th-century western Europe. Hervey's awareness of and mastery of French aristocratic etiquette, which as Seeman's portrait proves preceded the appearance of Nivelon's seminal book, also underscore the unspoken, unwritten and undiscussed role queer men played in the spread of elite modes of gender.

The whole function of a guidebook of manners is to present an unfamiliar, yet desired social terrain to an audience who is precariously placed in the purgatory of class uncertainty. Discourses of gender such as Nivelon's book laid out a theoretical framework for possible social mobility, as the ideal standards of masculine elite gender were presented for all and sundry to assimilate. "Culture, taste and refined manners would, it was held, enable society to bridge, or at least mask, disparate elements and interests. Such cultivation involved an ease of social address, reflected in physical grace. In part this could be learned, and the dancing master was the most important teacher."<sup>9</sup> Polished by regular use, such attitudes and poses became signifiers of power, while masculinity was very much subject to potentially subversive methods of containment and presentation. Polite behaviour, stressed by Augustan patriarchs and rendered accessible through Francophile publications, had a gendered nature, designed to regulate and to a certain extent protect those perceived to be weak, such as children, the aged, and women.<sup>10</sup>

Lord Hervey can thus be looked to as a very early example of someone who thoroughly mastered the elegant performances of masculinity that were seen as representing elite status, while the subsequent popularity of the poses and performances advocated by Nivelon and other etiquette writers points to the seminal role of well-born queer figures like Monsieur and Hervey, who took the lead in making politeness, elegance and physical grace the defining characteristics

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<sup>9</sup> Jenny Uglow, *Hogarth: A Life and World* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), pg. 158.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Kaminski, 'Rehabilitating 'Augustanism': On the roots of 'Polite Letters' in England,' *Eighteenth-Century Life*, vol. 20, no. 3 (1996), pg. 50

of aristocratic masculinity.

The life and oeuvre of John Fayram (active 1711/1713 - d. 1743/4),<sup>11</sup> the portraitist who was most patronized by the Hervey family during Lord Hervey's adult life, has as yet been defined in the most nebulous of terms by the art historical discipline, being primarily known only obliquely through engravings of his work by John Faber, whose output was prodigious throughout the early decades of the 1700s. Fayram's career appears to have coincided exactly with that of Lord Hervey, and given the consistent patronage recorded by the Earl of Bristol throughout the decade of 1728 to 1737, he had a strong professional relationship with the family, who likely were his most important patrons during the apogee of his artistic career, as he was continually creating various copies of his original portrait of Lord Hervey (See Figure Two) that reflected the changing status and prestige of the Hervey clan.<sup>12</sup>

The account-books of Lord Bristol, Hervey's father, clearly record payment at various times to Fayram and a number of artists, usually provincial and including at least one woman,<sup>13</sup> who worked as professional copyists, and who were commissioned by the Hervey family to make copies of portraits of family members that would then serve as gifts, exchanges, or simply highly visible symbols of court patronage and influence. In 1728 Lord Bristol "paid Mr. John Fayram in full for three ½ length pictures of Lord Hervey, Tom and Nann; all demands. 28 pounds;" a not inconsiderable sum in the days where a country squire could maintain his family in honour and gentility for five hundred pounds a year. Again on July 13, 1728, Lord Bristol "paid John Fayram for ye copy of Lord Hervey's picture which he promised to Mr. Winnington, four

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<sup>11</sup>The National Trust, *Ickworth: Picture List* (Ickworth House: Horringer, Suffolk, 2000), pg. 1.

<sup>12</sup>S.H.A.H. Hervey, *The Diary of John Hervey, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Bristol. With Extracts from his book of Expenses, 1688-1742* (Wells: Ernest Jackson, 1894), entries for 1728, 1736, 1737.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, entry for 1727

pounds four”]; while in 1736, the much-loved Earl “Paid John Fayram ye 3 quarter length copy of Lord Hervey’s picture, 2 guineas.” In 1737, only a few months before the tragic death of Queen Caroline, he commissioned another two copies of this same portrait of Lord-Hervey as Vice-Chancellor to the Queen; he paid George Knapton eight guineas for a copy in pastels, which he presented to Lady Hervey, his favourite daughter-in-law, and another three pounds ten went to Fayram, who must have been blessing Lord Hervey’s rise to political prominence about this time.<sup>14</sup>

While little is known of Fayram's background, some of his connections, as well as certain absences from the historical record (that may, of course, be later better explained by future research) lead me to postulate that he was mainly a provincial painter; he may have worked occasionally in London, the most plausible site of creation for the Fayram portrait currently housed at Ickworth, but he appears to have been dependent on individual sources of income, going from commission to commission at the whim of particular clients. Fayram may well have done both, maintaining or, more likely, sharing studio space in the capital with other craftsmen while continuing to travel throughout at least the south of England to fulfill the needs of regional markets.<sup>15</sup> He is documented as working in Bath during 1739, when he sketched and painted the famous Bath cross, an elaborately gilded monument at the center of the spa (See Figure Three). As a portraitist, he would doubtlessly have tried to obtain commissions from the gentry in Bath.

Fayram’s image of Lord Hervey, originally painted in 1728, is a fascinating example not only

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, entry for 1737.

<sup>15</sup> A centre-periphery dichotomy that was the life experience of many vernacular portrait painters in provincial England during the early Georgian era, reflecting the centuries-established metropolitanism of London but also the autochthonous influences mediating imported continental visual sources within regional hinterlands, including Bath, Bury.St. Edmunds, and Ipswich. See Sonia Roe, *Oil paintings in public ownership in Suffolk* (Ipswich: Public Catalogue Foundation, 2005), Introduction.

of a representation of masculine identity, dissident gender, and aristocratic class membership, but of a likeness rendered more poignant by the urgency of the circumstances of production, rendering an enriched texture to our understanding of the reasons why the portrait, and what seems to be a number of other images of Lord Hervey and Stephen Fox, were commissioned at this time. By 1728 Lord Hervey's health began to deteriorate; the death of his favorite sister Elizabeth in September of 1727 had exacerbated the medical difficulties that plagued him from his youth. By December he was seriously unwell, although still attempting to maintain his high social profile in London and his political duties as an MP. "Amyand," the doctor, he writes to Fox, "has put a fresh Costick to my Cheek, but the pain I am most impatient under is from the Costick your absence has putt to my Heart."<sup>16</sup> He made his maiden speech in the House of Commons in January, and was subsequently appointed to serve on several Parliamentary committees, winning Lord Bristol's pride, but by March he was so unwell that a dangerous fever confined him to his bed for weeks, necessitating the services of the most prominent medical men in London, Dr. Cheyne and Dr. Arbuthnot. Rumours of his death were only laid to rest in mid April, after he was seen in public out driving with an actress, Mrs. Oldfield.

Stephen Fox was with him continually throughout the months of his illness. By the time he was well enough to travel outside of the city,<sup>17</sup> in May of 1728, and before the Parliamentary

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<sup>16</sup>Lord John Hervey to Stephen Fox, December 1727, qtd in Robert Halsband, *Lord Hervey, Eighteenth-Century Courtier* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pg. 75.

<sup>17</sup>The state of the internal travel infrastructure in early eighteenth-century England was a constant source of complaint, with mud-ravaged roads, highwaymen, and uncertain conditions rendering mobility a physically taxing enterprise even for the wealthy and vigorous. Such conditions at home prompted the nobility to go to great length and expense to outfit the younger (male) members of the family for travel on the European continent, usually requiring their own coaches, servants and guards, as well as a suitably restraining influence, such as tutor or clergyman, who acted as a "bear-leader." See David Green, *Sarah Duchess of Marlborough* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), pg. 277; see also Frances Seymour, *Lady Hartford*

session had lifted, Fox whisked him away to his estate in Redlynch, where he continued his recovery. He returned to London in June, alone, in high spirits, and plotting his and Fox's mutual flight from England, as "Mr. Fox, with an affection and friendship I am as incapable of forgetting, as any nature but his is incapable of feeling, offered to go with me to any part of the world, and for as long as I chose."<sup>18</sup> The portrait by Fayram, therefore, was a project that had probably been inaugurated either to mark his election to office in August of 1727 or his maiden speech in Parliament in early 1728, but which did not come to fruition until summer of 1728, delayed by his illness and then hastened by his forthcoming continental trip. Hervey, who left on July 12 of 1728, had to have seen the portrait by that time, as he promised a copy of the image to Lord Winnington, which was paid for by the Earl of Bristol the very day after his departure, suggesting both of the paintings had been rushed for early completion.

I give this contextual narrative in such detail to demonstrate the complexity of the circumstances surrounding the production of these images by Fayram. During the time of the portrait's initial creation, the Hervey clan, still mourning the recent death of one adult child, had to face the prospect of the premature death of yet another heir (Carr Hervey, the Earl of Bristol's eldest son by his first marriage, had died in 1723). While the commission was in progress, Hervey and Fox formulated the plan of leaving England for an extended, and dangerous,<sup>19</sup> tour of the continent, and before they left, Hervey had commissioned another copy

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in *Correspondence between Frances, Countess of Hartford, (afterwards Duchess of Somerset) and Henrietta Louisa, Countess of Pomfret between the years 1738 and 1741* (London: Alexander Street Press, 1806), Vol. 1, pgs. 275, 276.

<sup>18</sup>Lord John Hervey to his children, 1731, qtd. in Robert Halsband, *Lord Hervey, Eighteenth-Century Courtier* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pg. 76

<sup>19</sup>The Grand Tour, although a common pilgrimage, had its perils, ranging from the comparatively minor and endemic troubles of footpads, highwaymen, and vermin, to the wrenching, and very real, possibilities of foreign rebellions, disease, or natural disasters. The

of Fayram's image for his friend and close political crony Thomas Winnington, later a Lord of the Treasury, who likely did not receive this copy until it had been paid for by the Earl of Bristol. These threads thus demonstrate some of the complex, and interlocking, reasons why and when the Hervey family demanded representations of themselves, in which political considerations run as a strong but not monolithic pattern. Homosocial bonding, which most 18th-century historians agree that, in this particular context, was (at the very least) heavily eroticized, played a vital, integral, absolutely indissoluble role in the very physical creation of portraits like the Winnington copy by Fayram, without in the least way compromising their participation in a number of other, more usual art historical narratives, such as those of political maturation or biological continuity. As Marcia Pointon has written, "portraiture was the one genre in which copies increased rather than diminished the standing of the original."<sup>20</sup>

Once again, Hervey's self-representation is marked by the aristocratic correctness of the two-fingered gesture, so advocated by Nivelon and anxiously aspired to by hosts of status-aspiring English gentleman, thus implicitly mirroring courtly rituals of deportment and behavior first articulated by the circles surrounding Philippe I d'Orléans at Versailles, but translated in a very English manner, via the imported cultural capital of figures like Nivelon and the nascent image reproductive technologies of the Enlightenment, into an articulation of established social

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'bear-leader' of the Duchess of Marlborough's Spencer grandchildren, her favorite page and former captain in the army, Humphrey Fish, died of fever in Paris, while Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was deprived of a travelling companion by the fears of her friend's parents. Lord Hervey was, he claimed, perilously ill in Italy and he attributed his survival solely to the caretaking abilities of Fox, while the two men's stay in Naples coincided with a major earthquake. Portraits of men who were about to embark on the Grand Tour, therefore, are very much engaged with corporeality, familial memory, and the commemorative bonds of homosociality.

<sup>20</sup>Marcia Pointon, 'Portrait-Painting as a Business Enterprise in London in the 1780s,' *Art History*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (June, 1984), pg. 195.

standing and suitably Protestant *gravitas* expressed through performative masculinity.

Seeman's treatment of this theme is prosaic, wooden, quiet, and even somewhat stolid, as illustrated by the comparative rigidity of the figure, the mask-like face reminiscent of Kneller, hat off and feet pointed out in what was perceived as a conventional attitude of confidence. Fayram opts instead to deflect attention from the overt use of the gesture into the subtle movement of hands among the lavish cloth of aristocratic dress, moving away from Kneller's legacy and harkening back to the swirling gracefulness of Lely. Highly indebted to Lely in its treatment of the hands and folds of drapery, the Fayram portrait of Lord Hervey testifies to the enduring influence of the Restoration-era studio.

Intriguingly, the little-known Fayram was also the portraitist of William Stanhope, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Harrington (1690-1756), a half brother of Lord Chesterfield, who was Lord Hervey's direct predecessor as Vice-Chamberlain to the Royal Household during Hervey and Fox's sojourn in Italy.<sup>21</sup> As former Ambassador to Spain, the proximity of the future Lord Harrington to the persons of the King and Queen would prove highly useful to the Whig administration, and indeed the Vice-Chamberlain played no small role in arranging the successful outcome of the Treaty of Seville in 1729, which secured peace between England, France, and Spain. Indeed, William Stanhope's success in this matter resulted in his direct elevation to the peerage a year later. Lord Hervey was the man appointed to fill the vacancy, and thus we see Fayram, three years after his creation of at least two likenesses of Lord Hervey, amending his work to now include a visual marker of career success, the "somewhat awkwardly added" gold key, worn by

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<sup>21</sup>Michael Finny, 'Cariactures,' <<www.michaelfinney.co.uk/caricstock.htm>>, Accessed March 2007.

the Vice-Chamberlain on state occasions as his insignia of office.<sup>22</sup>

After eleven years as Vice-Chamberlain, Lord Hervey was promoted to Lord Privy Seal, one of the oldest and most prestigious offices in the kingdom, to which auspicious heights Hervey had ridden almost purely on the combination of his favour with the Queen, who had encouraged his ambition, and his services to the Prime Minister, Horace Walpole: it was the tragedy of his career that he was so tardily rewarded, since by then Walpole's political hegemony over the Whig elite had already begun to founder. While he was not the first of his family to achieve court office, the position was certainly the most senior public office any member of the Hervey clan had ever achieved. Through sinecure, the office of Lord Privy Seal effectively recognized the liminal space between aristocratic court realities and the ideologically charged machinations of Parliament, so it is no surprise that such a prestigious, and well-paid, appointment was usually dominated by men whose offices, titles and prestige had been won through the usual oligarchical methods.

Hervey's direct predecessors in office formed an august body. Evelyn Pierrepont, 1st Duke of Kingston, light of the Kit-Cat club and father of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, served during Hervey's youth, from 1720-1726; the others included the redoubtable Thomas Treveor, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Trevor, enemy of the Marlboroughs and governmental prop of Queen Anne, and Spencer Compton, the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Wilmington, an early favorite of George II. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Devonshire, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Viscount Lonsdale, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Godolphin represented the Cavendish, Lowther and Godolphin families, all prominent aristocratic houses whose members had, in some cases, taken to force of arms to defend the Hanoverian dynasty despite considerable immediate risk,

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<sup>22</sup> National Trust. *Ickworth: Picture List* (Ickworth House: Horringer, Suffolk, 2000), pg. 3.

notably during the risings of 1715.<sup>23</sup>

By way of contrast, Hervey's appointment marked a much-delayed recognition of the court duties, intimate and public, official and unofficial, legitimized by precedent and rendered perplexing by idiosyncrasy, that had allowed Walpole and the Queen to so successfully dominate their immediate aristocratic polity. He was a kind of intelligence officer, a medium who translated the heady flow of court information into hard political fact for the government, and it is here where the gendered nature of Hervey's capabilities becomes of real interest. While the complexities of each individual case should be recognized, by and large the former holders of the office of Lord Privy Seal were all men who aggressively pursued autonomous roles as the titular heads of powerful families; Hervey, in name as well as in practice, was not the head of his household. His children, for example, spent much time with his younger brothers and sisters under his father's direct supervision at Ickworth, while his finances, substantially augmented by his earnings at Court, were throughout his life dependent on a landed estate directly controlled by the Earl.<sup>24</sup>

Above all, it was the power of the Queen that guaranteed his political success, and it was through gossip and wit that he first captivated her interest: his endless flow of gossip, his slicing wit, and the manner in which he mercilessly imitated other men and women of their acquaintance<sup>25</sup> were noted as his chief attractions to an intellectually isolated Queen.<sup>26</sup> Her

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<sup>23</sup>Henry Lowther, 3<sup>rd</sup> Viscount Lonsdale (1733-1735), military figure and Hanoverian loyalist during the 1715 rising, crony of George I, and Francis Godolphin, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Godolphin, 1735-1740. (Married to Henrietta Churchill, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duchess of Marlborough in her own right, and son of Sidney Godolphin of Queen Anne fame).

<sup>24</sup>S.H.A.H. Hervey, *The Diary of John Hervey, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Bristol. With Extracts from his book of Expenses, 1688-1742* (Wells: Ernest Jackson, 1894).

<sup>25</sup>While care should be exercised in delineating difference between gendered forms of humour, it does appear as if such witty, somewhat catty mimicry was a largely feminine strategy

initial toleration of him ripened into deep affection and respect after his new offices threw them much together, and his favour with the Queen and with several of her daughters, in particular the Princess Mary, meant he had access to crucial political information before it became generally known to the wider aristocratic public. Hervey was thus able to adroitly filter the oscillating flow of court gossip for relevant political information and combine it with what he knew of the intentions of the Royal Family, which he then posted off to Walpole, who used the intelligence to formulate reactive or preemptive strategies. Unlike Baron Trevor and Lord Lonsdale, who used military exploits to consolidate their status, or unlike the Duke of Devonshire or Francis Godolphin, whose familial connections made them candidates for oligarchical glory, Hervey's rise to fame depended largely on his ability to adapt his personal performance of gender to meet the needs of an enabled feminine figure, reversing the traditional dichotomy of early Georgian tropes of gender.

Most, if not all, of the larger oil pictures of Lord Hervey have been copied and were indeed copied at his express desire during his own lifetime. Many versions of the same portrait, relatively contemporaneous, can therefore create communities of realization, where a network of interrelating, yet disparate social groups, each with its own 'interest' or social-financial priorities,

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of expression and social aggression at the aristocratic court: I am particularly reminded, in this context, of the satirical performance of Nell Gwynn in November of 1674, when she donned the garb of a widowed princess of Tartary to mock her rival, the Duchess of Portsmouth, who had gone into mourning for a french nobleman only distantly connected to herself. *Femme fatale* Athenais de Rouchart, Marquise de Montespan, was mocked in a similarly public manner by Elisabeth-Charlotte of Palatine, who exaggerated the outraged courtesan's extravagant fashions through wearing elaborate wigs and employing a young scullion boy who pretended to hold up her train.

<sup>26</sup>See Andrew Hanham, 'Caroline of Brandenburg-Ansbach and the 'Anglicisation' of the House of Hanover, in Clarissa Campbell Orr (ed.), *Queenship in Europe 1660 - 1815: The Role of the Consort* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pg. 281. See also Emma Jay, 'Queen Caroline's Library and Its European Contents,' *Book History*, Vol. 9, 2006, pg. 55

lay claim to a kind of shared cultural capital. For example, the c. 1740 full-length rendition by Jean-Baptiste Van Loo of Hervey as the Lord Privy Seal (See Figures Four and Five) understandably functions as a kind of governmental portraiture, where insignias of specific heraldry point to the political power of the bearer. Aristocratic masculinity is represented through associative and highly symbolic attributes: the heraldry of office, cherished by Hervey's likeness, points to his precise location near the pinnacle of a carefully ordered, maintained and perpetuated social order, reifying both himself and his family's participation within administrative social structures. His personal links between the Royal Family and the Whig administration of Sir Robert Walpole, to whom he remained loyal throughout the entirety of his political career, are hereby publicly reaffirmed through the expressive subtlety of Van Loo's brush.

In terms of gender, part of the charm of Van Loo's work is the degree of characterization that comes through, the evident sense of personality that is conveyed through a careful, even canny, familiarity with the ritualistic formulas of court portraiture. The Grand Manner of the late Baroque has not been completely abandoned, but there is a considerable degree of reserve articulated through the quiet placement of the draperies, and the hues of fawn, russet and brown that construct recessive spaces of muted shadow, from which the countenance of sitter emerges in a calm, controlled and unemotional mask of good breeding and politeness. Traces of a smile linger on his lips, and he is bent forward a little in his seat, eyes bright and hands gesturing to the heraldry, with a countenance not marked by his habitual pallour, documented in other pictures by Fayram, Seeman, and Zincke, but alive and glowing, as befits an able, active minister of his clout, prestige and reputation.

Although Lord Hervey, as a courtier whose intellectual tastes and indifferent state of health

precluded him from an active appreciation of most forms of outdoor 'sport,'<sup>27</sup> including small-game hunting, he was far from being unacquainted with the sporting pursuits that were so closely tied to the aristocracy's control of landed estates. There was, however, a large disjunction between the way of life of the younger Herveys, with its thorough bias towards the sophisticated and urbane pleasures of the Court, and that of Stephen Fox, the future Earl of Ilchester, whose character remained consistently concerned with estate management, agricultural innovation and improvement, and with the custodial duties of a huntsman, throughout his adult life.

Lord Hervey's extroverted and sociable disposition - for he was, first and foremost, a socialite, a glittering if not primary star of the intertwined constellations of political and noble society - meant he channeled his behavior towards a highly-cultured, aesthetically self-aware participation within the machinery of court and government.<sup>28</sup> As we have seen, half or full-length portraits in oil of Hervey by court artists such as Seeman, Fayram and Van Loo are careful to stress the hypersensitive attention to dress and deportment that was championed by the remnants of the Augustan nobility, while the most successful of these large-scale canvases also inflect something of the Francophile informality known to have been popular among his immediate contemporaries, including his wife.

Steven Fox, however, expressed his dissidence through an internal and introverted devotion to nature, country retirements, and the comparative seclusion and privacy of his own isolated residences; in such a context, his refusal to participate in the established rituals of 'courtly' life,

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<sup>27</sup> Although not of horse-racing, as in the capacity of jockey he was the darling of the Newmarket circuit during his adolescence!

<sup>28</sup> Other liminally gendered or otherwise queer aristocratic men are known to have followed this pattern of aesthetic extroversion, including Horace Walpole, builder of Strawberry Hill and third Earl Orford; Hervey's friend Lord Winington; and the politically slippery Earl of Shaftesbury.

such as in the customary attentions to women in the salon, institutionalized among men of his rank, speaks of a certain rejection of aristocratic extroversion, of not quite being able to play that particular game, at least by the specified set of rules. His withdrawal from the decorous, public court flirtations was so final that his own marriage took place while the girl, a great heiress, was yet twelve years old, suggesting that like many other 18th-century aristocratic marriages, it was at least initially more of a mercenary transaction than anything else. The parents, naturally, did not allow the couple to take up residence together for a number of years, until Lady Ilchester achieved biological maturity, but the point is that he consistently eschewed the usual rules that should have mediated his relations with women of high rank (the Ilchester marriage was the talk of London society, while the bride's parents permanently separated shortly after the contract was signed).<sup>29</sup>

I am not suggesting the role homoeroticism played in his life was the sole or dominant reason for such dissidence, but taken together, his relationship with the Herveys and with his wife provides invaluable context for his known focus and orientation towards outdoor sports and labour, which as Camille Paglia has pointed out, form a *leitmotif* in his surviving portraiture.<sup>30</sup> Such devotion to rural outdoor sports, as opposed to the refinement and extroversion that were expected to characterize a man of his rank, is perhaps best illustrated through reference to the earliest of the known English oil portraits of Stephen Fox (Figure Six), rendered when he was in the first flush of his adult youth, which amply demonstrates some of the qualities, both physical and intellectual, that so rapidly endeared him to the impressionable Lord Hervey. Handsome,

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<sup>29</sup>Rictor Norton, 'Mother Clap's Molly House: The Gay Subculture in England 1700-1830' (London: GMP Publishers Ltd., 1992), pg. 154

<sup>30</sup>Camille A. Paglia, 'Lord Hervey and Pope,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 6, No. 3 (Spring, 1973), pg. 358.

wide-eyed, with a clear complexion and an air of innocence that was totally lacking in his younger brother, he gestures towards a basket of sporting goods, accompanied by his rifle and the curving figure of the hound, who looks up at the young Stephen with devotion, forming an upward vector that refocuses the viewer's attention on the face of the sitter. "Faithful hounds looking up to their masters were to be a recurring theme evoking the virtues of loyalty epitomised in the animal and the acreage of land needed for the exercise of the hunt and the shoot."<sup>31</sup> Painted by Enoch Seeman, this portrait is almost certainly linked to the influence of Lord Hervey, the Fox brothers' ticket to Court circles and the party elite.

Comparing this portrait to Seeman's earlier image of Lord Hervey, a maturation in style, perhaps fertilized by the Francophile currents of Rococo informality, is amply demonstrated. The wooden, stiff, heavy Augustan-like hollowness of the earlier portrait has been replaced by a vibrancy and physicality that shows increased expressive capabilities. The elegance of the performative gestures advocated in gender-producing discourses such as Nivelon's is not entirely abandoned, but, as in keeping with what is known of Fox's character, the focus of the composition is no longer the correctness of polite behaviour, but is re-centered on the relationship between aristocratic male subject and the privileges, prerogatives, and responsibilities of the landed gentleman who is more at home in the country, and hence in comparative isolation, than in the theatre of the court.

Like other forms of 18th-century food production, hunting, or at least 'shooting', the chase of small game such as rabbits, pheasants, quail, grouse, and the like, was carefully regulated. Shooting was a legal prerogative of the gentry and the nobility, who by the early eighteenth-

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<sup>31</sup>Sir Roy Strong in Richard Charlton-Jones, *The British Portrait 1660 - 1960* (Woodbridge: Antique Collector's Club, 1991), pg. 63.

century owned the bulk of the land where such game formed - and still does form - such an integral part of the English ecosphere. "Though hunting is sport, it carries so many significant overtones of rank that the dignity and not the pleasure of the activity tends to be stressed. A gun, like a sword, is an emblem of feudal power, and to hunt implies having land; indeed hunting was actually illegal for anyone who owned less than \$100 a year's worth."<sup>32</sup> Only estate owners or persons who had achieved economic equity with the gentry could legally own the accoutrements of small-game hunting, such as specially designed rifles, or certain breeds of dog, and, most importantly, only they could employ a gamekeeper, usually an adult male who resided full-time on or near the estate, and who was entrusted with the responsibility of being an ecological caretaker or custodian of the land. Shooting, therefore, was an elite recreation that depended on the mediation of the ecological custodian, the gamekeeper, to allow the owners of the land to engage in food production, and only at the appropriate season: such game was hunted for sport but also to allow variety for the table of the estate, and to supplement the diet of the family and their retainers.

With this context in mind, sporting pictures suddenly become invested with a plethora of highly pregnant, iconographically specific cultural issues, in which the performance of masculinity is linked not only to the virile, socially-accepted enjoyment of or prowess in outdoor pursuits (here completely reserved as a masculinist privilege, a homosocial behavioral practice defined in the out-of-doors, away from the physical presence of women), but also very much interconnected with the presentation of class/caste membership, administrative capability, and ecological responsibility. Sporting pictures such as the portraits of Stephen Fox "invariably

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<sup>32</sup>Desmond Shawe-Taylor, *The Georgians: Eighteenth-Century Portraiture and Society* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1990), pg. 62.

represent their themes in ways designed (albeit not conspiratorially) to further the interests of those members of the propertied classes who valued rural sport as a sign of their superior social status.”<sup>33</sup> The enduring popularity of sporting pictures throughout the late seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries among the English gentry speaks of aristocratic complacency: here the land-owning families display the virility of their men and the sufficiency of their land-management practices, and thus legitimize their own privilege!

Another portrait of Stephen Fox, by his estate agent Brown and dated to 1744, drives home the assertion of landed privilege with all the charm and force of its singularly delightful vernacular style (See Figure Seven). Occupying the central foreground of this picture is the future Earl, by this time elevated to the hereditary peerage, albeit that of its lowest rung, a Barony, through the intrigues of Lord Hervey with Queen Caroline. “I breakfasted yesterday with the Queen and Mrs. Clayton’s,” writes Hervey in 1731; “She was very agreeable on a subject you may guess at.... J’en fus content. Je ne suis pas de meme du P.\_\_\_\_. Ce Lot la me disispere.”<sup>34</sup> His disparaging reference to Frederick, Prince of Wales would seem to indicate that Queen Caroline, on Lord Hervey’s behalf, inaugurated the long process of ennoblement for Stephen Fox. Lord Hervey lived to see his favorite become ennobled as Lord Ilchester, of Ilchester in the County of Somerset, Baron of Woodford Strangways in the County of Dorset, as of 1741, and the vernacular portrait of the new Baron makes much of his new role.

While Seeman’s image is unconcerned with landscape and elides it much in the manner of so much theatrical wall-painting, thus reflecting the studio atmosphere that shifted landscapes, interiors, costuming and props with all the rapidity of a green-room wardrobe, the vernacular

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<sup>33</sup>David H. Solkin, ‘Book Review: Sporting Art in Eighteenth-Century England - A social and political history,’ *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 131, No. 1040, p. 783.

<sup>34</sup>Lord John Hervey to Stephen Fox, 1731, *Hervey MSS*, 497/47/4, pg. 143

image displays Fox in the literal depths of his country element. To the left of Fox, in the right-hand corner of the composition, is his beloved nephew, Edward Digby, the son of his sister. Neddy Digby's presence is more than accidental, and illustrates Fox's role as the head of the family, who as such took on the responsibility in educating the younger generation of the blood in the customary duties, as well as the pleasures, of estate management and ecological sensitivity. Kate Retford discusses the educational role of fathers in many sporting pictures, pointing out that many "popular devices similarly demonstrated the pedagogical role of the patriarch and his particular concern with his eldest son. Hunting, for example, provided a motif particularly favoured by portraitists and elite sitters as a means of expressing this relationship, suggesting both the traditional masculine role of the hunter-gatherer and the perks of the propertied."<sup>35</sup> The inclusion of Neddy Digby, an heir if not a son, is also a potent statement of dynastic continuation, pointing to the uncertain nature of inheritance in early Georgian England and the fragility of any family in the face of high rates of infant mortality.<sup>36</sup>

While Neddy Digby's insertion, commemorating a specific afternoon or set of afternoons during the shooting season of 1744, is a sign of dynastic insurance, the appearance of the gamekeeper, enigmatically situated on the left of the canvas looking towards the lively Redlynch figures, functions as a recognizable sign of the extent to which sporting pursuits, estate

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<sup>35</sup> Kate Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pg. 132.

<sup>36</sup> A second son survived to succeed as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Ilchester. A letter from Stephen Fox to his mother-in-law, Susanna Strangways-Horner dated January of 1740, is illustrative in its consciousness of the fragility of the succession of the combined estates of the two families. "As to the second point, whether it would have been wiser to have called in my money at that time, and paid off the debt, I had no objection to it, and I remember very well deliberating on this very subject with you, Ld Hervey and my brother in Grosvesnor street... 'Tis very true you say they were nine between you and the estate, tis very true I had seven elder brothers, what then?" *Holland House Papers*, British Library Manuscript 51337 ADD.

management and other outdoor activities completely engrossed Stephen Fox. Although gamekeepers and other servants are (rarely) inserted into similar portraits, I find this particular composition stresses the relationship between employer and employee, landowner and ecological guardian, in a highly personable, respectful and natural way, in sharp contrast to the ornamental roles allotted to similar figures in other portraits from the period. Richard Cox, the gamekeeper, is not displayed, as might be expected, at the feet of the rising member of an increasingly successful family, but is integrated into the rhythm of the compositional interaction in a seamless flow from left to right, making his features only slightly less prominent than those of the boy, and stressing his role in such rural activities.

More than this, it is the actual inclusion of the estate itself, the fields touched by evident labour, the land bounteous with the effects of good management and careful 'husbandry,' that leads me to postulate this as an uncommonly interconnected, sensitive depiction of masculine aristocratic involvement with and participation in the conservation of the early 18th-century English countryside. This postulation is underscored by other, highly subtle signs of unusual sensitivity, such as the naming of the dog, *Delia*, demonstrating an awareness of the particular life histories of animals, rendered all the more poignant from the almost sympathetic pathos of the fallen quail. As a vernacular expression of character, the painting - thought to have been done by an amateur, Brown, himself the estate manager at Redlynch - places Fox within his desired and chosen setting, indicating a degree of introverted concern for rural responsibilities that were all too often neglected by his contemporaries, including Lord Hervey.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>It should be remembered, though, that as the heir to and not the owner of the Ickworth and other estates, the management of the land itself was very firmly in the hands of Lord Bristol through Hervey's life, leaving him free to concentrate on his social, political and intellectual interests, as well as his growing family.

To conclude, another sporting picture (See Figure Eight) serves as a demonstration of the kind of usual, conventional visual strategies used to demarcate masculine aristocratic gender in the early eighteenth century. George Knapton, the artist employed in 1737 by the Earl of Bristol to copy Fayram's portrait in pastel as a present to Lady Hervey, also created an image of a landowner, his heir, their servant and a dog in 1745, one year after the creation of the vernacular Fox portrait by Brown. Despite these commonalities, the difference between the images could not be more marked. The landscape has been reduced again to ornamental backdrop, containing no reference to the agricultural estates that were the basis of the aristocracy's wealth or to agrarian labor of the peasant-tenants, while the gamekeeper, whose physical presence at such an event would be inevitable, has been suppressed. In his place is Althorp's black servant, Caesar Shaw, who is shown crouching at the feet of John Spencer in a manner highly reminiscent of Roman triumphal carvings, a similarity that would not have been lost on the dilettante Marlborough heir, who traveled extensively throughout Italy.

As servants of African descent were highly fashionable among the Georgian aristocracy, prized for their rarity and exoticism, Caesar's inclusion speaks not of careful estate management but of the social prestige of Johnny Spencer, whose stylishly careless cravat and snowy linens and lace mark the culture of display that permeated all male members of the junior Marlborough generation, who vowed to never sully their hands with silver. Caesar is not the ecological caretaker of the estates, but an urbane symbol of socio-economic power, transported, via the studio of the artist, into the responsibilities of the rural servant-class. Even the game itself, the hares, quail and pheasants that are (ostensibly) Johnny Spencer's concern, have been exiled from Knapton's portrait, leaving an image of a sportsman without sport, surrounded by opulence and luxury, utterly separated, divorced and disassociated from the actual workings of administrative

oversight and buttressed in his social position by the black footman, a representation certainly speaking to the imperialist, racist and essentialist parochial discourses that, already here evident, would come to characterize a much broader segment of the population throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Lord Hervey's portraits in oil contain traces of the dissident performances of gender that characterized the man, and are expressed through the mastery of regulated poses that were, through etiquette guidebooks, constructed as obvious signs of elite status. These poses are not incidental, but have specific queer connotations, since Hervey, and others like him, were likely aware that the precedent for these types of gendered poses was first elaborated at Versailles by Monsieur, the notoriously queer brother of the King. Discussing these images without making any mention of the role queer men played in the spread and naturalization of elite modes of masculinity denies their vitality in the historical record. The portraits of Stephen Fox are illustrative of another kind of dissidence that was far more introverted, retiring and outdoor-focused than the sophisticated, elegant performances advocated by Hervey, providing a counter-narrative that contributes to an enhanced understanding of diversity in gender during the early eighteenth century.

## Chapter Two

Saturday Night past 10 o'clock

June 18th, 1728

Walk often through Hervey groves and now and then visit the \_\_\_ by the pas-  
glissant! I want no memorandums, even your picture is useless in your character,  
my imagination is so much a better painter than Zink yet I find you drawn there  
not only more like than by his hand, but also in colours fixed by so much better a  
fire, yet tis impossible they should ever fade, till the thing on which they are so  
lovingly laid is itself destroyed, nor is it all, for this painter not only describes  
your figure but your face, 'tis an echo to your words, as well as a mirror to your  
form, and so extraordinary a performer in each capacity, that I hear you in  
deadliest silence and see you in deepest darkness.<sup>1</sup>

Quotes such as these, written from Lord Hervey to Steven Fox early in their relationship, illustrate the potency of artistic language in emotive expression, pointing to the relation between visual artifacts and the articulation of desire among the early Georgian aristocracy. The miniature can be theorized to make visible affective relations between elite members of society, while the wig, or the absence of the wig, can be a subtly potent sign of subversive masculinity both in miniatures and in sculptural portraiture. The physical preciousness of the miniaturized luxury good is read as a legitimizing or sanctifying device, while Hervey and Stephen Fox's patronage choices, influenced by Baron Stosch, can be read as containing references to homoeroticism,

unorthodox spiritual beliefs, and classical learning.

Lord Hervey's allusion to the miniature portrait of Fox by Zincke (Figure Ten) that was in his possession is not the only one in which he uses the language of art to refer to the absent person. Two years later, he writes that "I have not had as much pleasure in thinking of you now you are at Maddington as I had when you were at Redlinch I used to figure you up in the very room you were as to what you were doing: my Fancy now can only represent you singly; all of accompaniment of the picture is a dark and undistinguished canvas."<sup>2</sup> The pair, who were frequently separated due to Hervey's position at court and Fox's commitments to his estates, both commissioned small portraits from Christian Frederick Zincke, George II's most prominent enamellist, continuing a long tradition of aristocratic interest in miniature portraits.<sup>3</sup> Miniatures had many diverse uses, but their popularity, and the centrality of their function to romantic-erotic discourses among the transnational hereditary elite of western Europe, was a byproduct of the genre's versatility.<sup>4</sup>

Miniature portraits on enamel, while technically demanding for the artist, offered the 18th-century elite an alternative to the ungainly medium of canvas, which by nature catered to public display and was expected to be located in a comparatively permanent location. Small-scale portraits on enamel, however, could be worn around the person, secreted away with other treasured personal effects, or proudly displayed and collected as key indicators of the networks of familial and political affiliations that bound the aristocracy together. The reduced scale of

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<sup>1</sup>Lord John Hervey to Stephen Fox, June 18, 1728, *Hervey MSS 941/47/4*, pg. 77, 78.

<sup>2</sup>Lord John Hervey to Stephen Fox, Sept 14, 1730, *Ibid.*, pg. 141.

<sup>3</sup> See Figures Nine and Ten

<sup>4</sup>See, for example, Marie-Madeleine Pioche de la Vergne, Comtesse de Lafayette, *The Princess of Cleves* (New York and London: Meridian Classics, 1989 [1678]), pgs 44, 46, 47; and

miniature portraits also meant they adapted well to disparate forms of framing, such as the locket, which could be opened for display or closed for dissimulation, but they were also adorned and embellished by a range of precious and semi-precious materials, linking the genre to the products of the decorative artisans who created snuffboxes, jewelry cases, and a whole range of similar luxury items.

By Lord Hervey's time, the familiarity of the portrait miniature had been long-established in England, with the Tudor and Jacobean courts establishing paradigms of patronage that were continued by the Hanoverian monarchs. The political and social changes inaugurated by the Glorious Revolution of 1689 did not only inject vigour into the market for large-scale oil portraiture, but also deeply affected the demand for the decorative arts. The early decades of the eighteenth century saw miniature portraits, as with conventional full or half-length works, much concerned with promoting the stylistic regularity of the sitters' likenesses, reflecting the hoped-for civic virtues of the landed class. The reasons for such stylistic homogeneity were diverse, but provide invaluable indicators of social tone.<sup>5</sup>

The heavily-stylized, formulaic nature of early 18th-century miniature portraiture was remarked upon by critics during the period, who satirized in poetry 'Zink' for "making his sitters resemble each other or, more precisely, a stereotype based on a socially accepted pictorial form."<sup>6</sup> Regardless of the stylistic homogeneity C.F. Zincke adopted in his English oeuvre, his popularity remained constant and his output prolific. Born in 1684 as the son of a Dresden

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memoirs of Françoise-Athénaïs de Rochechouart-Mortemart, marquise de Montespan, concerning the many loves of Henriette d'Angleterre.

<sup>5</sup>Murdoch, John and Jim Murrell, Patrick J. Noon, and Roy Strong, *The English Miniature* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1981), pg. 164.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pg. 164.

goldsmith,<sup>7</sup> whose profession offered the young artist plenty of scope to learn both studio management and the importance of precise attention to minute detail, Zincke “settled in England in his early twenties and studied enameling there with the Swedish master Charles Boit (1662-1727). Zincke employed the demanding technique of painting in vitreous glazes on copper for portraits seemingly from life.”<sup>8</sup> Exactly when the miniaturist set up as an independent master is not known, but it was certainly before 1714. Although no direct records of payment to C. F. Zincke from the Hervey family, such as those that are extant in Lord Bristol’s record-books for John Fayram, appear to have survived,<sup>9</sup> Lord Hervey’s reference to the man in the *Hervey MSS* corresponds to the documented appearance of miniatures of himself and both of the Fox brothers by the artist (See Figures Nine, Ten, and Eleven), facsimiles of which are recorded at Ickworth, at the Suffolk Royal Archives, and in the National Portrait Gallery in London.

As well as fixing a deadline for a minimum dating of these objects (i.e., certainly before June of 1728), Hervey’s impassioned metaphors to Stephen Fox, implicitly criticizing Zincke’s talent, correspond with a known ebb in the miniaturist’s career, as by this time the painter, referred to as ‘Zink,’ ‘Zinks’ or ‘Zincks’ by his English patrons,<sup>10</sup> was struggling to deal with the increased demands of his business and the accompanying decline in his personal health. Overwork and the precise attention to microscopic detail necessitated by the small-scale format of the enamel miniature had taken a heavy toll on his vision, with several of his later works marred by

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<sup>7</sup>Basil S. Long, *British Miniatures 1520-1860* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1929), pg. 471

<sup>8</sup>Katherine Baetjer, ‘British Portraits in the Metropolitan Museum of Art,’ *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Now Series, Vol. 57, No. 1 (1999), pg. 24 of 1-73.

<sup>9</sup>Meaning either Hervey or, quite plausibly, Fox likely paid Zincke directly. See below for a more detailed description of Stephen Fox’s patronage of Edme Bouchardon.

<sup>10</sup>Basil S. Long, *British Miniatures 1520-1860* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1929), pg. 472.

uncertain glazing techniques, stippling, and similar vision-related defects.<sup>11</sup>

Zincke's portraiture, even when suffering from the increasing blindness of the artist, is still visually stunning: the faces of the Georgian nobility, and at times something of the intricacy of their costumes, characters, and modes of life, come through with great force of emotive expression. The relative similarity of these early Georgian miniature portraits to each other, especially from the hand of one artist (or, one might say, the many hands of one studio) can act to heighten those subtle differences which might otherwise be lost in the plethoric flow of data radiating from a conventional full or half-length portrait. Among these differences is the Francophile elements in Hervey's portrait by Zincke (Figure Nine), which compared to that of the Fox brothers shows strong elements of French cultural influence in the manner of wearing the wig. Even the expression on Hervey's face, with its oval marred by the distinctive cleft in his chin, contains hints in his smile of the *toujours gai* Addison and the readers of his mouthpiece, *Spectator*, found so revolting.

All the faces he drew were very remarkable for their smiles, and a certain smirking air, which he bestowed indifferently on every age and degree of either sex. The *toujours gai* appeared even in his judges, bishops, and privy councillors : in a word, all his men were *petits maitres*, [fops] and all his women coquettes. The drapery of his figures was extremely well suited to his faces, and was made up of all the glaring colours that could be mixed together. <sup>12</sup>

The nationalist language of this sophisticated connoisseur speaks of the prevailing attitude

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<sup>11</sup> John Murdoch and Jim Murrell, Patrick J. Noon, and Roy Strong, *The English Miniature* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1981), pg. 168.

towards French portraiture in Post-Knellerian London, but Hervey, whose scholarly tastes were well developed, may well have encouraged Zincke to create a more informal likeness of him as a reactionary strategy to the dictates of his father's generation. "During the second quarter of the eighteenth century, when Zincke was at the apex of his popularity, the aesthetics of English portraiture were gradually changing... Formal portraiture in all media was becoming the art of a whole society and not the prerogative of the court, a development that encouraged a more genial intimacy and an unaffected interpretation of character."<sup>13</sup>

Wigs, as Marcia Pointon has persuasively argued, were the defining mark or sign of power in the societies of late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup>-century Britain, with other noted scholars, such as Angela Rosenthal, continuing Pointon's critical legacy by expanding or revising her model. "The particular urgency of hair in the eighteenth century is, to my thinking, related to fundamental notions of sexual, national and racial difference within a rapidly expanding global economy."<sup>14</sup> Originally imported to Britain in the wake of the Restoration, the appearance of the full-bottomed wig or perruque at the English court was a sign of continental cultural influence. Like the hand-in-waistcoat mode of masculinity that signified elegance and propriety, the mode of wearing the perruque first gained widespread usage at the French court, and was subsequently internalized and modified in England to suit the needs of the aristocracy.

What had been, in the late seventeenth century, an aristocratic fashion that spoke of knowledge of French court sophistication had, several generations later, been translated into an

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<sup>12</sup>Joseph Addison, 'Dream of a Picture Gallery,' *Spectator*, No. 83, June 5, 1711 in J.H. Fowler (ed.), *Essays on Addison: XIII*, <<http://www.ourcivilisation.com/smartboard/shop/fowlerjh/chap13.htm>>, par. 3.

<sup>13</sup> John Murdoch and Jim Murrell, Patrick J. Noon, and Roy Strong, *The English Miniature* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1981), pg 169.

<sup>14</sup>Angela Rosenthal, 'Raising Hair,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1, pg. 2.

expression of hegemonic, oligarchical power, which, as yet, few women wore. The potency of the wig as a status-expressing device was such that it represented “austere masculine authority, articulating the claims of professional men in an emerging public sphere” and also created “gender solidarity, by muting differences of rank, political interest, region etc.”<sup>15</sup> Other authors have engaged with Pointon’s definition of the 18th-century masculine wig as a potent sign of power, such as Festa, who writes that “designed to cancel out individual vagaries, the wig does not derive meaning from the wearer; instead, it confers a corporate identity upon the individual, marking him as a member of a profession, a person of rank, a public man.”<sup>16</sup>

While by and large this analysis is correct, provocative and historically well-grounded, Festa’s argument fails to take into consideration the subtle, almost imperceptible ways in which such “corporate” signs of identity could be subverted, tweaked or readjusted to display individuality and creativity. Zincke’s portraits of both Fox brothers shows wigs that conform to an expected standardization of aristocratic male identity, privileging the obvious, immediately recognizable marks of rank, wealth and participation in civic life without highlighting individual deviations from the norm. In contrast, Zincke, in his miniature portrait of Lord Hervey, is far more interested in cleverly subverting such standardized, homogenized and incorporated concerns. Hervey’s wig is of a type rarely seen in English portraiture, gathered to the side and falling onto one shoulder in a knot highly reminiscent of feminine hairstyles of the period, which encouraged one lock of hair to grow longer than the rest so as to be better displayed over one shoulder.

Hervey’s wig is therefore indicative of the existing conditions of social play, of a willingness

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<sup>15</sup>Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) qtd. In Lynn M. Festa, ‘Personal Effects: Wigs and Possessive Individualism in the Long Eighteenth Century,’ *Eighteenth-Century Life*, vol. 29, No. 2, (Spring 2005), pg 62.

to tamper (but only slightly!) with expected rules so as to draw attention to “individual vagarity” by utilizing the very language, symbolic and immediately visual, which should have been used to “cancel out” his idiosyncrasies. Dror Wahrman sees such spaces for dissidence and gender subversion as a direct result of social conditions that were, given dominant ideologies of the time, surprisingly flexible. “While eighteenth-century sex had already acquired the putative uncompromising rigidity of biology, eighteenth-century culture was still allowed something of the fluidity and versatility of culture. The consequent autonomy of gender from the dictates of sex, it can then be suggested, created a space for play, that is, a space for imaginable dissonances of gender over (supposedly) stable sexual bodies.”<sup>17</sup>

Play, in this case, is careful to be as non-threatening as possible, even as Zincke represents his sitter with the Francophile accoutrements of a stylish androgyny that would surely have raised the hackles of Addison’s kind of connoisseur. Hervey does not eschew the visible signs of rank and power to express dissidence with Augustan formality, perhaps suggestive of his relative social security and entrenchment within the world of privilege that was the Georgian court order. Another of Hervey’s friends who did tweak the usual rules of self-representation was Thomas Winnington (1696-1746), of Stanford Court. Winnington, an avid Whig, was an MP whose political connections with Walpole drew him into Hervey’s orbit, and who was later briefly appointed to a position as Lord Treasurer. Winnington’s miniature portrait on enamel from the studio of Zincke, c. 1730, is housed at the National Portrait Gallery in London (See Figure Twelve). In contrast to the portraits of his closest friends, Lord Winnington’s image is startlingly bereft of the powdered wigs or perruques that frame nearly every other masculine face in

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<sup>16</sup>Lynn M. Festa, *Ibid.*, pg. 62.

Zincke's oeuvre. Instead, a nightcap, sumptuously coloured and made of rich materials, conceals the shaven head most noblemen adopted in order to better wear the hot, heavy and cumbersome wigs, which by the early decades of the eighteenth century were powdered with barber's confections of flour and a variety of oils.

The direct predecessors of the Winnington portrait by Zincke are to be found in Kneller's portraits of the influential Whig elite, heads of the great land-owning families, who formed the social aspect of the Whig party known as the 'Kit-Cat' club. Most of the men were represented with attributes of their profession, status or hobby, which could be considerably disparate activities. Jacob Tonson, a bookseller and commoner, was the de facto leader of a club that included the Duke of Somerset, Joseph Addison, and Sir Robert Walpole. Despite differences in background, nearly all were depicted with the status-alluding frame of the wig. Individuals who are excepted from this general rule were done so at the express wish of the sitter, who, by deviating from the norm, drew attention on themselves: Tonson, for example, as befitting an eccentric intellectual with no tangible political power, is represented with a soft cap. "When the wig was removed it was customarily replaced with the soft cap that is frequently represented in seemingly more informal portrait busts."<sup>18</sup>

The absence of the wig was therefore a device that was designed to draw attention away from familiar signs of status and power back towards the individual head, re-centering the viewer's gaze on the sitter's less immediately noticeable idiosyncrasies. Kneller's portrait of Charles Fitzroy, 2nd Duke of Grafton (See Figure Thirteen), is striking in its deviation from the cautious

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<sup>17</sup>Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University, 2004) pg. 43.

<sup>18</sup>Malcolm Baker, 'No Cap or Wig but a Thin Hair upon It': Hair and the male portrait bust in England around 1750,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1, pg 68.

professionalism of the other oligarchs. The swirls of an oval, extravagant silk cap worn by the young Duke, whose indolence and sensuality earned him the nickname ‘Booby’ among his contemporaries, is contrasted with the sharp, arrow-like dive of the neckline, as the young nobleman’s hand traces open the folds of his cravat with seemingly careless, casual ease.<sup>19</sup>

Fitzroy, whose father was the illegitimate son of Charles II and his mistress Barbara Villiers, Countess of Castlemaine, came from a family who was continually associated with the memory of illicit sexuality, while the personal mannerisms and behavior of the young Duke, at least at this represented stage in his life, spoke of the hothouse atmosphere of the court and of its eroticized nature. Winnington’s portrait by Zincke speaks of a similar preoccupation with court morals and the sensuality of informal dress, where the absence of the wig could and did speak volumes about the sexual attitudes of the sitter. Removing the wig, or causing oneself to be depicted without it, was nothing less than dissidence, since “once it became customary for gentlemen to wear wigs, to appear without one was to expose oneself as eccentric, exceptional or deviant.”<sup>20</sup>

Besides allowing the elite Georgian male considerable diversity in how he was represented, the miniature could serve an important role in the communal reification of the aristocracy. Drawing on the psychoanalytic theories of Winnicott and Semble, who articulate something of the importance of infantile creativity in the subsequent recognition of the transitional object, the object that both denies and reifies the infant’s sense of individuality, Pointon argues that hand-held miniatures can be read to function as transitional – positioned in a liminal sphere between

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<sup>19</sup> J. Douglas Stewart, *Sir Godfrey Kneller and the English Baroque Portrait* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), Appendix Two: Portrait of Charles Fitzroy, 2nd Duke of Grafton (1683-1757).

private and public. As psychological defenses that both argue for the ego's interconnectivity within larger, surrounding social networks, and yet still insist on the transcendence of the individual, 'portrait-objects' necessarily point to the ties of blood, affection, or, in the inevitable terminology of the period, 'interest,' and yet they also underline an individual's personality, whose representation attempts to find chrysalis in the carefully staged, formulaic visual rituals of the jeweled miniature.

"Like other defenses (such as the debates on luxury or the preoccupation with politeness)," she writes, "the gem-encrusted portrait-object, ring-fenced from the real by miniaturization, materials, and technology, is given to be worn in a game that is more than competitive in the merely social or diplomatic sense. The portrait-object offers the prerequisite transitional object that can insist its bearer is at one and the same time socially attached and individually separate."<sup>21</sup> For Pointon, the bestowment of semi-precious materials, such as diamond covers, minute carving, and the like creates a potent synthesis between "economic and sentimental value: the worth of the subject was irrevocably endorsed by the precious materials producing at the symbolic level a sign of unique distinction."<sup>22</sup> Pointon goes on to suggest that the fusing between family and money creates an "explicit" preciousness, in this medium reinforced by tactility.

The desire, or even the psychic need, to hold, to touch, or to cherish the miniaturized image of the absent person is vitally important for the conceptualization of the object as a stand-in for the

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<sup>20</sup>Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) pg. 117.

<sup>21</sup>Marcia Pointon, "Surrounded by Brilliants": Miniature Portraits in Eighteenth-Century England' *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 83, No. 1 (March 2001), pg. 68

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, pg. 56

absent person, and thus as a relic of their own relationship to the represented.<sup>23</sup> Hervey's language in describing the work of Zincke is highly suggestive in this regard, as Fox the subject is tied to Fox the object, "the thing on which they are so lovingly laid," in his narrative of envisionment, by "colours fixed by so much better a fire."<sup>24</sup> It is clear that miniature portraits were used, at the very least in this example, to celebrate, commemorate and "fix" the depth and fire of affective desire, just as the enamellist fixed the colours of his product through the heat of the glazing and firing process. The miniature portrait clearly was used by Lord John Hervey and by Stephen Fox as a device that legitimized and stabilized how the two men thought about their personal relationship, an understanding that was probably shared by the other elite, Whig-affiliated men who sought out their company.

Miniatures were originally not meant to function in isolation as the locket does, but to be passed from hand to hand, or sometimes even worn ( usually only by women) as further indications of explicit links within the elaborate networks of the court, where marriages, birth lineages or court appointments were celebrated and publicized through a doubling of signs. The preciousness of the materials also reinforced patriarchal order, regulating and interpellating the aristocratic subject into the affective bonds of the clan or the polity. In Hervey and Stephen Fox's case, the same doubling of signs articulated an eroticized homosociality which subverted patriarchy from within, utilizing the very hegemonic discourses that buttressed patriarchy to convey dissident desires.

Homosocial bonding, of course, can never be completely stable, certain or fixed, as it depends on the shifting life-histories of the relevant individuals. John Potvin's discussion of the term, first

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<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, pg. 56

<sup>24</sup>Lord John Hervey to Stephen Fox, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1728, *Hervey MSS 941/47/4*, pg. 77, 78

critically inaugurated by Sedgwick, highlights the oscillatory character of homosociality. “In *Epistemology of the Closet*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick defines male homosocial bonding and power along a continuum mitigated by ‘the gender system as a whole,’ which she designates as ‘male homosocial desire.’ Distinct from the homosexual, the homosocial institutionally reinforces the ‘social bonds between persons of the same sex.’”<sup>25</sup> Potvin goes on to comment that the “shifting and ever-contingent boundary between the homosocial and the homosexual placed along the homosocial continuum is problematized by the potential of same-sex eroticism, a desire which must remain inarticulate.”

Certainly Hervey, Fox and their associates felt the need to remain publicly inarticulate: their surviving letters are sprinkled with agitated entreaties about the need to be cautious about what the recipient of the letter committed to paper. “For I would always have our pleasures the same,” writes Lord Hervey, in one of the most explicit references to the need for self-censorship. “If this letter does not come too late to you to prevent you making any steps, this affair may weaken your interest with your friends. I would caution you for God’s sake to be careful how far you embark, ‘tis a very tender point for your reputation, I dare expectate [sic] no further by letter and wish you *meritome*. J.”<sup>26</sup>

Hervey’s agitation is certainly fuelled by his relatively high-ranking position within the court, but also potentially in the growing visibility of the two men’s relationship. Following their return to England, Hervey, especially, complains about his mail being opened, likely by spies loyal to

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<sup>25</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), pg. 2, qtd. in John Potvin, ‘Vapour and Steam: The Victorian Turkish Bath, Homosocial Health, and Male Bodies on Display,’ *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (2005), pg. 327; see also Jill Campbell, ‘Politics and Sexuality in Portraits of John, Lord Hervey,’ *Word and Image* 4 (1990), pg. 281.

<sup>26</sup> Lord John Hervey to Stephen Fox, January 11, 1727/8, *Hervey MSS 941/47/4*, pg. 78.

the opposition government, but potentially also his own ministry. “I have ten thousand things to say to you,” he writes, in a letter from London to the absent Fox, dated from November 25, 1729, “but every letter I receive from you or anybody else is opened, and I suppose the same useless curiosity extends to those I write, so I can say nothing I would not advertise.”<sup>27</sup> Other, related issues in the *Hervey MSS* also include an attention to the paper trail of the physical correspondence itself: such an innate concern with detail was by no means limited to the veiled references to homoeroticism that exist throughout the text, but also relating to other moral issues associated with liberal attitudes, notably suicide, a not uncommon event in the early Georgian court. Hervey, for example, writes Lady Mary Wortley Montagu inquiring if she ever received a letter in which he commented on the reasons for an unmarried friend’s suicide (Lord Scarborough, a crony, took his own life in 1739), commenting that he begs “to know particularly whether you ever received a long letter from me after the death of poor Lord Scarborough in which there were various reflections which I should be sorry to have fall into hands that were not designed to receive them.”<sup>28</sup>

One of the most intriguing facets in the overall importance of Zincke’s miniature portraits of the Hervey set is the fact that the dissidence or subversion expressed by these male courtiers exists side-by-side alongside orthodox narratives of stability and continuity. Hervey and Fox’s resistance is formulated in such terms that allows for the existence of the miniature to function as an indicator of familial links, but miniatures were also used as affective, transitional devices that, as Hervey’s impassioned letters recount, used a semi-public, socially reified medium for the re-inscription of dangerously liminal modes of being, identity and desire.

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<sup>27</sup>*Ibid*, pg. 99.

The interplay between letter and portrait in Hervey's letter suggests how individual experience and conviction could use the languages of beauty, of money, and of power to make the bejewelled miniature portrait distinctively one's own. The capabilities of the medium to transcend expectation is illustrated by the genre's popularity with women, who often, by their individual methods of negotiation with the miniature portrait, could rework usual stereotypes to make the miniature function as guarantees of personal merit, often triggering considerable social anxiety in the process.<sup>29</sup> Pointon's example of the middle-class woman, arms marked with the labour of her less fortunate youth, who uses the bejewelled miniature portrait-bracelet as an easily-visible sign of her social mobility, was one such figure who triggered contemptuous mention by some writers.<sup>30</sup>

The hostility that was engendered by the bourgeois appropriation of the bejewelled dynastic device is also perhaps explained by the fact that, like snuffboxes or porcelain tea-sets that point to their use as social objects, whose use was ritualized in the modes of politeness that signified social position, miniature portraits and jewelry carried connotations of permanency that had long been the preserve of the traditional landed aristocracy, or at least the persons who had achieved landed status (in contrast to the bourgeois woman, whose wealth was supported by foreign trade). "Jewelry, bequeathed as heirloom or gift, carries narratives of continuity and signifies the transvaluation of the material into abstract qualities such as history or spirituality."<sup>31</sup> Besides the intangible, spiritual benefits of the highly decorative, miniaturized 18<sup>th</sup>-century object, luxury

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<sup>28</sup> Lord John Hervey to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, letter from St. James dated November 2, 1739, *Hervey MSS 941/47/2*, pg. 18.

<sup>29</sup> Patricia Crown, 'British Rococo as Social and Political Style,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3, pg 281.

<sup>30</sup> Marcia Pointon, '“Surrounded by Brilliants”: Miniature Portraits in Eighteenth-Century England' *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 83, No. 1 (March 2001), pg. 58.

consumer goods such as snuffboxes, tea sets and miniature portraits had a high political value at court, where the value of such precious things was deliberately aggrandized by the monarchy, who used them as visible manifestations of power. At times, “the fine dividing line between gift and payment of services” was often considerably blurred, as in the case of the wife and sister of the Duke of Dorset, who, as representatives of the Sackville clan, received not only a parcel of sumptuous goods but a snuffbox containing a thousand-pound note from George II and Queen Caroline.<sup>32</sup>

Hervey himself was no stranger to similar interactions, as from 1730 onward his rising favor with the Queen found concrete manifestation in the shower of gifts she publicly conferred on him, including direct presents of money and horses, a momentous gift in this age where people’s status was often reckoned by the number of horses they could afford to maintain. Queen Caroline’s influence over national affairs during this period is well recorded in the writings of other courtiers as well as Hervey’s, and in fact the beginnings of many of her political, cultural and social initiatives were implemented from the moment of the Hanoverian accession. “In order to appreciate Caroline’s status in London [during the reign of her father-in-law] it is worth recalling that the wife of George I, Sophia Dorothea, remained in Germany, secluded in the castle of Ahlden. Without a Queen, the Princess of Wales was the highest female royal.”<sup>33</sup>

Lord Hervey’s favour by the Queen, who actively sought out his company and consulted him as an advisor, is a sign of the degree to which his intelligence, wit and connoisseurship was valued by a woman whose lasting reputation has been one of scholarship and learning. “One of

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<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, pg. 55.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.* pg 55.

<sup>33</sup>Domenico Bertoloni Meli, “Caroline, Leibniz, and Clarke,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (1999) pg 472.

the few British sovereigns who can be described as an intellectual,” is how Judith Coulton, historian of 18th-century garden art, characterizes the personality of Caroline of Ansbach. “She played an important role in English affairs from the time of her husband’s accession in 1727 until her death ten years later. During that period, she became the intermediary between the weak and unconcerned George II and his powerful first minister, Sir Robert Walpole, Caroline’s strong ally. On four separate occasions, for months at a time, the Queen acted as regent while her husband absented himself [in Hanover with his mistresses]. Caroline was no mere *locus temens* on these occasions.”<sup>34</sup> “It is well I am so old, or I should be talked of for this creature,” said Caroline in 1734 of Lord Hervey, and in the same year Hervey wrote to Henry Fox that “I can not help bragging to you of a Present the Queen made me.... Of the finest Gold Snuff-box I ever saw, with all the Arts and Sciences by her own bespeaking carv’d upon it.”<sup>35</sup> Besides illustrating the Queen’s own connoisseurship, the incident had further ramifications that Halsband, Hervey’s biographer, was able to painstakingly recreate. “On 1 Feb. 1734 a jeweler’s apprentice was committed to Newgate for robbing his master of a gold snuffbox, the property of Lord Hervey (Daily Advertiser). Can it have been this one, kept in the vault of the jeweler? Six months later Hervey tells Henry Fox that the Queen has given him another fine snuffbox (9 June 1734).”<sup>36</sup>

Palm-sized, decorative and crafted from valuable materials, such objects could be passed from hand to hand during a set of social rituals like the drinking of tea or the morning visit,

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<sup>34</sup>Judith Coulton, ‘Merlin’s Cave and Queen Caroline: Garden Art as Political Propaganda,’ *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pg 2. See also Gregory Brown, ‘Leibniz’s Endgame and the Ladies of the Court,’ *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (2004), pp. 75-100, specifically pgs. 81-90, 92-98, for a more specific discussion of the exhaustive intellectual interests and endeavours of this truly remarkable Queen.

<sup>35</sup>Robert Halsband, *Lord Hervey: Eighteenth Century Courtier* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), Pg. 171.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, Pg. 171

outliving the occasion as a memento; a particularly succinct description of the preeminence of such items in the life structures of the early Georgian nobility says they are “the visible bit of the iceberg that is the whole social process.”<sup>37</sup> As such, snuffboxes, miniature portraits and fine luxuries like imported china had aristocratic meanings of court service and structure; their appearance across most levels of upper and middle-class society by the close of the century logically points to the period c. 1720-1740 as being a particularly influential epoch in the dissemination of such goods.

Art historical inquiries that deal with the spread of the miniaturized luxury item and other sumptuous goods therefore have great potential to engage with questions of the psychological effects of such affective materialism, including the ways in which homosocial relations, whether consciously eroticized or not, came to be conceptualized through the self-conscious use of ritual. Social rites such as the drinking of tea, the giving of snuffboxes or the group’s perusal of miniaturized objects like the small-scale portrait were all repetitive actions that came to be reified through the literal preciousness of the objects involved in these activities. The mystical connotations of this process, which create a secular mimicry of the preciousness accorded to sacral vessels of church, temple or shrine, cannot and should not be divorced from customary histories of 18th-century consumption.

Christian Frederick Zincke was not the only miniaturist to create a likeness of Lord Hervey, although it seems likely that despite being a “foreign” painter, Zincke and his close association with the court ironically represents the most ‘English’ of the small-scale Hervey portraits. The

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<sup>37</sup>Mary Douglas, ‘Why Do People want Goods?’ in Shaun Hargreaves Heap and Angus Ross (eds.), *Understanding the Enterprise Culture: Themes in the work of Mary Douglas* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), pg. 25, qtd. Marcia Pointon, ‘ “Surrounded by

second artist favored by Lord Hervey was Johann Lorenz Natter, a gem-engraver who was working in Rome during Hervey and Fox's sojourn in Italy, and who created an *all'antica* engraved gem-portrait of Hervey sometime in late 1729 (See Figure Fourteen). Pointon's postulation of 18th-century miniature portraits as transitional devices that, through their tactility and tangible, physical, corporeal immediacy, position and reaffirm the individuality of the viewer while simultaneously connecting the ego to a larger society of interconnected people, is here a provocative and efficient method of analysis.

Natter, whose low-relief gemstone carving talents were matched by his proficiency as a medallionist, has here created a side-profile view of his English client, adorning the top of an oval container made of semi-precious stones. Pointon's highlighting of the role of the miniature in social rituals where the object was passed from hand to hand is particularly appropriate, as once the gemstone container was opened, another, smaller paper miniature of Lady Hervey with an accompanying affectionate marital inscription could be discerned, inserted after the multifunctional object had been brought back to British soil as a precious memento. As such, the Natter gem-portrait of Hervey is a fascinating example of the vitality and importance of the object that physically transitioned from one individual to the next, being opened and closed to reveal its secrets, which in this instance seem to have been consciously staged by the residents of Ickworth during or immediately after the lifetime of Lord Hervey, given the semi-public nature of the gemstone.

This privacy is carefully positioned to enact strategies of oscillation, of concealment and display, that played on marital ties to re-center societal ideas about the relationship between

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Brilliant's": Miniature Portraits in Eighteenth-Century England' *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 83, No. 1,(March 2001), pg. 58

husband and wife and their (entirely successful) participation within the dynastic politics of the family to ensure its financial, political and biological continuity. The engraved gem-stone portrait is thus a discursive device that, like many other images from the period, was subsequently modified after its initial creation to draw attention to the represented individual's place in subsequent clan narratives of continuity, underscoring the centrality of clan identity among the Hervey family and their aristocratic milieu.

Natter's gemstone image is strikingly dissimilar to that of Zincke's, even allowing for the natural differences resulting from disparities between the work of an enamellist and a gemstone engraver. Despite their being dated to within a year or two of each other, the image by Natter is radically disassociated, iconographically speaking, from the obvious signs of secular gentility that Zincke, living in post-Knellerian London, was expected to excel in: it is not surprising that, following the climate of adulation for Kneller which endured for many decades, Zincke's attention to contemporary fashions and the modernity of his sitter's dress and grooming is constant throughout his oeuvre. By way of contrast, in Rome, Natter is far removed from such pragmatic realities, and is very much caught up in tropes of classicism, antique revivalism, and the deliberately archaicizing motifs used to express an impassioned nostalgia for the grandeur of Greco-Roman culture.

Instead of facing the sitter directly, as espoused by Zincke and the post-Knellerian generation, the *all'antica* carving shows Hervey in severe side-relief, head startlingly bare of the perewig that signaled his social power, garbed in the manner of a Roman patrician: the entire composition and execution of the small-scale portrait has been heavily influenced by observation of surviving Roman cameo-reliefs, and shows a prescient neo-classicism that is, as yet, rarely to be observed in Britain. Natter's choice of the brooch that fastens over Hervey's shoulder was a motif he

would use again later in his career, specifically with another British sitter, Charles Sackville, Earl of Middlesex and later Duke of Dorset, who was in Rome four years later, and who commissioned a silver medallion from Natter in exactly the same severe, *all'antica* manner. This connection may not be wholly incidental, as religious-occult links of social dissidence linked Sackville to Stephen Fox and thus to Hervey himself; I refer to the Masonic links between male members of the Sackville family and Hervey, hinted at by Baler, Laing and Harrison and made plausible through external references. Natter's medallion portrait of Sackville, for instance, included a figure of Horus on the reverse, while some of Hervey's closest friends and acquaintances are known to have been adherents of Freemasonry, with both Stephen Fox and Charles Spencer (Churchill), future 3rd Duke of Marlborough, received into the Lodge in 1729.<sup>38</sup> Natter himself played an important role in the spread of the Rosicrucians or 'Knights of the Rosy Cross,' whose ideologies closely paralleled those of the Freemasons.

Natter's allusions to the Masonic spirituality in his 1733 Sackville medallion are not discernable in his earlier portrait of Lord Hervey, but he was almost certainly recommended to Lord Hervey by Baron Philip von Stosch, a double agent in the pay of the British government. Stosch's inclination towards transvestism was largely ignored by high society of Rome on account of his impeccably sophisticated tastes as a scholar, antiquarian and connoisseur, while his dissidence in gender was paralleled by his interest in esoteric spiritualism, as his "home at the Via del Malcontendi became a center for spiritual inquiry of a Rosicrucian, alchemical-pansophic nature."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Malcolm Baker, Alistair Laing and Colin Harrison, 'Bouchardon's British Sitters: Sculptural Portraiture in Rome and the Classicizing Bust around 1730,' *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 142, No. 1173 (Dec., 2000), pg. 754.

<sup>39</sup> Ida Postma, 'The Birth of a New Order,' *Sunrise* (Theosophical University Press: October

The holy city, as an irresistible magnet for the nobly-bred “Grand” tourists educated on a regular diet of Juvenal, Horace and Virgil, had a remarkably diverse and (for the time) tolerant, cosmopolitan culture. It is significant to note that, at this time, sodomy was known as the “Italian” vice in England, with King William III lampooned in a nascent popular press of indulging in ‘Italian’ pursuits with his much younger, wilder protégé, while in France Saint-Simon and others lamented the spread of “ultramontane” (literally, beyond the mountains) pursuits among the decadent young princes of the blood at Versailles.<sup>40</sup>

Far from being fleeting references by isolated individuals, these conceptions of “modern” Italian culture in both France and England were reinforced by massively popular cultural institutions like the theatre, using nationalist assertions of the importation of foreign vices to highlight changing manners. “Eighteenth-Century social commentary,” writes Dror Wahrman, “boasted a long line of extravagantly dressed gender-ambiguous male figures from the fops...to the Italians whose gender-blurred reputation was captured in Samuel Richardson’s memorable three-way division of the character list in *Sir Charles Grandison* into “Men,” “Women,” and “Italians.” (Imagine a theatre featuring three doors at the back marked “men,” “women,” and “Italians.”)<sup>41</sup>

Such, then, was the context of what “modern” Italy and Italians meant to the transnational hereditary elite, whose religious differences did not completely mask a common cultural affinity

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1980), par. 4, 5 at < <http://www.theosophy-nw.org/theosnw/world/moder/ph-ida1.htm> > , Accessed May 2007.

<sup>40</sup>Louis-Francois de Bouchet, Marquis de Souches and Gabriel-Jules, Comte de Cosnac, Arthur Bertrand (eds.), *Memoirs sur le Regne de Louis XIV*, vol. 1., pgs. 110-113, in Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Raga (eds.), *Homosexuality in early modern France : a documentary collection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pgs. 118, 240, footnote 65.

grounded, at least ideologically, in ancient Rome, and whom were also fascinated with the tremendous cultural achievements of the Italian city-states during the Renaissance. These commonalities resulted in the magnetism of Rome and its enduring popularity as the end destination of the Grand Tour, but also allowed for French and British aristocracy to “other” a wider Italian ethnicity as potentially sexually liminal - an ‘othering’ and exoticization that may indeed have increased the fascination and appeal of Italy to aristocrats like Hervey or Stosch.

Baron Stosch, as a noted intellectual, retained close links with Cardinal Albani and the exiled Stuart descendants of James II, who were living in Rome after changing Franco-British relations forced them to flee St. Germain; Stosch was thus an invaluable observer of all Jacobite intrigue emanating from the city, and as such he was paid heavily for his services by Sir Robert Walpole’s government. It is by no means inconceivable that Lord Hervey (although admittedly suffering from ill health) carried messages from the government to Stosch, who was paid to report the arrival and departure of all British visitors of rank to Walpole’s administration. In any case, the two men were tied by similar interests, as Hervey’s antiquarian leanings and scholarship was paralleled by Stosch’s centrality within the scholarly and artistic expatriate circles in Rome. Gem-carving was described by Stosch as “ma passion, ma folie domine” and besides his undercover surveillance achievements was that of “his study of antique gems, many of them in the remarkable collection he himself owned.”<sup>42</sup>

Part of this achievement is the unexpectedly pervasive triumph of neoclassical portraiture, in which his capacity as an intelligent patron with comprehensive historical knowledge played a

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<sup>41</sup>Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University, 2004) pg. 60.

decisive role, as demonstrated by the 1717 appearance of a profile medallion in ivory by Giovanni Pozzi, and to a sketch by Ghezzi of Stosch in the same year. Such images provide important links in a genealogy of stylistic factors that contributed to the appearance of Natter's images of Hervey and Sackville, and also points to Stosch and his circle's innovative role as arbitrators of taste, style, and aesthetics, as they predate by a decade the subsequent appearance of a highly seminal marble bust of Stosch by the French artist Edme Bouchardon. As Bouchardon was also responsible for similar busts of a host of British tourists of noble blood, including Lord Hervey (See Figure Fifteen), these early *all'antica* portraits inaugurated by Stosch in Rome are indicators of the depth of the Baron's learning and the stylistic influence his kind of patronage could exert over subsequent developments in 18th-century sculptural portraiture. As Baker, Laing and Harrison remark, what is seminal about these patronage choices "is not simply that these images articulated the sitter's antiquarian concerns through their mode of dress and hair, but that - in line with the almost impartial and equal interest they showed in antique marble statuary, gems and coins - there was a continuum between sculptural portraits in different media and on different scales."<sup>43</sup>

Sculptural bust portraits, like the transitional devices that survive social rituals as mementos and markers of individual linkages, use tactility and the tangible allure of three-dimensional space to insinuate not only physical likeness but the "individual bodily presences" of the sitter. "Unlike the painted portrait, the bust is viewed by the spectator in his or her own space and thus assumes a different mode of engagement.... It is at once more illusionistic than the painted

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<sup>42</sup>Malcolm Baker, Alistair Laing and Colin Harrison, 'Bouchardon's British Sitters: Sculptural Portraiture in Rome and the Classicizing Bust around 1730,' *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 142, No. 1173 (Dec., 2000), Pg. 759.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, pg. 760.

portrait through its three dimensionality and more removed in being monochrome.”<sup>44</sup> Like the importance of wigs, the sculptural presence of hair on 18<sup>th</sup>-century portrait busts is a potent signifier of class-based aristocratic masculinity, a performative device functioning as a distinctive mark of status. “As seemingly natural as the face, and yet as artificially configured as the sitter’s dress, hair when represented on the bust signaled to the viewer the power and directness of three-dimensional marble as an image of an individual human subject,”<sup>45</sup> writes Baker, later collaborating with other scholars in subsequent articles to show how “the formulation of this distinctive mode of classicising portrait bust was based on a combination of the sitter’s antiquarian concerns....and Bouchardon’s own predilection for the antique.”<sup>46</sup>

Following the rapturous reception of Bouchardon’s presciently neoclassical image of a bare-chested Stosch with cropped hair, “which set Bouchardon’s work in the eyes of one critic as being ‘par dessus tous les autres statuaires,’”<sup>47</sup> Bouchardon achieved critical and commercial success as ‘the’ favourite sculptor of bust portraits resident in Rome, receiving prestigious commissions from the likes of Cardinal Polignac, Cardinal Rohan, Pope Clement XII, and the wife of Nicholas Vleughels, Director of the French Academy, who had overseen Bouchardon’s installation in Rome in 1723, following the artist’s win at the Prix de Rome of 1722.

The Hervey bust, with its distinctive cropped hair, appears to have been created initially for Stephen Fox, as the signed marble remains with the descendants of the Earls of Ilchester, but another copy and a terracotta model were also permanently situated at Ickworth. The bust was

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<sup>44</sup>Malcolm Baker, ‘No Cap or Wig but a Thin Hair upon It’: Hair and the male portrait bust in England around 1750,’ *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1, pg. 78.

<sup>45</sup>Malcolm Baker, Alistair Laing and Colin Harrison, ‘Bouchardon’s British Sitters: Sculptural Portraiture in Rome and the Classicizing Bust around 1730,’ *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 142, No. 1173 (Dec., 2000), pg. 753.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, Pg 752

created in a context of a nascent cultural shift that used deliberately archaicizing visual language to move away from the ‘Grand Manner,’ which had rigid associations with a modernity many felt to have been corrupted by mercantilism. Directly resulting from the desire of the English oligarchical leaders to associate themselves with political virtues located in the distant Greco-Roman past, classicizing sculptural portraiture, of which the Hervey bust is a remarkably early example, could and did function as a legitimizing device. As sporting or shooting portraits reified the role of the landowner in estate management, the early Georgian bust portrait appropriated the trappings of the classical past to convey the sitter’s political duties, historical consciousness and intellectual strengths, all of which were gendered as masculine attributes. “Most portrait busts, at least until the 1770s, tended to be of men, for whom this more public category of image was thought more appropriate.”<sup>48</sup> The homosocial nature of the early instances of this genre, however, should not be attributed solely to neoclassicism’s more obvious attractions, such as historical scholarship, humanist sophistication and civic virtue; other, less palatable or visible associations were also wrapped up with the emerging style.

Baker theorizes that the subtle language of the 18th-century sculptural portrait, with its emphasis on the presence or absence of distinctive modes of represented hair, opened up the satirical or humorous aspects of what was, ostensibly, a serious and historically well-informed manner of identity representation. “Did the very artificiality of the bust, and in particular the use of a hairstyle that bore no relationship to contemporary dress, open up the possibility of parody, that sort of mockery that surfaces in Thomas Patch’s paintings that so often play on the tensions not only between fashionable behaviour and the ugliness of actual appearances, but also between

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<sup>47</sup>Francois Fagel to Stosch, 17<sup>th</sup> November 1727, *Ibid.*, pg. 756.

sculpted images and human subjects? Need sculptures always have been taken so seriously?"<sup>49</sup>

Intriguingly, sculptural portraiture as humour is exactly what was expressed by some of the political lampoons that commented, in the popular press, on the visibility of Stephen Fox and Lord Hervey's personal relationship. An article published in the *Grub Street Journal* on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1736, some six months after Fox's marriage to the twelve-year old Elizabeth Strangways-Horner, makes a great deal of Hervey's portraiture to convey, via hardly-veiled innuendo, that both Fox and Hervey's gender-performative strategies were becoming visibly dissident.

A strolling Fox once changed to drop  
 Grand Connoisseur! In Rysbrack's shop.  
 A noble bust he there beheld  
 Whose beauty all the rest excelled

Much he admired the curious craft  
 The sculptor praised - and praising laughed  
 A pretty figure I profess  
 It is Lord Fanny's head I guess

How Happy Rysbrack are thy pains  
 The life G-d L-d it has no brains.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Malcolm Baker, 'No Cap or Wig but a Thin Hair upon It': Hair and the male portrait bust in England around 1750,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 1, pg. 64.

Besides suggesting that Fox's connoisseurial skills lacked finesse in comparison to that expected of noblemen like Hervey, the *Grub Street Journal's* comments on how dangerously homosocial sculptural portraiture could be illustrates the satirical tendencies of sophisticated patrons, which received a good deal of encouragement during the early Georgian era.

Consistently demonstrated throughout the 1730s and 1740s was an almost obsessive concern with satire across interlocking spheres of the visual, literary and theatrical arts (most stridently exemplified by Hogarth). The portrait bust created during these decades was thus necessarily catering to the tastes of a small but sophisticated clientele who were well aware of the dissidence such sculptural portraiture could express. Baker, Laing and Harrison have articulated the sensual aspects of Bouchardon's images, saying that "the choice of a bare-chested format for sitters such as Stosch and Hervey whose homosexual preferences were well-known was not necessarily determined solely by antiquarian interest in Roman busts and gems...Probably commissioned for a male lover, Bouchardon's bust of Hervey represented *all'antica* may well have carried a homoerotic charge."<sup>51</sup>

Lord Hervey's personal performance of gender, then, was not only publicly commented on but was spoken of in the language of sculpture, an art form Hervey was helping publicize through his cultural experiences in Rome, both as a member of a select group of aristocratic men who had visited Italy and maintained connections with Baron Stosch, and as an independent connoisseur

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<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, pg. 70.

<sup>50</sup>Malcolm Baker, Alistair Laing and Colin Harrison, 'Bouchardon's British Sitters: Sculptural Portraiture in Rome and the Classicizing Bust around 1730,' *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 142, No. 1173 (Dec., 2000), pg. 757.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, pg. 757.

who was interested in many diverse types of media. His likeness was represented in subversive and dissident methods that were yet operating from within a socially allowable 'space for play,' which his Italian experiences, and his proximity to the Queen, had surely expanded. While Hervey's consumption of jewelled miniature portraits speaks of his participation in the elaborate social rituals of the early Georgian court, where small-scale images made of precious materials functioned as affective transitional devices, his relationship with Stephen Fox and their trip to Italy provided him access to a sophisticated world of like-minded connoisseurs, whose homosocial relationships were not entirely unproblematic by questions of eroticism or of occult activities.

The role of Italy in his subsequent position as a widely-respected cultural authority in England during the 1730s cannot be underestimated. Hervey acted as one in a long line of cultural mediators who translated Italian aesthetic sophistication into the triumphant flowering of British neoclassicism. His role, long overlooked in official histories of Georgian art, was one that was informed and influenced the development of identity representation in Britain during 1730 - 1743, the period between his return to Britain and his death. Included in this role was his patronage of William Hogarth and of the "conversation piece."

### Chapter Three

Around the year 1740, Lord Hervey and his closest friends posed for an informal group portrait by William Hogarth. The painting, sometimes known as the ‘Holland House Group’<sup>1</sup>, is more commonly termed the *Hervey Conversation Piece* (See Figure Sixteen), since its composition, iconography and dating correspond with the genre of that name that rose to prominence in British portraiture following 1720. Conversation pieces, or ‘family pieces,’ the most common term at the time for the informal group portrait, comprised neither a new or a uniquely aristocratic form of art in early 18<sup>th</sup>-century England, but the genre’s resurgence in popularity following the Glorious Revolution was, in part, due to the patronage of the nobility, who took it up as a popular fashion.<sup>2</sup> This popularity has indelibly stamped early Georgian visual culture with associative connotations of well-dressed people, whose “identities and personalities..., shedding or ignoring the formal attitude and drapery of grand portraiture, emerge from the representation of plural social relations, inscribed within a daily environment of pets, furniture and functional objects which combine to offer the viewer the spectacle of a living world.”<sup>3</sup>

I argue that Hogarth’s innovative strategies of representation, culled from the pictorial language of familial structure, depict the learned, convivial atmosphere cultivated by the circle that surrounded Lord Hervey as adherents to the Wapolian administration, placing the various men in attitudes of interaction with each other that amply demonstrate the affective

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<sup>1</sup> John Kerslake, *Early Georgian Portraits, Vol. 1* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, National Portrait Gallery, 1977), pg. 141.

<sup>2</sup> Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-century England* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1993), pg. 158.

<sup>3</sup> Frederic Ogée, ‘Je-Sais-Quoi: William Hogarth and the Representation of the Forms of Life,’ in David Bindman, Frederic Ogée and Peter Wagner, *Hogarth: Representing Nature’s Machines* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pg. 72.

homosociality that characterized these elite, Whig-affiliated men.<sup>4</sup> *The Hervey Conversation Piece* can be read as a narrative that stabilizes or legitimizes individual interactions between men, making same-sex interactions, plausibly including eroticism, visible through the utilization of typically Hogarthian devices such as subversion, wit, and humour. In this work, the Hervey coterie is vacillating between an idealizing, socially-legitimizing commemoration of their own breeding, intellectualism, and connoisseurship on the one hand and a more subversive celebration of dissidence on the other. This dissidence is expressed through the mimicry of the conventional dynasticism of the standard group portrait, the use of subtle references to esoteric spiritualism, and the overt deployment of idiosyncratic narrative devices, such as the motif of the toppling clergyman, which are unparalleled in other conversation pieces from the period. Religious non-conformism is taken as a gender-building tool, by which different forms of masculinity were expressed.

The didactic strategies used to showcase this painting in recent contemporary exhibitions are problematized through a comparison to historiographic material, which illustrates the mixture of fascination and repulsion that has long attended art historical discussions of early Georgian gender. George II himself is a figure who, when compared to Hervey, illustrates how each proffered to the court different modes of masculinity. Textual references to Maddington in Hervey's letters are taken as primary sources to illustrate how the physical place was thought of, while the letters also suggest the painting is strangely lacking at least one member of the 'coterie,' William, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Bateman, whose absence can be read in terms of disgrace, social

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<sup>4</sup> As Jill Campbell writes, these men were "linked suspiciously, physically together in a network of diffuse and feminized masculinity." See 'Politics and Sexuality in Portraits of John, Lord Hervey,' *Word and Image* 4 (1990) pg. 285.

ostracism, and the self-policing techniques employed by the queer aristocratic community of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Britain.

In order to continue my project's goal of extending the validity of biographical detail onto art historical analyses of early 18<sup>th</sup>-century portraiture, which I believe contributes significantly to processes of reinserting or reclaiming queer presences in modern-day conceptualizations of history, I have included in my critique of the *Hervey Conversation Piece* an extended interrogation of a contemporaneous portrait of Lord William Bateman by Carle van Loo. Through references to the poetry of Horace Walpole, to the architectural life history of the Batemans' London residences, and to biographical sources, the presence and absence of Lord Bateman from the London scene and the Hervey coterie can be retraced. A dialogue between the two images therefore has profound ramifications for our understanding of the queer aristocratic community in the early Georgian era.

Part of the appeal of early 18<sup>th</sup>-century portraiture for many scholars is the sheer charm of similar images, which can be immediately seductive in terms of their humour, their domesticity, or their apparent simplicity. For many years, informal group portraits of the upper class were discussed in terms of their leisured, moneyed, class-based facets, with a great deal of attention paid to caste divisions, but comparatively little to represented structures of gender.<sup>5</sup> Marcia Pointon, however, has cautioned against reading the 18<sup>th</sup>-century conversation piece as a 'natural' depiction of familial structure, arguing that "the continuing twentieth-century investment in the idea of the family as a uniquely licensed power base, an ideological investment

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<sup>5</sup>See Sacheverell Sitwell, *Conversation Pieces: A Survey of English Domestic Portraits and their Painters* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1936), or Mario Praz, *Conversation Pieces: A Survey of the Informal Group Portrait in Europe and America* (University Park, Pa. and London: Pennsylvania University Press, 1971).

that runs counter to much of the evidence on how people actually live, has assigned to the... conversation piece a powerful position in the dynamics of visualizing our antecedents.”<sup>6</sup> Since conversation pieces have such potent appeal in processes of speaking about familial history, the *Hervey Conversation Piece* by Hogarth, painted at (or at least painted to depict!) Maddington, Stephen Fox’s little ‘shooting-box’ or hunting retreat on the edge of the Salisbury plain, has great value for speaking about queer domesticity, identity and community.

Part of the reason informal group portraits became so popular among the 18<sup>th</sup>-century British aristocracy was that the genre allowed for the visible manifestation of mutually beneficial social relations, which could be depicted in playful ways that referenced the individuality of each sitter. People were painted conversing, which, in the language of the time, "did not mean simply talking to another person, but politeness in action, the art of behaving in company. Art that resembled conversation was thus both intimate and public."<sup>7</sup> First employed by Dutch artists such as Marcelles Laroon the elder and Van Heemskirk in 'merry company' paintings, the term 'conversation piece' had been in use since 1706, but a more specifically aristocratic form arrived in 1725 with the Protestant artist Philip Mercier, whose work shows groups or pairs of elegant people enjoying the amenities of their house and grounds "in a style echoing Watteau's *fetes galantes*... the conversation piece was civilized but informal, fanciful and new, and... predominantly French in style," writes Hogarth scholar Uglow.<sup>8</sup> Uglow also remarks that the genre "usually paid a graceful tribute to family life, its domestic feeling, its happy occasions and

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<sup>6</sup> Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-century England* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1993), pg. 160.

<sup>7</sup> Jenny Uglow, *Hogarth: A Life and World* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), pg. 159.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 160.

social standing. Often (in traditional portraits) they marked rites of passage: marriages and anniversaries, appointments as MPs or Governors, people leaving home, even the memory of someone who had died."<sup>9</sup>

Such pictures, like the attributes taught by the dancing master, or the corporate signifier of the wig, had a culturally homogenizing effect, showing "even almost the grandest busy with pursuits common to all classes with money enough to order a picture - not only could everyone drink tea, but everyone did."<sup>10</sup> Part of the importance of this fusion between Dutch and French artistic models through the patronage of the British gentry is exactly this social context, in which the elite, characterized neither by the incessant quality of "*toujours gai*" or the obsessive materiality of Dutch mercantilism, are represented as "animated, the thoughts set not on the eternal, not entirely on the duty of looking one's best for posterity, but also on the here-and-now...in such essays, the intention is... to catch the character in action, reacting to a specific impulse, the features in movement before passion, like water in a wind."<sup>11</sup> The immediacy and apparent transparency of the early Georgian conversation piece is therefore both a self-conscious reflection on the state of continental artistic developments and a gender and nation-building discursive device, in which the composition of the elite family, its status supported in theory upon the landed estate, but often heavily subsidized by mercantile money, is *visually* legitimized by compositional appeal, delicate colouring, and witty, often allegorical iconographical strategies that display the education, learning and *finesse* of the patron.

Thus, the performing art of behaving in public, which was presumed to be reflected in the

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 160.

<sup>10</sup> David Piper, *The English Face* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1957), pg. 173.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 175.

way one behaved at home, was, by the 1720s, associated with a visual art form that had aristocratic connotations and a certain French elegance, charm and cultural capital derived from the cultural articulations of Versailles. Part of this performance entailed one's own ability to interact with educated, affluent and powerful individuals and their families and associates, an ability that could, like the physical grace that was almost necessary to successfully demonstrate an aristocratic form of gender, be learned from the appropriate sources. Mark Hallett, curator of the 2006/2007 Hogarth exhibition that included the Hervey piece and which travelled from London to Paris and Madrid, writes in an earlier monograph that "conversation was privileged as the primary means through which polite social and cultural status was displayed as something that bound together" disparate elements of society, remarking that "given these conditions, proficiency in the kinds of verbal and bodily performances required to converse successfully with other cultivated men and women was an unusually prized skill in this period."<sup>12</sup>

Part of Hogarth's historical importance is his ability to retranslate the visual medium of portraiture away from the ossified structures of Baroque identity representation towards a newer and more immediate sense of personal engagement with the art object, in which theatrical languages are fully employed as interpellative devices that render the often complex allegorical structures of the best instances of the genre more accessible, understandable and, it must be admitted, fashionable, to a wider audience. As Frederic Ogée writes, Hogarth's achievements lay in the fact that his work remained intellectual and exciting while highly "in phase with the main trends of thought of his times, which was accessible to a vast audience who saw in it not only an

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<sup>12</sup> Mark Hallett, *Hogarth* (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), pg. 55.

extension but an equivalent of what was offered to them in books or on the stage."<sup>13</sup>

Hogarth's aptitude for understanding and representing the kinds of performances needed to maintain amicable social relations under such circumstances has great potential to convey the dominant attitudes that characterized the English gentry at this time. Tea parties, for example, were to the Georgian aristocracy a status device that, like playing cards or gambling, "were understood to both complement and promote discussion. The tea party was a fashionable fixture of daily life within elite society in this period, and tea - which remained at this point far too expensive to be consumed by other than affluent families - was continually praised as an invigorating stimulant to conversation."<sup>14</sup>

Hogarth's treatment of tea-sets, fine china, snuffboxes, wine glasses and other luxury items that contribute to offer the spectator a glimpse of the "living world" of the early 18<sup>th</sup>-century British elite is intriguing. "The importance of Hogarth," writes Sitwell, "is in the thoroughness of his achievement. A picture by his hand is carried down to the smallest detail in anecdotal dramatization, as in the progress of a plot. No point is forced or hurried. His accessories are left to be discovered and do not intrude,"<sup>15</sup> which is very much a description that is applicable to the almost reductionist use of the wine glasses and china in the *Hervey Conversation Piece*, half-obscured on the table by the inviting platters of fruit and flowers, which riot out of their expensive containers in a seductive profusion of colour and sensuality.

As Richard Meyer pointed out in his recent article, Hogarth is known to use the liminally

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<sup>13</sup> Frederic Ogée, 'From Text to Image: William Hogarth and the emergence of a visual culture in Eighteenth-century England' in David Bindman, Frederic Ogée and Peter Wagner, *Hogarth: Representing Nature's Machines* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pg. 13

<sup>14</sup> Mark Hallett, *Hogarth* (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), pg. 57.

<sup>15</sup> Sacheverell Sitwell, *Conversation Pieces: A Survey of English Domestic Portraits and their Painters* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1936), pg. 1.

gendered male subject as a device for social critique,<sup>16</sup> but in this work, "Hogarth, who so cruelly depicted the fop and the rake in his prints, makes no such judgement. Instead, his painting is full of gaiety, evoking a mysterious moment,"<sup>17</sup> a moment where Stephen Fox, sitting in the left foreground, is slyly using the tip of his walking stick to push a clergyman's chair into the water, deflecting the satirical intent of the painting into a clear, funny and immediate statement that surely deals with these men's thoughts on the precarious position of organized religion. Instead of poking fun at the effete, as Hogarth does in his 'Marriage-a-la-Mode' series of engravings, Hogarth's view of his Whig patrons is widely read as sympathetic to Hervey and his group. "Although Hogarth shows the gold key at Hervey's waist which was the badge of vice-chamberlain to the Royal Household, this is an intimate portrait group which is seen from the point of view of the witty Hervey, not the bitter diatribes of Pulteney and Pope."<sup>18</sup>

The painting actually deliberately excels, in some ways, according the usual rhythm and pattern of the conversation piece, for if tea, cards, hunting or visiting are the customary activities depicted in not only Hogarth's conversation pieces, but also those of his contemporaries like John Wootton, Gavin Hamilton, and the Devis brothers, the unusual statements being made about the patron's intellectual capabilities speak of their surpassing of these activities. Hogarth's reductionist treatment of the material goods themselves render them as necessary, but mundane accessories to a wider interest in conversational stimulants that involves the intellect, most

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<sup>16</sup> Richard Meyer, ' "Nature Revers'd": Satire and Homosexual Difference in Hogarth's London,' Bernadette Fort and Angela Rosenthal, eds., *The Other Hogarth: Aesthetics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pg. 166.

<sup>17</sup> Jenny Uglow, *Hogarth: A Life and World* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), pg. 347.

<sup>18</sup> Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth: Volume Two, High Art and Low. 1732-1750* (New Brunswick and New York: Rutgers University Press, 1992), pg. 176.

strikingly found in the prominently-featured architectural plan held up by the now-portly figure of Henry Fox. Architecture, then, is the subject under discussion, engrossing not only Hervey and Henry Fox, who had been made Surveyor General of the King's Works, but also Thomas Winnington, featured on the far right. The seated figure, Charles Spencer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Marlborough, anchors the composition's colourist structure through making much of the Duke's scarlet coat, which itself speaks of the Duke's recent promotion to the rank of Colonel, but the plan itself is a central, unifying device that, in theory, is the ostensible subject of conversation.

The viewer, however, knows that soon the chair will fall, the suspended clergyman will splash into the recoiling water, and the seriousness of these gentlemen's intellectual and artistic endeavours will be subverted by shouts of laughter, an in-joke that tells of the Hervey set's willingness to laugh at not only religion, and the fragility of the clergyman's position in their closed world, but also at themselves. This laughter, or the smiles of the audience, does however act to reinforce the sitters' connoisseurial abilities, as the interplay between practical joke and sophisticated discussion acts to mask, but not entirely conceal, that the physical place is in fact a hunting lodge, a shooting-box that doubled as a homosocial retreat, but where, at least on this afternoon, the pursuit of game has been abandoned for the pursuit of intellect. Extending this line of argument further, the story built by the painting about the toppling clergyman also acts to divert overt attention towards this humorous act and away from exactly what and who is being mocked: organized religion, yes, but also a specific individual, whose attribution remains controversial.

While exemplary, the *Hervey Conversation Piece* is also dissident, as it may in fact be a comment on how easy it was for those with money to manipulate the church. The clergyman has

long been said to be Rev. Peter Willemin, gazing at the living of Eisleigh, which Henry Fox gave him for officiating at the secret, scandalous wedding of Stephen Fox and Elizabeth Strangways-Horner in 1736. The wedding was scandalous across a number of spectrums, since not only was the bride only twelve or thirteen, but Stephen's relationship with Hervey was quite well-known. Elizabeth's father had refused to sanction the marriage, but her mother - who was Henry Fox's mistress - provided the necessary parental consent, and so the union took place, causing no small amount of family friction.<sup>19</sup> The bride's father arranged to formally separate from his wife, while the Strangways-Horner servants, who were suspected of being bribed by the Foxes, were turned off without a character.<sup>20</sup>

If the clergyman being pushed into the water is Willemin, the degree of social subversion which is indicated by Stephen's actions is quite high, given the background history of the bride's mother with the groom's father, while the image of Hervey and the Fox brothers' intimacy can not retain innocence. Horace Walpole, however, said the minister was J. T. Desaguliers, known for his interest in optics and telescopes, who was a prominent Mason! Stephen Fox and the Duke

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<sup>19</sup> A letter from young Elizabeth is characteristic of the situation. "I don't know what to say for myself Dear Papa," she entreats, "but I assure and promise you that if you can forgive me what I have done I will never again willingly offend you. I know I have done wrong but if you and Mama could forgive me, my fault would turn to my own happiness & I could never be tempted to do wrong anymore since by doing right towards you I shall now equally please my Mama and you and Mr. Fox. Indeed Papa if you can forgive this want of duty you shall never have another instance to complain of in your most affectionate and most humble daughter and servant E. Fox." Elizabeth Fox to her father, April 1, 1736, *Holland House Papers*, British Library Manuscript 51337 ADD., pg. 3.

<sup>20</sup> The sequel, dated October 1736, indicates the scandal had not yet died down. "We left yesterday for Melbury, a place, I doubt, we must not yet hope to see you at, since Papa designs to be here... Which I fear will destroy my poor Mama, for he teazes her without end, and insists on Mr. and Mrs. Anslvs being turned off for selling me to you: Thus you may see, my dearest Ste, what a sad way we are in, and to be told to be kept separate from you afflicts me more than you can possibly imagine... We'll send to you again as soon as Papa is gone." Elizabeth Fox to Stephen Fox, October 1736, *Ibid.*, pg. 6.

of Marlborough, as mentioned, were Masons since 1729, and as Uglow writes, “in the original painting the plan that Henry Fox holds up was a little piece of paper stuck onto the canvas. This too may have had Masonic designs. If so, it was a reference Hogarth could share and his lodge connections would put him on a special plane with these worldly men.”<sup>21</sup>

Either of these two identifications therefore contributes to a reading of this piece as an expression of dissidence. Formally linked through the use of a quintessentially Hogarthian compositional strategy, using figures who point towards the central group as ‘book-ends’ that contain the main narratives,<sup>22</sup> the people in the Hervey Conversation Piece are religiously and sexually privileged - raised above orthodoxy by the accumulation of status, wealth, and learning, but not deviant from it, as to be deviant implies an active undermining of the status quo. Rather, they were, in a certain sense, “allowed” to be secular, to be dissident, and to perform dissidence. “If the homosocial and homosexual bonds represented here,” writes Campbell, “appear as parodic versions of heterosexual ones, perhaps they do so not as *mere* parodies of the normative domestic models but as challenges as well.”<sup>23</sup>

The men’s concern with the plan of a secular structure, their classicizing sculptures and array of flowers and wine plays into the construction of Maddington as an escape from societal expectations of orthodoxy. Even the clergyman, who needs a telescope to look at a church is a “comment on the group’s secularity,” writes Paulson. “Indeed, the lone clergyman’s black is contrasted with the bright colours of the other gentlemen... his elevation and disinterestedness with the heaping platter of fruit and the wine cask, and his status as Christian, anchoring the left side

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<sup>21</sup> Jenny Uglow, *Hogarth: A Life and World* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), pg. 347.

<sup>22</sup> Mark Hallett, *Hogarth* (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), pg. 60.

<sup>23</sup> Jill Campbell, ‘Politics and Sexuality in Portraits of John, Lord Hervey,’ *Word and Image 4* (1990), pg. 296.

of the picture, with the classical sculpture of Minerva, which anchors the right side. It is presumably significant that both, figuring religious and secular wisdom, are directing their gaze away from the gentlemen at hand."<sup>24</sup>

The *Hervey Conversation piece* is a work that must, given its late date, be reacting to repressive propaganda circulated by political or personal enemies of the Hervey coterie during the early years of the 1730s, such as the *Grub Street Journal's* article lampooning Stephen Fox, or William Pulteney's insinuations of scandal. Such propaganda eventually found codification in the canonical historical account of the Walpolian era through the literary apotheosis of Alexander Pope, whose caricature of Hervey as 'Sporus' in his Epistle to Doctor Arbuthnot has largely conditioned historical memory of Hervey and his performances of dissident aristocratic masculinity. "This painted child of dirt," however, knew full well that, if, as Retford says, "the nominal aim of attacks on the immoral aristocrat was embarrassment and reform... titillation, sensationalism and exploitation of public curiosity probably had much more to do with such criticism than a genuine desire to instruct."<sup>25</sup> The painting is therefore a kind of retort, an appeal for a different kind of attitude than was stirred up by Pulteney and Pope, but directed at a very select audience of peers and associates who could not but respond to the work as a statement about who these men were, and, more importantly, what they meant to each other.

Hervey's references to the physical space of Maddington are tinged with a kind of associative eroticism that speaks of the physical, and ideological, isolation that shrouded the

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<sup>24</sup> Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth: Volume Two, High Art and Low. 1732-1750* (New Brunswick and New York: Rutgers University Press, 1992), pg. 175; see also Jill Campbell, 'Politics and Sexuality in Portraits of John, Lord Hervey,' *Word and Image* 4 (1990), pg. 290, for an alternate reading of the "skewed" symmetry of these compositional 'book-end' figures.

<sup>25</sup> Kate Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pg. 192.

place in a dream-like atmosphere. Maddington, closed off to the kinds of casual visitors that were expected to drop by, or ‘call,’ at more conventional residences in town and even in the country, was the perfect venue for the enactment of performances of gender that married subversion with excellence. As Hervey makes quite clear, he, at least, was determined that mental as well as physical stimulation would saturate the group’s activities.

Hampton Court, September 11th, 1731.

By my having no Letter from you to Day I conclude you either on the Road to Maddington last post day; or yet, when you are retired to that Little Trianon (sacred to sweat and Spaniels) you are determined not to be troubled (with) any Busyness foreign to the (?) place: if so perhaps you have resolv'd to receive no more Dispatches than you send, and then my trouble in the enclosed will be thrown away. Voiture or Blansac would tell you yet as Apollo and Diana were brother and sister, there would be nothing inconsistent, if you suffr'd poetry to amuse your Mind, in all the Leisure Hours your Body must allow for rest, and yet this God him-self had his Harp in his Hand as often as his Bow and arrow: you see how earnestly I plead, and what pompous Names I bring as evidence to prove this intrusion on hunting not impertinent.<sup>26</sup>

In this letter, Lord Hervey is not, as might be expected by today’s readers, referencing the famous Petit Trianon at Versailles, since the Petit Trianon was not built until some thirty years after the composition of this missive. Instead, Hervey is alluding to the so-called ‘Grand’ Trianon, built in 1687 for Louis XIV, his family, and some select favourites to enjoy a respite from the rigours of court etiquette and the all-encompassing eyes of the multitude. Significantly,

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<sup>26</sup> Lord Hervey to Stephen Fox, September 11, 1731, *Hervey MSS 941/47/4*, pg. 174.

the Grand Trianon replaced an earlier, tiny structure, the Porcelain Trianon, which had been built as a lover's hideaway for the King and the mother of most of his illegitimate children, Madame de Montespan, on the site of an old hamlet called 'Trianon.' Trianon, then, was a physical place the rulers of the French court went to in order to indulge in licentious behaviour away from the censorious attitudes of the rest of the court. Hervey's sketch of Maddington as "that little Trianon (sacred to sweat and Spaniels)," is particularly telling, for if he had wished to simply express the connotation of a mere hunting retreat, devoid of erotic connotations, the chateau of Marly would have served as a far better comparison.<sup>27</sup> Another letter, dated Sept. 2, 1731, is even more explicit in its suggestive connotations. "Winnington is here," writes Lord Hervey, and "he talks of going to Maddington from Basingstroke? I do not fancy it can be above a day's journey, I should think it nothing from hence? Should you think of other a great way to meet me there, and could not meeting your sister be a pretense? In short I long and fret and pine to see you... what does one live for but to be happy..."<sup>28</sup>

As Hallett points out, conversation pieces, "when put on display in the houses of families... would have corresponded in an unusually explicit way with its environment, providing an idealized pictorial version of the activities and conversations - the tea parties and card games, the repartee and the gossip - that took place around the painted images on a daily basis."<sup>29</sup> This particular conversation piece, excelling as it does in the usual rules by using humour to express subversion, and subtly transcending the usual activities of the family group by heightening an

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<sup>27</sup> For a fuller (and exceptionally vivid, colourful) account of Marly and its strict associations with hunting, see Louis de Rouvroy, Duc de Saint-Simon, *Memoirs*.

<sup>28</sup> Lord Hervey to Stephen Fox, Hampton Court, Sept 2, 1731, *Hervey MSS 941/47/4*, pg. 167.

<sup>29</sup> Mark Hallett, *Hogarth* (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), pg. 62.

awareness of the conversational stimulants provided in an atmosphere of homosocial intellectualism, is an *idealized* version of these homosocial relationships, which the letters would seem to indicate were most explicit, most subversive and most dissident within the 'safe' confines of Maddington, a remote spot unobserved by any but trusted servants.

Conventional family pieces, as Pointon has written, were intended to "be understood as a visualization of the last will and testament, an imaged set of domestic commands for future generations produced at the behest of an individual who will no longer be alive when the text is read... Conversation pieces insert a particular statement of familial power relations into the narrative of succession, a statement intended to fix family members in their relationship with another."<sup>30</sup> The Hogarth portrait of Hervey does the same thing, only it mimics the dynastic structure of the family piece to stabilize, or to 'fix,' individual relationships between men in a medium that was usually used to depict genealogy. To Pointon, conversation pieces are genealogical statements, and as she remarks, genealogy, "relating to family lineage, and therefore connected also with progeny on one hand and with property on the other, is never divorced from gender."<sup>31</sup>

The set of men connected with Hervey, then, use this painting as a reworking of genealogy and gender, representing a clique of people connected, not primarily by the ties of blood or marriage, and not even by the hunting that, to all intents and purposes, was the ostensible reason for their coalescence at the shooting-box of Maddington in the months of August or September of 1740. Instead, we have, in Paulson's words, "A parody husband and wife of the sort Hogarth

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<sup>30</sup> Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-century England* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1993), pg. 161.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pg 159.

represented in his family groups,”<sup>32</sup> and a group tied by homosocial affection, in which eroticism was presented in a similarly restrained, domestic fashion as heterosexual marriage. Hogarth, in fact, was being quite shocking enough to 18<sup>th</sup>-century viewers to need any further subversive references, since the audience that viewed the painting were being urged and encouraged by the painting to delight in, and to legitimize, modes of dissident gender that included same-sex eroticism and the expression of esoteric, non-conformist religious beliefs, and all of this at the expense of the established church! Maddington becomes, through Hogarth’s brush, a participant in staging “the setting for what might be called living conversation pieces, in which various men and women, analysing the painting on display in front of them, found themselves acting out and enjoying those conventional rituals so idealized within the canvases themselves.”<sup>33</sup>

What is truly innovative about the *Hervey Conversation Piece* is that, for one of the first times in the genre's history of patronage by the British elite, living performances of difference in masculine gender were commemorated, celebrated and made visible in a wider public eye through the mimicking of conventional familial structures. Hogarth’s informal group portrait, when looked at by the 18<sup>th</sup>-century aristocratic acquaintances of Hervey and Fox, became a “living conversation piece,” a gender-discursive device that drew on oral histories, allegory and subtle iconographical references to maintain the memory of the homosocial environments advocated by some of Walpole’s adherents. Alterity in gender is certainly subversive to the dominant social order, but through the appropriation of the genteel, sophisticated and elegant forms of representation that were favoured by the Georgian elite, Lord Hervey and his close

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<sup>32</sup> Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth: Volume Two, High Art and Low. 1732-1750* (New Brunswick and New York: Rutgers University Press, 1992), pg. 176.

<sup>33</sup> Mark Hallett, *Hogarth* (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), pg 63.

acquaintances could convey their respect for society's codes of behaviour while simultaneously expressing their dissidence with essentialist expectations that linked biological sex to performed gender.

For example, Freemasonry offered a convivial, males-only and, for the time, remarkably liberal alternative to entrenched Anglicanism, an alternative that held a remarkably potent appeal for Stephen Fox and Charles Spencer, but this spiritual alterity was not accompanied by a wholesale rejection of the established religion, as all men continued to respect the feelings of their families and of society at large by paying honour to the Anglican church. In a similar fashion, Lord Hervey and, it would seem, many of his closest friends were similarly attracted to or simply *lived* performances of dissident gender that allowed for eroticism between men, but these performances, whether involuntary or not,<sup>34</sup> were not incompatible with married life or with the value of children, a value that was hyper-sensitized in a patriarchal society that desperately required the production of male heirs to guarantee the biological, social and political continuity of the entire family and of the wider polity associated with the landed estate.

In a sense, paintings like Hogarth's view of this breathtaking afternoon at Maddington can speak volumes about the detrimental effects of patriarchal social structures on men as well as on women. Much literature has been deservedly written on the lamentable legal and social status of women during the colonial era in England, and it is impossible not to admit that, by and large, the vast majority of well-born men enjoyed access to legal power, material wealth, and

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<sup>34</sup> Colin Tudge, writing about biology, says some interesting things about performance, arguing that any species, "and the lineage to which it belongs, and the planet itself, are like a flame: not so much a thing as a performance, always becoming something else; and that each of us... are part of the overall unfolding." Colin Tudge, *The Time Before History* (New York: Scribner, 1996), pg. 14. I think that Georgian gender, in this context, should be understood in a similar (although heuristic) fashion, with the same transient, oscillatory properties as fire.

ideological education on a scale of patriarchal privilege that deliberately excluded women (as well as impoverished men, religious non-conformists, and political radicals). However, as Hogarth's cleverly subversive portrait argues, there were men who were profoundly uncomfortable with the roles that had been allotted them, who were staggering under an immense burden of financial and administrative responsibility, and who had to cope with the necessity of scrambling for political office to keep their entire extended families on par with oligarchal status.

Moreover, it is entirely possible to speak of the sheer loneliness of the patriarchal role, where one man, and perhaps his eldest adult son if he was lucky enough to possess one, had the legal, social and moral responsibility of providing for, maintaining and bequeathing to an implacably stable posterity the landed estate and the reputation of the entire clan. No surprise, then, that homosocial networks or structures like Freemasonry proliferated throughout this era, with all-male clubs, societies and associations, such as the Kit-Cat Club, the Jockey Club, the Society of Dilettantes and a host of others springing up to provide support, or that Hogarth, Gavin Hamilton, the Devis brothers, Hudson and so many other 18<sup>th</sup>-century painters represented communities of men pictured outdoors engaged in recreational pursuits tied to land management, such as hunting, shooting, etc.

The much-maligned George II is, in fact, one of the most sterling examples of such "stalwart" 18<sup>th</sup>-century Protestant masculinity, which, although it has not been much discussed in scholarly literature, was one of the determining factors in he and his father's accession: not only was the House of Hanover religiously compatible with the attitudes of the Whig oligarchs who dominated the English parliamentary intrigues, it was also, in stark contrast to the francophile,

effeminized Stuarts, compatible in terms of gender, with both George I and George II cultivating the image of the aggressively virile male, which is echoed in the high visibility of their mistresses in the historiography of the early Hanoverian monarchs.

Georgian scholar John Brewer has remarked how George II's performances of elite masculinity could and did use visual art, or rather the rejection of high art, as a gesture that built a contrast between his more sophisticated courtiers, like Hervey, and his own relatively straightforward, conventional, orthodox demeanour. "When he returned from Hanover in 1735," recounts Brewer, "he was horrified to discover that the Queen, on Hervey's advice, had taken away his favorite pictures in Kensington Palace and replaced them with some of the finest canvases from the royal collection. He insisted on the removal of all the new pictures, including the Van Dycks, and when asked by Hervey if he really wanted 'the gigantic fat Venus restored,' brusquely responded 'I like my fat Venus much better than anything you have given me instead.' ... [The King] was only publicly asserting a taste that was usually kept private. But his blunt comment was of a piece with his self-presentation as a bluff and unaffected soldier."<sup>35</sup>

It is in art, through the presentation and reception of the mythologized body or sign of woman, that one glimpses an evitable staging of conflict, of genders that clash over control of images. George II's strategies of performative identity disclaimed the interiority of connoisseurship, preferring a kind of overt expression of eroticism that appealed to militaristic circles, and was paralleled by the rank and status the King accorded his mistresses. Hervey and the Queen, hoping to appeal to the more sophisticated elements of the Whig oligarchy, veiled such extroversion through exhibitionary practices that linked the current court with the high cultural

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<sup>35</sup> John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Vancouver: Douglas and MacIntyre, 1997), Pg. 20

precedents set by the preceding Stuart dynasty. By rejecting such associations, the King elided his effeminized Stuart predecessors and reinforced his own presentation, proving that George II and Lord John Hervey offered two different modes of elite masculinity to the court, modes that could conflict but were not necessarily incompatible.

Hervey, to illustrate, is known for being a highly respected connoisseur, whose influence over the London art world was considerable. A letter from young Elizabeth Fox to her husband Stephen, dated during the shooting season of 1740, and thus quite possibly written during the very trip to Maddington that is depicted in Hogarth's work, provides us with a fascinating glimpse of Hervey's status as a cultural arbitrator. "I went to see our house in Burlington Street," writes Elizabeth Fox, by this time either sixteen or seventeen, "and saw the pictures Lord Hervey has got for us, they look vastly well and I am quite happy to have my room furnished by the time I lye-in because all the town will see it then, I enclose the list of them given me by Lord Hervey."<sup>36</sup>

Besides confirming that Elizabeth and Stephen Fox inaugurated normative marital relations sometime during 1739, this document also presents the *Hervey Conversation Piece* in the context of the segregation of elite genders according to season, occupation, and health, since Maddington, a masculinist preserve, did not contain the amenities that would have been necessary for Fox's wife during the final stages of her pregnancy. Hervey, in Elizabeth Fox's words, undertook to 'furnish' the young woman's apartments for her, and her evident delight in how well the room looks masks the social function such pictures would play following a

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<sup>36</sup> Elizabeth Fox to Stephen Fox, August 12, 1740, *Holland House Papers*, British Library Manuscript 51337 ADD., page 15.

successful birth, when “all the town” would visit the Fox residence in Burlington street to pay their respects to the new mother. As is quite evident from her letters, Elizabeth Fox herself lacked, at this stage in her life, the experience and education necessary to make the kinds of critical judgments in art that would be expected by aristocratic London society, while Hervey, as Vice-Chamberlain of the court, had reinforced his position as a connoisseur by his trip to Italy.

Stephen Fox likely specifically requested Hervey to undertake the task of buying and displaying works of art for his wife’s bedroom, a task in which he appears to have been completely successful. The bedroom of his lover’s wife is not the place modern-day readers would expect to find Hervey engaging in what might be called a curatorial role, but as archival research shows, this is exactly the spot where Hervey was able to be both dissident and exemplary: dissident, in that, as “all the town” well knew, he had been carrying on an intense personal relationship with Fox for some years, but exemplary, in that through his solicitous care for the appearance of the future Lady Ilchester’s immediate environment, he could display his own sophistication, intellect and good breeding.

Despite the relative importance of Lord John Hervey and Stephen Fox's relationship in delineating Hervey's reputation as a traveled connoisseur, a continuing elision of queer themes in Hervey and Fox's patronage exists in contemporary art-historical discourse, albeit in ameliorated form. For example, the Tate Britain's online label to accompany the *Hervey Conversation Piece* in the recent travelling exhibition of Hogarth's work is quite telling. "This enigmatic and humorous group portrait," reads the label, "was commissioned by John, Baron Hervey of Ickworth, seemingly to celebrate the political and personal companionship enjoyed by a small but highly influential coterie of Whig aristocrats, politicians and courtiers. Hervey is shown

gesturing to an architectural drawing held by Henry Fox, Surveyor-General of the King's Works. The clergyman on the left is possibly Dr John Theophilus Desaguliers, an influential physicist and Freemason. He trains a telescope on the church tower in the far distance. Meanwhile his chair – possibly nudged backwards by Fox's brother, Stephen - tilts precariously towards the river flowing nearby."<sup>37</sup>

Small descriptions such as the Tate's succinct description of the *Hervey Conversation Piece* are quite often the only information a member of the viewing public will absorb before moving on to the next work in any given exhibition, and although the catalogue, when it becomes readily available, might modify the unfortunate wording of this or similar descriptions of the piece, a number of questions are raised by what has been chosen to represent, to frame and to contextualize one of Hogarth's most innovative of group portraits. Why, for example, is it more important to emphasize the presumed scientific, religious, non-conformist characteristics of the clergyman, whose identity remains in question, than it is to include any mention of same-sex eroticism between the primary patrons, whose likenesses form the formal center-point of the painting itself, and whose reputation, life and legacy are so highly coloured by queer issues? Why is Stephen Fox and Hervey's personal relationship, so evident in archival sources from the time, elided under the phrase "personal companionship?"

The use of these and similar phrases contributes to a suppression of queer voices from the canonical narrative of art historical scholarship that is being added to this painting, despite the body of scholarly work that has been articulated by Hogarth specialists, few of them otherwise

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<sup>37</sup> Tate Britain, *William Hogarth*, <<http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/hogarth/rooms/room4.shtm>>, Accessed May 2007

active in queer scholarship. There is a definite, specific and concrete parallel between the choices made by the writers for the Tate exhibition and the critical language employed by scholars writing about 18th-century gender in early 20th-century academic discourse, which elided the mention of same-sex eroticism through a larger umbrella of dire hints about morals.<sup>38</sup>

I believe that indeed there is a continuing elision of queer presences in even contemporary references to early Georgian aristocratic portraiture; that accounts of homosociality and dissident masculinity are still limited to a comparatively specialized, enclosed and contained scholarly hermeneutic, which can, for all its apparent open, transparent character, still act as a limiting filter or veil that blocks, or completely misunderstands, queer identity. As an example, Uglow, writing in 1997, mentions how the homoerotic connotations of the painting 'mirror' the conversation piece, but adds an unfortunately-worded description, saying that "Hogarth makes him [Henry Fox] hold up the architectural plan, to which the limp-wristed Hervey gestures to so airily."<sup>39</sup> Extended comparison between Hervey's pose and other depictions of aristocratic masculinity, however, has not convinced me that Hervey's gesture is particularly 'limp-wristed'; this is, instead, a pejorative term for the contemporary gay community that has been (likely inadvertently) projected back onto the figure of the dissidently-gendered 18<sup>th</sup>-century aristocrat, and which moreover denies the complexity and fluidity of elite modes of masculinity in favour of an essentializing concept. I might add that heterosexual structures of eroticism almost always find mention in the conventional small description or 'blurb' chosen to accompany portraits, and that this is not limited to orthodox, socially-sanctioned roles such as marriage, but also includes

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<sup>38</sup> See C.F.Fletcher and Emery Walker, C.F. Bell, *Historical Portraits, Part 1., Vol. III: 1700-1850* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1919),pg.101.

<sup>39</sup> Jenny Uglow, *Hogarth: A Life and World* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), pg. 347.

illicit unions, as even the most glancing references to portraits of people such as Emma Hamilton, Lord Nelson, Elizabeth Chudleigh, Anne Vane, Lady Jersey, etc., will show.<sup>40</sup>

When reading about this circle's social, political, and economic interconnectivity, there was a rupture between the literary and textual sources of the archival material, which suggested Lord William Bateman, who had married Charles Spencer's eldest sister, Lady Anne Spencer, was a vital, if not an integral member of the Hervey circle as such, and the Hogarth piece, which depicted, in addition to the figure of the clergyman, all of the key players of this drama *except* Bateman. William Bateman's absence from the Hervey set can be carefully structured through references to surviving biographic documentation, poetry and architectural history, while a portrait of the 1st Viscount Bateman that is contemporaneous with the *Hervey Conversation Piece* provides valuable context for the comprehension of both pictures, illustrating the failures as well as the successes of some English aristocrats who attempted to perform kinds of subversive masculinities. One excerpt from Hervey's letters, only one of many, well illuminates the importance of Bateman to Hervey, and indeed to Stephen Fox.

Windsor Castle, September 16th, 1730.

I have persuaded Lord Bateman to be at Old Windsor when you are here, not that I will lend you for a moment of the Day or Night if I can have you: but in order that I can contrive, that the hours you are not with me, may not be as heavy on your hands, as I

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<sup>40</sup> I should, however, at this point highlight that the curators and trustees of Ickworth itself have been commendably sensitive to similar concerns of the elision of dissident masculinities, and that several attempts to render these performances of subversive gender more visible in the public eye have met with great success, notably in the introductory panels that have been unobtrusively inserted into a newer wing of the house that serves as a public entrance. Ickworth's awareness of the importance of strategies of inclusion reflects on the demand for such narratives.

always find those when I cannot be with you mine for I can with a great deal of truth on this occasion say as Lady Mary does upon another:

*In crowded Courts I find myself alone;*

*And feel no commerce gratefull but your own;*

*Prudence, not taste, makes other Walks My Care*

*For ev'ry Line of pleasure centers there.*

*And whilst a thousand objects I pursue,*

*They're all as Tasks or Debts to Custom due*

*I practice others, but I live with you.*

... Adieu, Lord Bateman is grown quite a courtier."<sup>41</sup>

While similarly suggestive remarks by Hervey towards Bateman are present in the textual sources, any mention of the man is eviscerated from the surviving correspondence after the later years of the 1730s. The architectural life history of the Bateman residence in town, known as 'Monmouth House'<sup>42</sup>, sheds further light on Bateman's presence - and absence - from the London scene and, by association, with the Court-centered faction of Lord Hervey. "In February 1716/17 the Duchess of Monmouth finally disposed of the lease of Monmouth House for 3000 [pounds]. The purchaser was a City financier, Sir James Bateman... On Sir James Bateman's death in November 1718, Monmouth House was inherited by his eldest son William (later first

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<sup>41</sup>Lord Hervey to Stephen Fox, Sept. 16, 1730, *Hervey MSS 941/47/4*, pgs. 137, 138.

<sup>42</sup>In honour of the unfortunate prince who had commissioned it in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, but whose political failures had ended with his execution, following a failed rising against his uncle, James II.

Viscount) Bateman... William, first Viscount Bateman, lived at Monmouth House until 1739, but the ratebooks record from 1740 until his death in 1744 there were tenants."<sup>43</sup>

Such architectural details concerning a long-since vanished structure (demolished in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century) become infinitely valuable towards structuring the absences of Bateman from his accustomed haunts. To begin with, the residence of the Bateman family in a palatial dwelling, originally commissioned for the favourite illegitimate son of King Charles II, points to the level of interconnectivity between aristocracy and bourgeoisie in early 18th-century British society, as well as the degree of social mobility guaranteed to the most successful of London's city merchant families. William Bateman's rise to the peerage is also rendered more explicable, as his residence in London was described by one architectural critic as being "built at a good deal of expence, and meant for something grand and magnificent,"<sup>44</sup> i.e. the achievement of aristocratic status, which was consolidated by his marriage. Monmouth House would have been a considerable attraction that could and did serve to whitewash the ignoble origins of the family, who, in fact, only managed to acquire a landed estate, at Shobden Court in Herefordshire, as late as 1705.<sup>45</sup>

Combined with biographical detail, the tenancy records flesh out the severity of the circumstances surrounding his departure, as it is known that he was forced into semi-official exile and that, having abandoned residency at Monmouth House in London, he left the country

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<sup>43</sup> English Heritage, 'Soho Square Area, Portland Estate, Monmouth House' *Survey of London: Volumes 33 and 34, St. Anne Soho* (1966), pp. 107-113 at <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/export.asp?compid=41057>,> accessed April 17, 2007.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, par. 5

<sup>45</sup> The Herveys, although not of the haute nobility, were of good gentry stock, and had been established in Suffolk for hundreds of years: there was a John Hervey at Ickworth as early as the sixteenth century. The Foxes, less established, were still ensconced at Redlynch by the end of the Civil War; Charles Spencer and Thomas Winnington came from similarly entrenched backgrounds.

for Paris, where he died in 1744, never having either the inclination or the ability to return to England. The tenancy records also point to the fact that his estranged wife, Lady Anne, was not permitted to continue residency in the couple's sumptuous Soho house after his departure, suggesting both the finality of their break and Bateman's need to recoup some sort of financial benefit out of the structure through rent-monies. While it was by no means out of the common way to rent out a familial town-house, such a step was usually only undertaken if the family was quite certain that the house would not be needed during the whirl of the London 'season,' which marked the annual migration of the aristocracy from their country seats to town for the Parliamentary session. Lord Bateman, by renting out his house and retiring from the scene, was turning his back not only on his wife, but on London society as a whole and on his governmental responsibilities in the House of Lords.<sup>46</sup>

The reason for such a definite and all-encompassing abjuration of Bateman's former life is recorded for us in, of all places, a decidedly smutty, sexually explicit poem written by Horace Walpole, 3rd Earl Orford, the younger son and eventual heir of the Whig leader, Sir Robert Wapole, who governed the Hervey set. Horace Walpole's elegant tastes and finicky deportment later in life masked the sensitive scholar's earlier love of coarse sexual innuendo, much of it inspired by his friend, Lord Lincoln. Henry Pelham-Clinton, 9th Earl of Lincoln was famous for his virility, sexual prowess, and confident performances of aristocratic masculinity. At some point in the mid 1740s, and certainly before 1744, Horace Walpole composed a poem called

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<sup>46</sup> Lady Bateman and her son John appear to have lived either with her brother or with her powerful friends during her husband's residence in Paris: a letter from Elizabeth Fox, by this time Lady Ilchester, of February 1, 1743, records that "The Duchesses of Richmond and Norfolk dine here, Lady Caroline Lennox and Lady Bateman came here last night and stay till we go to Goodwood," the residence of the Duke and Duchess of Richmond. See Elizabeth Fox to Stephen Fox, August 12, 1740, *Holland House Papers*, British Library Manuscript 51337 ADD., pg. 12.

*Little Peggy, a Prophetic Eclogue, in Imitation of Virgil's Pollio*, which also bore the description that "Peggy Lee, a whore of Lord Lincoln's, Had a Daughter by Him, whose birth was the subject of this Eclogue." The poem, which begins with the lines "While you, my Lord, are the stallion of the age...", etc., closes in a shockingly graphic manner.

Still some tracks of ancient fraud shall last:

Distended cunts with alum shall be braced;

With foreign hair the circle shall be bound,

And dildos make an imitative wound

Another Onan shall new crimes invent

Another Bateman shall debauch the boys

And Future Sapphos practice mimic joys.<sup>47</sup>

Walpole's reference to Bateman, as intriguing as it is, was apparently not clear enough for the author, who later annotated his manuscript. A note, in Walpole's writing, is inscribed in the margin of the original manuscript beside Bateman's name, reading "Lord Viscount Bateman, separated from his wife, by her brother Charles Spencer Duke of Marlborough, for his amours of this sort."<sup>48</sup>

Architectural details of a long-vanished mansion and the insouciant vulgarity of crude poetry suddenly become less irrelevant to a study of Hogarth's portraiture than might have been instantly assumed, as both of these radically differing types of sources combine to shed

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<sup>47</sup> Horace Walpole, *Little Peggy*, c. 1740, in George E. Haggerty, 'Walpoliana,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34.2 (2001), pg. 239

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 239.

considerable illumination on the question of Bateman's absence from the *Hervey Conversation Piece*. Tenancy records from the house show both the initial glory and the eventual failure of the 1st Viscount Bateman in maintaining himself in an advanced social position, while the explicit poem, with its in-jokes and pornographic imagery, speaks of the willingness of 18th-century aristocratic masculine society to engage with questions of same-sex eroticism. The poem also illustrates the inherent limits and checks on an individual's behaviour that issued from within the nucleus of the clan or the family, external of the operating control of the State's representatives, who would have found it remarkably difficult to prosecute aberrancy in persons who were so far advanced up the economic, political and social hierarchy.

About the same time Hervey and his friends commissioned their group portrait from William Hogarth as an innovative method of conceptualizing aristocratic masculinity, Lord William Bateman had his portrait painted (See Figure Seventeen), in Paris, by a brother of Jean-Baptiste Van Loo, Carle van Loo, later famous for the delicacy of his colouring and the eroticism of his scenes and much patronized by the court of Louis XV. His work, on account of the high degree of training he had received from infancy, was much in demand, portraits by Carle van Loo being both expensive and prestigious. Keeping the context of homosexual scandal and political downfall in mind, the portrait of Bateman in Paris, by the brother of the very man whose monopoly of patronage back in London had caused a frenzy among the local painters, is enriched by an enhanced wealth of detail, in which the preservatory role of the connoisseur is aspired to, and where the same attributes of status, reified by the State, that were championed in the official portraits of Hervey are similarly employed.

The younger van Loo does not depict Bateman devoid of the corporate signifier of the wig or clad in the loose, flowing colours of the "bohemian" informality that characterized Zincke's enamel of Winnington or Kneller's sexualized image of the 2nd Duke of Grafton, but shows a man whose posture is impeccably self-aware, whose 'hand-in-waistcoat' stance attempts to convey the Augustan virtues of political ability, *gravitas*, and good character, eliding and denying any kind of masculine sexualization, however subtle, that might lead the viewer to remember the scandals that had driven the sitter from the English court. Lord Bateman, likely remembering Addison and the Spectator, does not smirk, but there is the faintest hint of the *toujours gai* in the manner of his lips: this is, after all, a French portrait, created in France, but made suitably dour for an English patron who needed a suitable image to buttress his reputation, and who used portraiture as a sophisticated method of confining, containing and conditioning his particular performance of aristocratic masculinity.

Everything about this portrait engages the viewer's attention to the physical accoutrements of rank that were designed to make visible the achievement of aristocratic status, and in this I draw attention to the red sash billowing effortlessly over the olive velvet of the coat, and to the sparkle of the stars that are affixed to the shoulder nearest the foreground. No mere decorations, these are the mantle and star of the Knights of the Order of Bath. Having married Lady Anne in 1720, he served as an MP for Leominster from 1721 to 1722, rendering himself agreeable to Sir Robert Walpole by voting for the Whig side. In recognition of his support, and indeed of his familial connection with the heir to the Duchy of Marlborough, on July 12, 1725, he was created the 1st Viscount Bateman in the Peerage of Ireland by George II, acting on instructions from Walpole and Queen Caroline. The rank of Viscount ranked one degree above the lowest, that of Baron,

which was also accorded to him as 1st Baron Culmore, in the country of Londonderry in Ireland.<sup>49</sup>

Walpole and Caroline, with support from Lord Hervey, were not acting out of disinterested motives. In the same year, Walpole, to drum up political support for his regime and to fortify his position through the advancement of his loyalists, decided to reinaugurate an Order which had fallen into disuse since medieval times, and which would, once revitalized, allow the administration a means of rewarding its adherents without necessarily creating additional hereditary peerages, or, for that matter, creating the strife and jealousy that attended the advancement of a family up the rungs of the aristocratic ladder. On the 18th May 1725, then, acting under letters patent of the Great Seal, and further supported by official documentation issued a week later, the Order of Bath came back into existence as a genuine political tool. Bateman's promotion, curtailing so closely with the re-inauguration of this Order, was clearly part of an overall political scheme that was, theoretically at least, politically symbiotic to both Walpole and the couple themselves, whereby Walpole saw a political loyalist kicked up into the divisive House of Lords, and the Batemans finally eschewed commoner status to achieve something of a common footing with Lady Bateman's family.

Following the return of Lord Hervey to political prominence in England as the Vice-Chamberlain to the Queen in 1730, Lord Bateman's newly-achieved aristocratic status was

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<sup>49</sup> G.E. Cokayne; with Vicary Gibbs, H.A. Doubleday, Geoffrey H. White, Duncan Warrand and Lord Howard de Walden (eds.), *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct or Dormant, new ed.*, 13 volumes in 14 (1910-1959; reprint in 6 volumes, Gloucester, U.K.: Alan Sutton Publishing, 2000), volume II, page 13 at <<http://www.thepeerage.com/p10542.htm#i105412>>, accessed November 2006.

further reinforced by his being invested with the Order of Bath in January of 1731, marking him as a supporter of the Royal Family and of the all-powerful Walpolian administration. That he made some attempt to maintain the profile of a connoisseur and a learned intellectual is evident from his being made in February of 1732, a Fellow of the Royal Society, but in Carle van Loo's portrait there is little, if any, reminder of his association with the R.S., all attention being consumed by the ribbon and the star. Van Loo's canvas has to have been deliberately devised to show off the colouring and the sparkle of these visible manifestations of aristocratic status, an assertion I believe is confirmed by the wonderfully sumptuous handling of the emerald drapery in the background.

Highlighted in golden light near the ribbon, but dissolving into a dark shadow that shows off to perfection the snowy laces of the sleeve and cravat, the curtain is a fitting contrast to the shimmering crimson satin mantle of a Knight of the Bath, a mantle whose pigmentation is called 'Sanguine' in the deliberately archaicizing language of the heraldic statues. Sanguine "is a Colour in great Esteem, and very Stately, and us'd in some Robes of Knights of the Bath," as 18<sup>th</sup>-century references to the Order show, while the linguistic equivalents between 'Sanguine' and the French word for blood, 'Sang,' may have inspired the younger van Loo, later famous as a Rococo colourist, to make the trickle of fabric so visceral and so prominent in the overall composition.<sup>50</sup>

This, then, is what might be called the shadow of Hogarth's group portrait, of the other story, a

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<sup>50</sup> James Coats, *A new dictionary of heraldry, explaining the terms us'd in that science, And a concise account of the most noted orders of knighthood. Illustrated with 196 devices on copper. Revis'd and corrected with a recommendatory epistle* (London, 1747), pg. 306, at *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, <<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>>, Accessed June 2007.

counter-narrative existing side by side with the insouciance and dissidence of the *Hervey Conversation Piece*, a story that speaks of isolation and failure in the face of the solidarity expressed by Lord Hervey's coterie; the portrait by Carle van Loo of William Bateman might also be said to be a fitting contrast for the triumphant one of Lord Hervey, in the role of Privy Seal, which was painted by the artist's brother within a year or two of the creation of this image. Hogarth's delightfully witty composition and iconography reference the political and personal camaraderie enjoyed by the depicted Whig grandees, a camaraderie that was complicated by the assertion of homoerotic relationships, paralleled by an interest in esoteric nonconformist spiritualism, and unbroken by the necessity, and the enjoyment of, heterosexual marriage structures.

Lord William Bateman's portrait, however, is another side of the same coin, of an individual who, despite immense personal wealth and brilliant marriage connections, was not able to confirm the dangerous balance between subversion and excellence that was advocated by Lord Hervey and his circle; this is a portrait of a man whose performances of dissident gender had become entirely too overt, whose relationship with his nobly-bred wife had deteriorated to the extent that his own brother-in-law, enjoying the literal fruits of Maddington in Hogarth's scene, had courted public notoriety by officiating over their separation, and whose political life, having once achieved considerable recognition, was entirely in ruins.<sup>51</sup> The sunny scene at Maddington,

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<sup>51</sup> Two things ought to be mentioned at this point: one, that Bateman's public and personal failure, resulting in semi-exile in Paris, was by no means unprecedented in his immediate familial history: his wife's father, Lord Sunderland, had something of a history of entanglement in homosexual issues that arguably may have led to his political downfall. Secondly, going abroad, specifically to Paris, was the exit strategy for many aristocrats who became embroiled by sexual scandal. See Carola Hicks' unfortunately-titled, but thoroughly-researched, art historical

with the clever puns and esoteric religious signification, the mimicry of dynastic structures, the seductive sensuality of a paradise-like 'Trianon' sacred to homosocial activity: all these mask a somewhat darker side of the story, where one of the circle (significantly, the one whose family's upward social mobility had been most meteoric) did not, despite wealth and connections, have the requisite cultural capital to successfully contain his performances of dissidence. The *Hervey Conversation Piece* is a celebration of homosociality, but it is also a celebration of deliberate exclusion, not only of women, but of one of its own formative members, who has been elided from the record. Ironically, the elision of their own stories from the record in subsequent, less tolerant, generations, including, in some respects, contemporary art historical discourse, has left the memory of the Hervey coterie stripped of some of its most vital, innovative and inspiring facets. Closer attention to the wealth of detail provided in biographical documentation, including the primary sources that survive in the archives, can contribute to a more sensitive, inclusive and historically accurate conceptualization of these men and their portraiture.

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account of the life of Lady Diana Beauclerk entitled *Improper Pursuits: The Scandalous Life of an Earlier Lady Diana Spencer* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001), pgs. 14, 119-122.

## Conclusion

Painting, sculpture, music and architecture, are fine amusements but where society is wanting, they lose their merit as much as fine sauces of dishes where there is no meat, when one is hungry.<sup>1</sup>

Going through archival material, such as the Hervey and Fox-Strangways manuscripts, and finding quotes such as the above is one of the most exciting parts of research like this project, where biographical detail is given a striking immediacy. The richness of the period roughly corresponding with Lord Hervey's life for a study of dissident modes of gender was an undoubted inspiration, but this richness corresponds almost exactly with a comparative dearth of interest in the period itself. Since the political, social and economic achievements of the British nation over the course of the later part of the century are extraordinarily striking, it is only natural that those crowded, turbulent years, which produced such radical shifts in the development of European civilization, should receive intense scholarly interest.

Compared to the outstanding level of cultural expression displayed at Versailles, early 18th-century Britain found itself profoundly disadvantaged by the lack of centralization, but this in itself had advantages. New money began to blur the lines between merchant and hereditary ruler, so that the visual arts in late 17th and early 18th century Britain received a more widespread degree of patronage than had previously been seen. Some aristocratic clans took the lead in advocating disparate styles of painting or sculpture, while the gentry and the moneyed urban classes became increasingly similar in their modes of self-representation.

Portraiture, therefore, that dates from this period is far less polished, less immediately

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<sup>1</sup> Lord John Hervey to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, June 27, 1728, *Hervey MSS 941/47/2*, pg. 33.

expressive and, it might be added, far more homogenous, than the deliberately self-aware work that emerges later on in the century. The relative difficulty of the early material in comparison to later images, however, only adds to their charm, as there is still a great deal that simply has never been said about artistic developments during this period. For example, no monograph has ever been written on John Fayram or even Enoch Seeman, despite the latter's elevation to the position of foremost painter in the realm under George I, an achievement paralleled by his studio's prolific output of work. Many of the most exhaustively researched books on 18<sup>th</sup>-century British portraiture to appear of late have been heavily weighted towards the later decades of the Georgian era. To illustrate, Retford writes that, while her own recent work remains under the broad umbrella of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to maintain flexibility, "much of the book will be concerned with the decades between 1740 and 1790 as the most crucial for the development of a new ethos of affection and intimacy," a decision which I find has been reflected by many authors in their treatment of Georgian portraiture.<sup>2</sup>

Another aspect of early 18<sup>th</sup>-century British portraiture that I find has not been addressed in great detail is the link between class-based conflict and homoeroticism. Like the aristocratic disdain for masculine frivolity, Hogarth's treatment of dissident masculinities is characterized by an attention to detail, to an underscoring of the domestic, of the trivial, and - above all - of the excessive. Decadence is sometimes blamed on transnational interaction, since "it is typical not only of Hogarth but of his cultural movement that the most effete and decadent characters should be presented as foreigners," writes Meyer, pointing to how insistently moral tracts blamed

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<sup>2</sup> Kate Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pg. 15.

England's increasingly diverse population on continental sources.<sup>3</sup>

I am of the opinion that these satirical comments on liminal masculinity, with their latent xenophobic and misogynistic undertones, are inextricably situated in an anti-aristocratic context, forming part of a set of parallel discourses aimed at criticizing the hereditary elite for the appearance, toleration and patronage of dissident gender. The whole representation of the liminally gendered male, in the days of the Walpolian administrative legacy, is bound up alongside heavily-politicized (i.e. Tory) reflections on (Whig) aristocratic excess. For example, the visual examples discussed by Meyer are both reflective of aristocratic community and sociality, in which dissident masculinity was tolerated and even encouraged, through patronage, if - and only if - the individual in question had accumulated a sufficient stock of cultural capital. Opera singers, connoisseurs, dancing masters, etc. were therefore given a certain degree of tolerance that was not granted to the mainstream population.

To attack the effete masculine figure, at least in Hogarth's engravings, was also to attack the aristocratic milieu that allowed visibly divergent modes of masculinity to exist. In such a setting, dissident masculinities can be argued to constitute yet another example of aristocratic privilege, underlying a much larger class-based conflict that was permeating discussions of gender throughout this period. While Stosch's role as a cultural arbitrator in Italy was paralleled by Hervey's connoisseurship in London, the increasing visibility of liminal modes of masculinity, including homoeroticism, in English society during the early eighteenth century resulted in xenophobic, essentialist strategies of blame, in which the corruption of morals undoubtedly was felt to parallel the political and social corruption that permeated aristocratic structures of control,

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Meyer, 'Nature Revers'd': Satire and Homosexual Difference in Hogarth's London', in Bernadette Fort and Angela Rosenthal, *The Other Hogarth: Aesthetics of Difference*,

such as the court, the church, or even the painter's studio.

Portraits of Lord Hervey and his circle have much to contribute towards a newer, more inclusive reading of the various debates over class, corruption and gender that raged through the medium of 18<sup>th</sup>-century British portraiture, in which queer narratives, stories and records are present, just as they were during the period itself. While I have intimated that the importance of oil painting as identity representation at the English court during the 1720s and 1730s should not be underestimated, aristocratic men who performed a dissident kind of masculinity were also portrayed in a plethora of other media, each radiating its own intricate iconographic connotation. Other forms of portraiture include brilliantly polished marble busts, prescient and sophisticated, jeweled cameos and intaglio snuffboxes worked in precious stone, which, like miniatures, were in this period undergoing something of a revival, being paramount in conceptualizing and maintaining personal relationships, as well as in being vital participants in a community of exchange. Even the political woodcuts, crudely-rendered and often lampooning in character, have an expression and inner force that elevates them, in a sense, to the realm of portraiture, although certainly established artists would have denied their entrance to such a hallowed realm of representation.

Lord Hervey's representations, bound up as they were with the regalia of state – the key of the Vice-Chamberlain's office, or the Seal signifying the position as Lord Privy Seal, were symbolic of his role at the court and his position close to Queen Caroline. "As Vice-Chamberlain, Hervey's duties were the supervision of court functions: ambassadorial receptions, royal birthdays and marriages and funerals, court balls, and the seasonal removal of the Court from St. James to Windsor, to Richmond and to Kew. His role as the master of ceremonies contributed

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(Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), pg. 166.

even more material to his satirical persona as a fop of the highest order, as a creature of mere decorum."<sup>4</sup> As Lord Privy Seal, his prestige was increased, while Jean-Baptiste's van Loo's images of Lord Hervey in office can be read as a comparatively different, innovative look at a man whose position at the Court as the Queen's political go-between was equally idiosyncratic.

Lord Hervey's role at the glittering theatre of pomp, display and intrigue that was the Georgian court is not a new or untouched narrative. His own official memoirs have long been important sources of documentation for the reign of George II, while his participation in the machinery of the early 18th-century English state, while marginalized, was by no means forgotten. Ickworth itself is, was and always has been, since his death, inevitably concerned with the preservation of his memory, in which the public display of Hervey's portraiture has played no small role, as the family papers amply show. What is not as evident is the abiding interest in Hervey's gender, which endured right through the comparative rigidity of Victorian morals and resurfaced in the public eye in the post-war period through the publication of several biographies and monographs. At the very time Hervey was pointed to as an example of the (admittedly intriguing) degeneracy of the high aristocracy during the eighteenth century, the institution of aristocracy itself was under severe and protracted threat: the decade of the 'fifties marked an unprecedented demolition, destruction and abandonment of the great houses that had been such important cultural locii to Britain for, in many cases, two or three hundred years without cessation. With even highly-treasured cultural jewels like Chatsworth and Blenheim lying near-vacant under the guardianship of skeleton staff, and with a cash-strapped government coping with the rapid and forcible dissolution of the Empire, aristocratic traditions were stretched to the

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<sup>4</sup>Rictor Norton, 'Mother Clap's Molly House: The Gay Subculture in England 1700-1830' (London: GMP Publishers Ltd., 1992), pg. 151.

breaking point by the imposition of debilitating ‘death dues’ that were more wrapped up with capitalistic inventories of goods than with evaluating the lived experiences of real families.

Ickworth, and the Hervey family, were no exception to the larger trend of the dissolution of traditional ways of life. The Dowager Marquess of Bristol made the decision to transfer those parts of the house that the family had long since ceased to live in over to the custodianship of the National Trust, under the condition (since negated, although still controversial) that she and her descendants remained in residence.<sup>5</sup> Lady Bristol was more than cooperative with scholars and researchers, graciously hosting several noted writers interested in the Hervey history at Ickworth throughout her life. In return, most if not all of these mid-century writers displayed a sensitivity to the official story of Lord Hervey that surely reflected a (completely appropriate!) respect for the individual wishes, concerns and perhaps even prejudices of the living family descendants.

“There is no doubt Hervey was physically normal,” wrote D. A. Ponsoyby, contrasting Hervey’s marriage and children with the comments of Pope and his ilk but noting the publicity which Hervey’s subversive mode of gender created. In her private correspondence with Lady Bristol, she discusses photographs of some of the versions of the van Loo image of Lord Hervey as Lord Privy Seal for her book, and goes on to say of the 18th-century generation that “it is not always possible to admire them, but always I feel the effect of their great personal charm,” indicating something of the ambiguities surrounding Lord Hervey that permeated his historical memory.

From a historiographic point of view, Hervey’s life was and is highly subject to contemporary concerns, morals, and standards of in/toleration. Understandings of his life and gender, or more

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<sup>5</sup>Parts of Ickworth did remain as a private residence for the Dowager Marquess and her eldest son and grandson until their deaths, after which the Trust took possession of the remaining parts of the house and estate, excepting the little estate church. The structure, containing the family

properly the degree of public access to a collective memory of his behaviour and achievements, were and to some extent perhaps still are affected by the individual tolerances, prejudices and moral standards of his descendants: one gets the sense of a very real, living, breathing history overlaid by many different layers of familial achievement. That the man himself can be glimpsed so vividly is due to the survival of his letters, personal papers and official speeches, as well as his entrances and departures from the stage of contemporary memoirs. However, it is only through the innovations of 18th-century portraiture, so alive to the tradition of Kneller and yet invigorated by a new informality blowing across the channel from court-driven France, that one is able to conduct a kind of archaeology of visual manners, to distinguish the ways in which his representation, bound up as it was through tropes of aristocracy, gentility and wealth, could so subtly convey his (largely successful) deviations away from conventional masculinity.

Hervey and his fellow patrons used portraiture as a normalization or assimilation of latent homoeroticism through a remarkably subtle set of interacting signs, all of which are linked, through the representation of these individuals, to a wider social universe that lubricated its interactions through the culture of polite behaviour. Poses that were conditioned by social training to express wealth, power and status, such as the correct, two-fingered gesture advocated by Francois Nivelon, were used by men like Hervey as a way of articulating their own individual performances of gender. These performances were naturalized by the English gentry, but queer figures have been demonstrated to have played an important role in the dissemination of these modes of elite masculinity. Subversion, instead of being explicit, was couched in subtle ways

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gravesites and funerary markers, alone endures at Ickworth to this day as the Hervey dynasty's private property.

that required experience in reading elite societal codes, such as in the manner of wearing one's wig, or, for that matter, the manner of not wearing it at all.

This archaeology or mining of the biographical record for new ways of looking at the likenesses of the Hervey set can be said to counteract or complicate established notions about the time and its morals. The literary apotheosis of Alexander Pope has combined with latent structures of repression and elision to completely obscure Lord Hervey's role as an important patron of art, connoisseur and cultural arbitrator, whose performances of dissident masculinity were characterized and tempered as much by respect for aristocratic social codes as they were by the subversive deconstruction of monolithic patriarchy. These aspects of the man's life have been forgotten, as his memory has been coloured by Pope's allegorical metaphor of Hervey as Sporus, whose masculinity "is neither entirely trivial or unequivocally dangerous, but veers uneasily between these two conditions; he is a freak, a neuter, a misfit, an undefinable irritation and threat; a reptile with the face of a cherub."<sup>6</sup> Instead of allowing the irritation, the threat and the freakishness to deter art-historical inclusivity, these narratives of dissidence and liminality should be reinserted into the discourse of 18<sup>th</sup>-century British portraiture, providing a more well-rounded picture of domesticity in all its diversity. Providing examples and stories of 'queer' men to foreground the appearance of their likenesses is undoubtedly controversial, but it has tremendous value in any attempt to redefine the parameters of 18<sup>th</sup>-century gender, and, by extension, those of our own day, since these works of art are so powerful in talking about the past.

As Pointon suggests, part of the power of these images was in the potent combination of

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<sup>6</sup> Ian Donaldson, 'Concealing and Reviling: Pope's Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot,' *The Yearbook of English Studies* > vol. 18 (1988), pp. 181-199.

tactility and preciousness. Hervey's comments about the miniature of Stephen Fox that was in his possession (See Figure Ten) demonstrate something of the need or desire that prompted the circulation and consumption of miniaturized luxury goods, while the two men's patronage choices, reflecting the influence of Stosch, illustrate the subversive potential of the early neoclassical bust portrait. Just as other minority groups have engaged in processes of provincializing the art historical readings of some British collections to refocus the audience's awareness of difference, queer communities stand to benefit from a heightened sensitivity to the complexity of the social circumstances of the Georgian aristocracy. These narratives of homosocial bonding, for example, demonstrate that potentially eroticized same-sex affection was responsible for the physical creation of objects like the Fox miniature, the Winnington copy of Fayram's image, and the bust of Hervey by Bouchardon. The knowledge of flexible, fluid or oscillatory paradigms of sexuality that were concurrent then, and that have since lapsed into exclusive, self-governing traditions, has great possible impact on the potential of future generations to imagine into being less rigid categories of sexuality, gender and identity.

Lord Hervey's relationship with Stephen Fox was not the only homoerotic relationship that changed his life, since following Fox's marriage, but not completely excluding the maintenance of their old closeness, he engaged in an on-again, off-again relationship with Francesco Algarotti, popular science writer and future Count Algarotti at the court of Frederick the Great of Prussia, whose importance to the art historical discipline consists of his lavish patronage as a collector and a patron, notably of Tiepolo. As Paglia writes, Algarotti's "liaisons with prominent men across Europe are well-documented, so that Hervey's infatuation with him can hardly have been

innocent.”<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Lord William Bateman’s life history strongly indicates that, like Hervey and the men they associated with, he performed dissident acts of masculinity, including homoeroticism, but was simultaneously striving for aristocratic excellence, a struggle that ultimately ended in failure and a collapse of privilege.

While it is important to stress the plausibility of allotting a queer reading to an analysis of Lord Hervey’s portraits, a great deal of the scholarly literature dealing with dissident modes of masculinity and with historical performances of same-sex eroticism has been fascinated by conceptualizations of homosexuality as such, i.e. the specific acts that make up same-sex eroticism between men. Since legal ramifications in the colonial era were similarly caught up in tropes of the definition of guilt, and since social attitudes also may have paralleled the legal networks, the scholarly attempt to fix sexual roles through notions of the “active” or “passive” partner is understandable, although misguided. Such notions of stability in sexual practice have more apparent value in Greco-Roman social studies than they do in inquiries that deal with 18th-century aristocratic masculinity. Not only is it impossible to ‘prove,’ empirically speaking, who did exactly what to whom, it is completely irrelevant to fetishize historical performances of sexuality in a similar manner, since such an argument denies the complex, often shifting attitudes towards sex that any given individual entertains at specific moments in time. I have, therefore, not attempted to define same-sex eroticism in the early Georgian era in terms informed by notions of the active or passive partner.

Hervey and his friends were decidedly aware of their comparative privilege, certainly making use of their connections and their power to negotiate spaces for individual autonomy in gender,

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<sup>7</sup>Camille Paglia, ‘Lord Hervey and Pope,’ *Eighteenth-Century Studies*> Vol. 6, No. 3 (Spring, 1973), pg. 358.

but they were also aware of the potential repercussions of stretching that privilege too far. Hervey's androgynous wig or even his public love of Stephen Fox's company were all gestures of dissidence, but they were performed in such a way as to draw derision instead of abhorrence, mockery and satire instead of outright violence. Winnington might choose to have himself represented in a sensuously informal way that drew on precedents of masculine sexualization, but the intellectual ramifications of such representations, or of Hervey's classicizing portrait by Bouchardon, were well known. Bateman, however, appears to have seriously transgressed these codes of aristocratic behaviour by drawing too much public attention on himself and his "debauches"; the simple fact that Horace Walpole, an outsider, was in a position to record the circumstances attending the departure of Lord Bateman from the Whig milieu suggests that his performances of dissident masculinity had gone entirely too far (and which, moreover, might have involved adolescent individuals, as suggested by the term "boys," contrasting against the adult homosocial bonds that characterized the affections of the others). All of the circle, including Charles Spencer himself, would be highly at risk if one of its closest members, in disregard of Fox or Hervey's admittedly limited abilities of self-censorship, was unable or unwilling to properly veil his behaviour: that the risk was largely political instead of immediately physical does not detract from its seriousness.

As the self-policing techniques of the Hervey coterie show, far from flagrantly pushing their performances of difference onto society in the raking manner of Sir Francis Dashwood, who revelled in the outrageous, the shocking and the explicit, Lord Hervey and his friends used grace, wit and humour to enact strategies of dissidence that were highly informed by the rules of polite etiquette, reworking patriarchy from within. Biographical detail, although biased, provides invaluable context for the comprehension of the portraits of these early Georgian aristocrats.

## Figures



Figure One  
Enoch Seeman  
*John Lord Hervey, Son to the Earl of Bristol*  
c. 1717-1730  
Oil on Canvas, Full-length  
Private Collection, Melbury House, U.K.



Figure Two  
John Fayram  
*Lord John Hervey as Vice-Chamberlain*  
1727-1730  
Oil on Canvas, Three-Quarter Length  
National Trust: Ickworth House, Horringer, Suffolk, U.K.

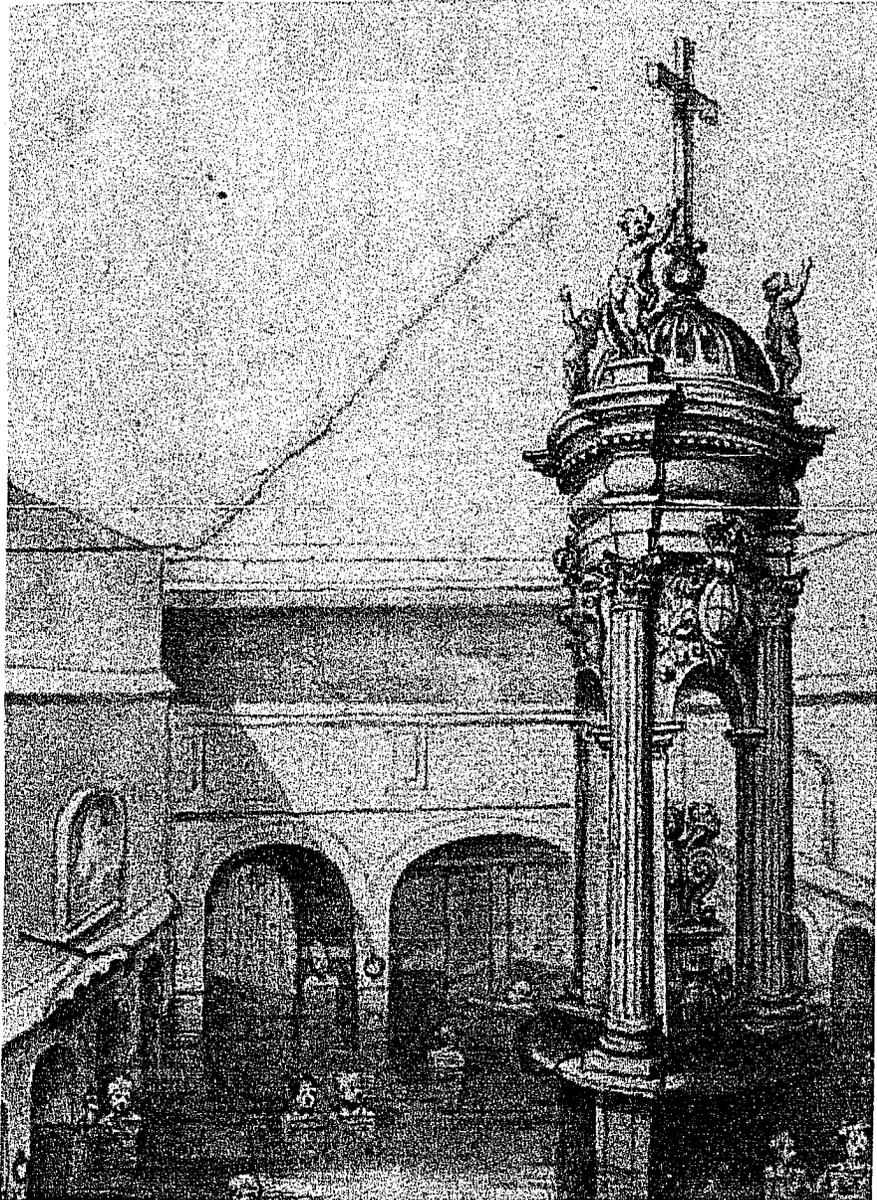


Figure Three  
John Fayram  
*Bath Cross*  
1739  
Drawing, 23.8 X 19 cm  
Victoria Art Gallery, Bath, U.K.

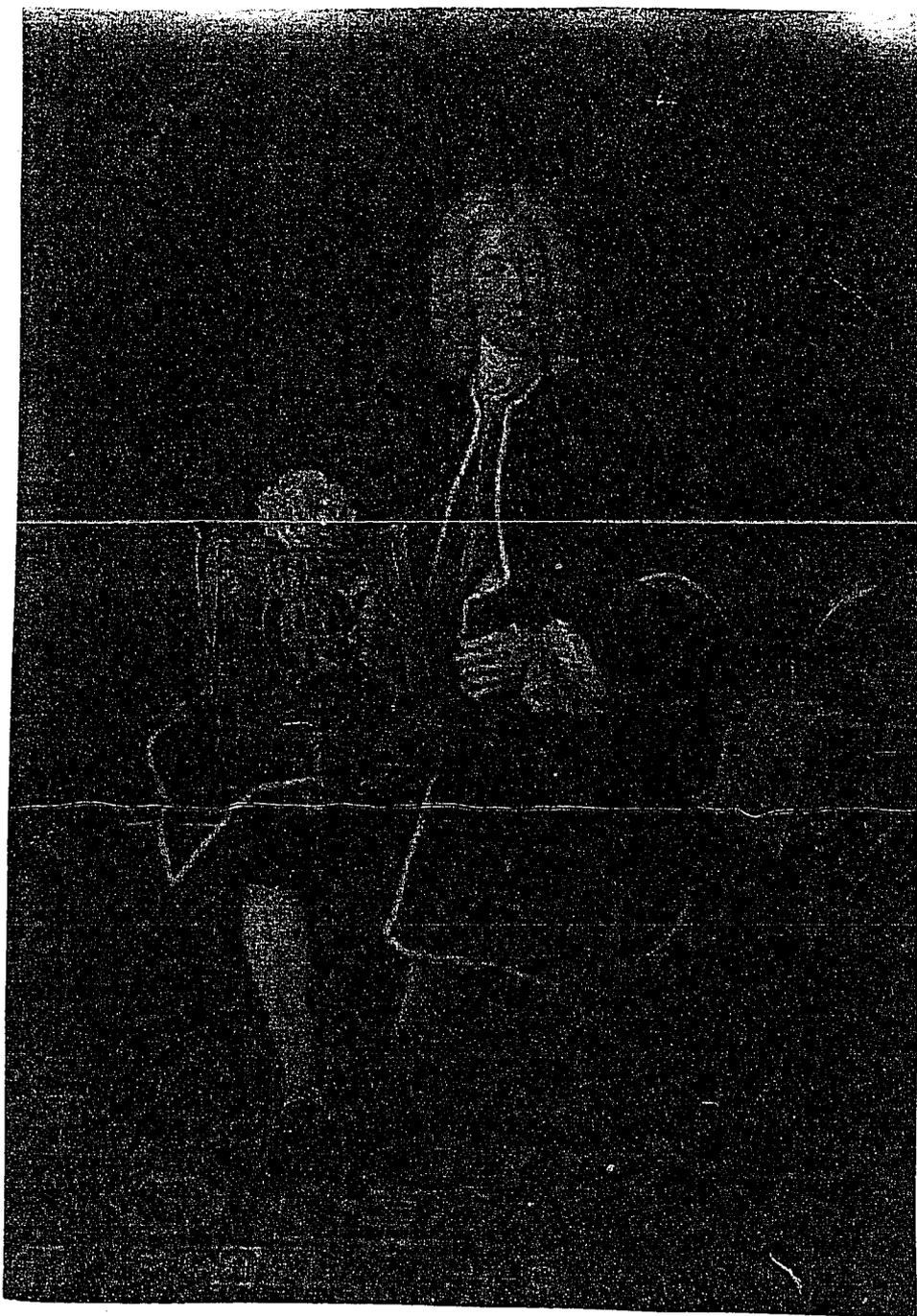


Figure Four  
Studio of Jean-Baptiste van Loo  
*John Hervey, Baron Hervey of Ickworth as Lord Privy Seal*  
c.1740-1741  
Oil on Canvas, Full Length  
National Portrait Gallery, London, U.K.

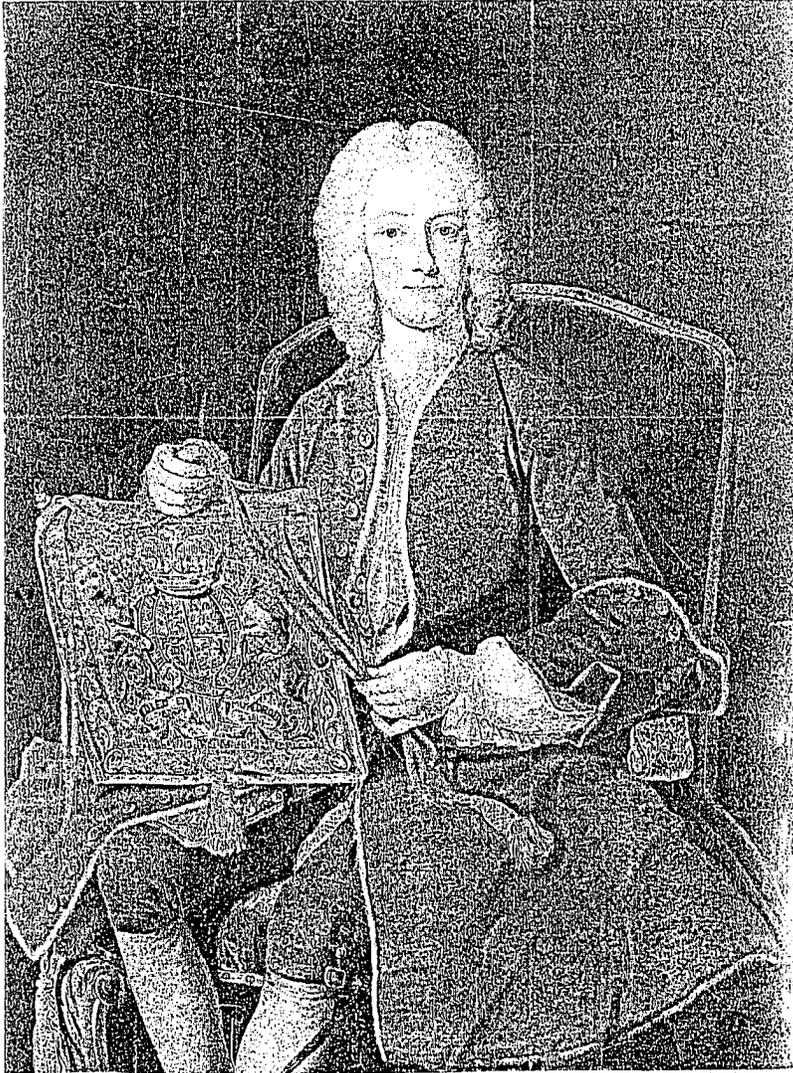


Figure Five  
Studio of Jean-Baptiste van Loo  
*John Hervey, Baron Hervey of Ickworth as Lord Privy Seal*  
c. 1740-1741  
Oil on Canvas, Full Length  
Present Location Unknown

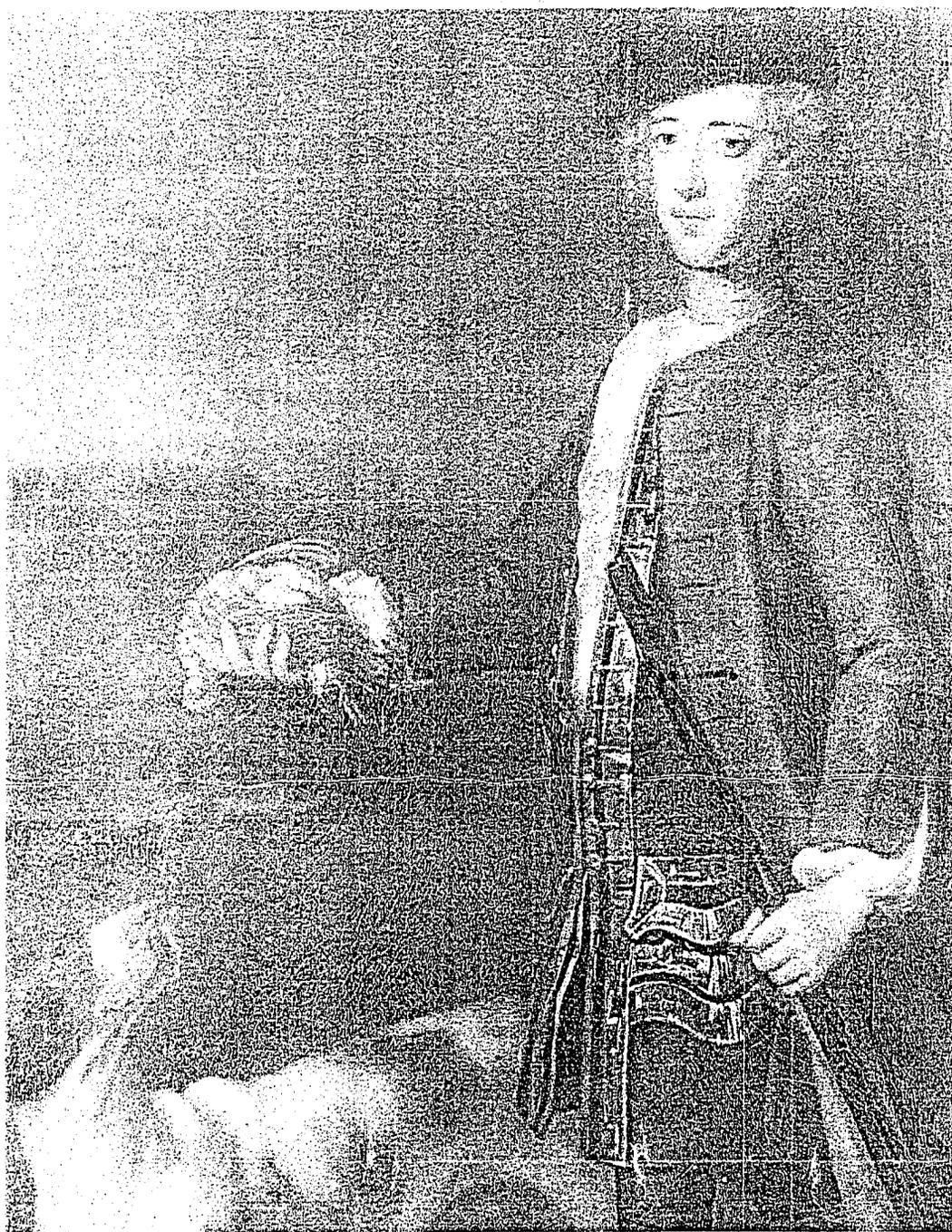


Figure Six  
Enoch Seeman  
*Stephen Fox*  
c.1727  
Oil on Canvas, Full Length, 127 x 103cm.  
Present Location Unknown



Figure Seven  
Brown (Agent at Redlynch)  
*Lord Ilchester, Neddy Digby, Richard Cox and Delia*  
1744  
Oil on Canvas  
Private Collection, Melbury House, U.K.



Figure Eight  
George Knapton  
*The Honourable John Spencer and his Son*  
1745  
Oil on Canvas, Full Length  
Private Collection, Althorp, Northamptonshire, U.K.

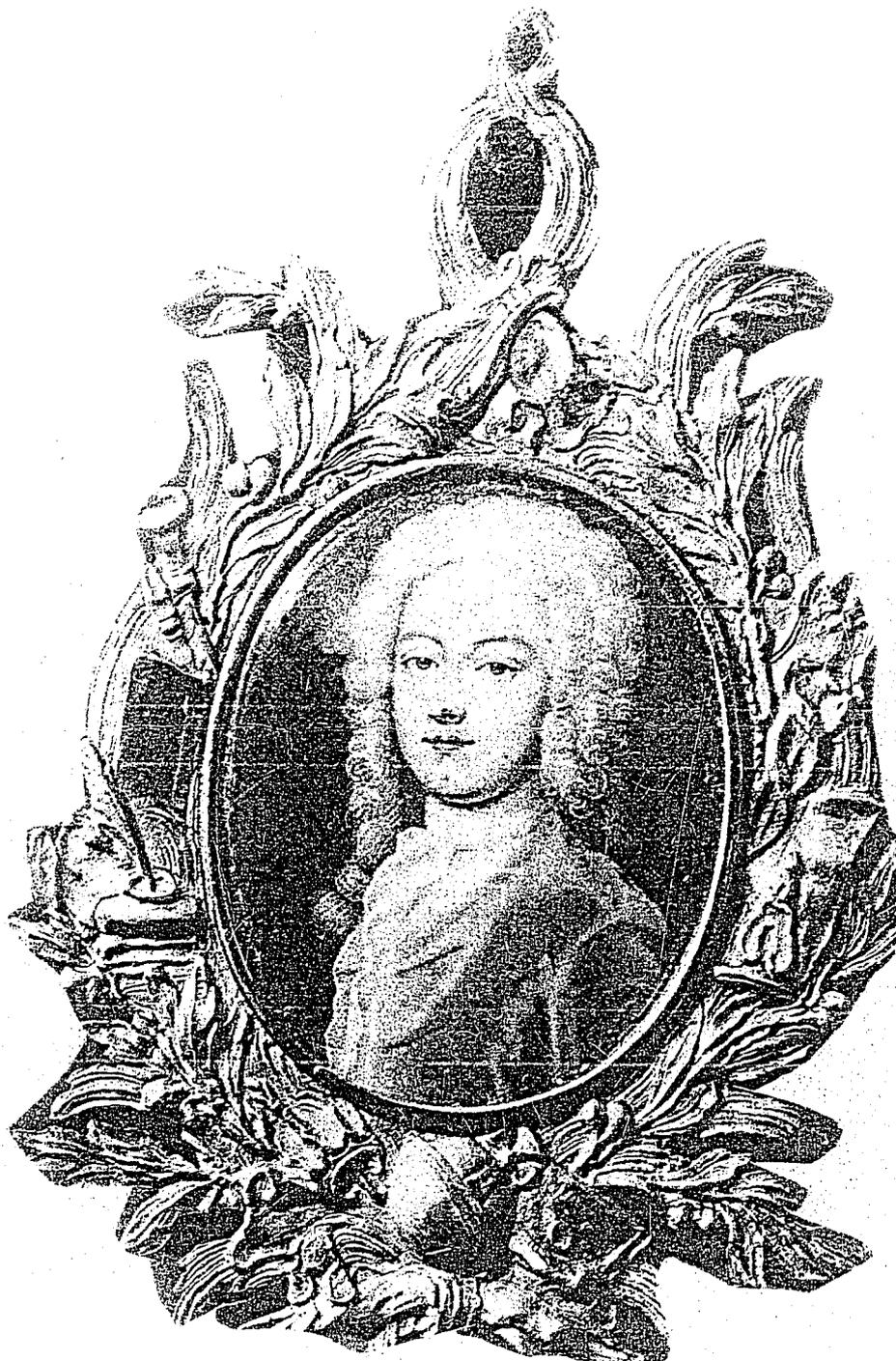


Figure Nine

Christian Frederick Zincke

*Lord John Hervey*

1723

Enamel, miniature.

Present location unknown: Formerly at Ickworth House, Suffolk, U.K.



Figure Ten  
Christian Frederick Zincke  
*Stephen Fox*  
Before 1728  
Enamel, miniature, 1  $\frac{3}{4}$ " oval  
Sherbourne Castle, U.K.

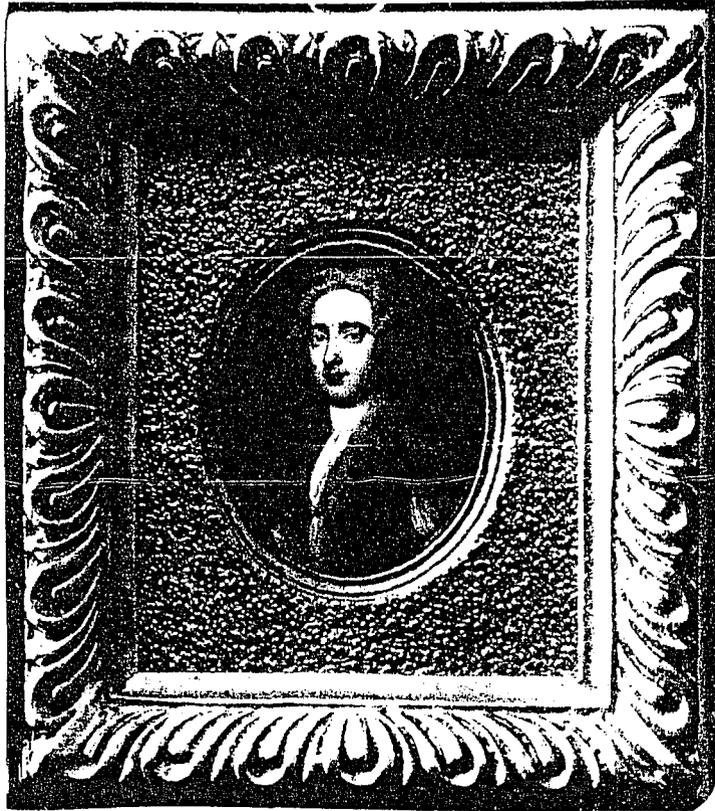


Figure Eleven  
Christian Frederick Zincke  
*Henry Fox*  
c.1730  
Enamel, miniature  
Present location unknown: formerly at Ickworth House, Suffolk, U.K.



Figure Twelve  
Christian Frederich Zincke  
*Lord Thomas Winnington*  
Enamel, miniature, 44 mm. x 38 mm.  
National Portrait Gallery, London, U.K.

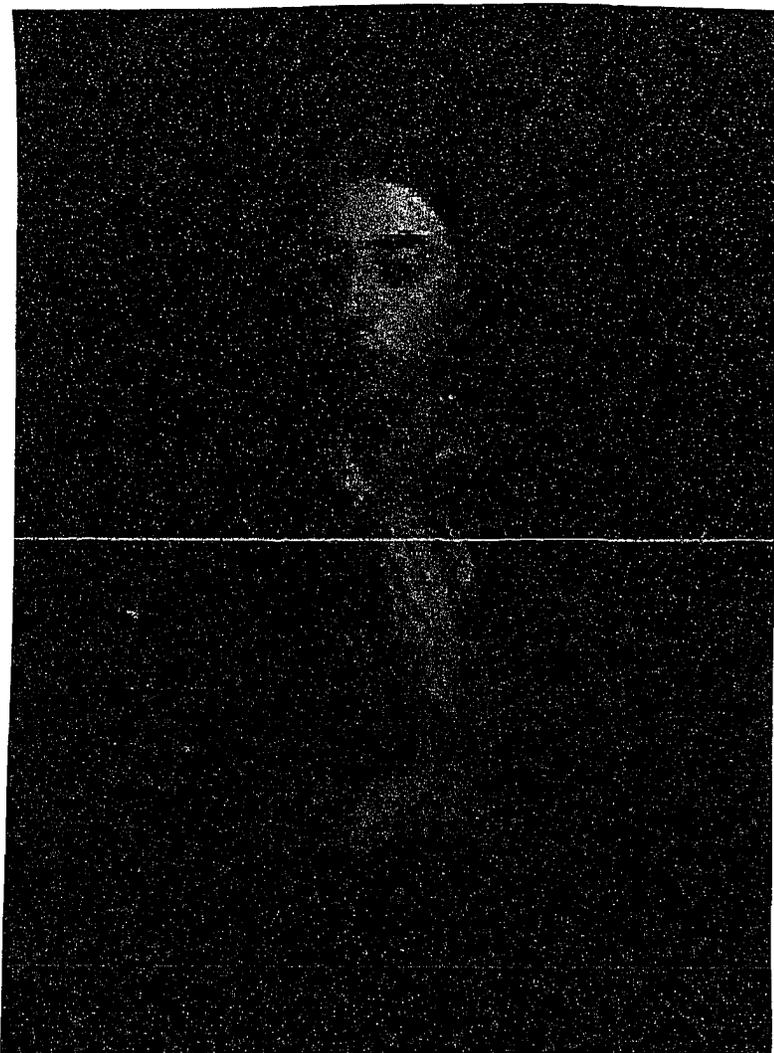


Figure Thirteen  
Sir Godfrey Kneller  
*Charles Fitzroy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Grafton*  
1703-1705,  
Oil on Canvas, 'Kit-Cat' format, 91.4 cm x 71 mm  
National Portrait Gallery, London, U.K.



Figure Fourteen  
Johann Lorenz Natter  
*John, Lord Hervey*  
1729  
Engraved Gem  
National Trust: Ickworth House, Horringer, Suffolk, U.K.



Figure Fifteen  
Edme Bouchardon  
*John, Lord Hervey*  
1729  
Marble, 76.2 cm  
National Trust: Ickworth House, Horringer, Suffolk, U.K.



Figure Sixteen  
William Hogarth  
*Hervey Conversation Piece, or Holland House Group*  
c.1740  
Oil on Canvas, 101.6 x 127 cm.  
National Trust: Ickworth House, Horringer, Suffolk, U.K.



Figure Seventeen  
Carl van Loo  
*Lord William Bateman, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Bateman*  
c.1739-1744  
Oil on Canvas, 80.3 x 64.5 cm.  
Rafael Valls Limited

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