

beautiful nude. This perceptual and psychological engagement is one of the reasons why Rembrandt strove so mightily for palpable flesh and lifelike bodies, as discussed above—in appeal to both empathy and erotic desire, as with the *Danaë*, his other life-sized nude, but now in a religious scene of moral temptation. Rembrandt thus makes his images immediate in accord with their subjects, but also in emulation of the great artists of tradition, from Titian through Goltzius to Rubens, and in defiance of moralists from Erasmus to Jacob Cats.

A final note is that this large book offers good value. It is handsomely produced and lavishly illustrated (though comparative photos are often minuscule), and it remains a pleasure to read, even spiced with contemporary references. Certainly it is already a primary resource in course readings, including undergraduate classes, where the larger relevance as well as the perennial significance of Rembrandt himself makes this wide-ranging but closely focused study indispensable. This is the kind of book every library should own, the kind of book that every scholar enviously wishes s/he could have written.

Aileen Ribeiro. *Fashion and Fiction: Dress in Art and Literature in Stuart England*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005. x + 387 pp. + 100 b/w + 80 color illus. \$65.00. Review by ROZE HENTSCHELL, COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY.

Early in the introductory chapter to Aileen Ribeiro's *Fashion and Fiction*, an ambitious survey of seventeenth century English dress, the author describes several surviving garments from the period. That this list is so brief indicates the challenges faced by the early modern fashion historian. Ribeiro's turn, then, to visual representations of the clothing of the period is a necessary one and it is clear why she would look to the wealth of visual depictions of dress, mostly portraiture of royalty and aristocrats, to give a sense of how fashions emerge, develop, and shift throughout this tumultuous period. Ribeiro is a renowned art historian at the Courtland Institute of Art and she carefully analyzes seventeenth century imagery. The book includes scores of sumptuous color reproductions in a gorgeous, oversize format. The form of her book, however, belies what makes it a fresh and important contribution to early modern studies at large: Ribeiro also takes *textual* representations seri-

ously as sources for understanding a “narrative of dress” (5). By also attending to the wealth of literary material of the period, imaginative and non-fiction texts alike, Ribeiro provides a more complete sense of the extent to which subjectivity in Stuart England was negotiated through attire.

Ribeiro’s book is comprised of five substantial chapters, generally running chronologically from the seventeenth century through the early years of the eighteenth century. While court dress during James’s reign was not significantly different from that of Elizabeth, in Chapter One, Ribeiro sees an increasing sense of clothing as “a form of theatrical diplomacy,” where donning styles of foreign nations signified favor and alliances (27). Portraiture in this period became more prominent as England now had a royal family, something it had been lacking for decades. The “presence and importance of fabrics, clothes, accessories, and jewelry” in the paintings helped to create a sense of the identity and status of, and associations with, the sitters (32). A melancholic posture and somber, often disheveled garments, for example, indicated a contemplative mind and was a popular pose for aristocratic sitters and literary subjects alike. Clothing could also indicate the moral qualities of the wearer, as a garment embroidered with lilies, for example, would symbolize modesty. The interest in allegorical representations in clothing is seen in other visual forms, such as emblem books and costumes for masques. But it also is found in the complex and symbolic “language of contemporary poetry,” such as that of Herbert (76). Ribeiro, then, does not merely use literary texts to find references to dress, but also sees that literature participates in intricate cultural sign systems of which attire was also a part.

Chapter Two takes up the clothing of the Caroline court, which embraced a “kind of casual elegance” (98) and signaled a departure from the stiff and bombastic attire associated with the Jacobean period. Both the clothing and the portraits (or the clothing *in* the portraits) emphasized softer lines, a trimmer silhouette, and the “understated” simplicity of plain velvets and satins (120). For women, the popularity of *deshabillée* contributed to an idealized beauty, famously seen in Herrick’s poetry about the sensual “disorder” of his beloved’s clothing. Many of the images analyzed in this chapter are paintings by Van Dyke, and one cannot overstate the importance he had in engendering the image of a “Careless Romance” and a dream of Arcadia” (91). Van Dyke, according to Ribeiro, was “the first artist to experiment with notions of ‘timelessness’ in dress” and he often painted his subjects in “studio

draperies,” rather than their actual clothing (138). The popularity of classical and pastoral themes and images in the literature of the period influenced fashion and suited the “relaxed informality” of van Dyke’s style (143). Ribeiro, however, makes the important point that the idealism of a Golden Age found in the representations of clothing and in the literature of the 1630s and 40s, was necessarily “a form of escapism” (142) and perhaps signaled a desire to obfuscate the increasing troubles of the Caroline court.

Chapter Three, “Sermonizing Dress,” is distinct from the rest of the volume in that Ribeiro relies much more on textual output to discuss the “wider attitudes to clothing and appearance” in the period, many of which were governed by increasingly conservative religious voices (159). The moral regulation of attire and comportment is found in writings by Puritan polemicists and Anglican sermonists as well as popular satirists and dramatists, all of whom derided the English preoccupation with extravagant dress, foreign fashions, and the “class confusion” that arose from donning luxury apparel (166). Women were accused of counterfeiting by wearing deforming fashions and falsifying cosmetics, which signaled their loose sexual morals. Complaints against men focused on the vain and profligate fashion-crazed gallants or gulls (183). Ribeiro then moves to a discussion of the shift in style that emerges during the civil war and interregnum. While the Puritans espoused a greater modesty in styles and fabrics of clothing, the absence of a court as a central site of fashion ironically led to a greater prominence of modish attire on the common Londoner. The Royal Exchange and other markets sold an unprecedented number of goods to a wide customer base, while the new coffee houses, public promenades, and the Exchange itself provided a venue to flaunt one’s new purchases. One of the primary virtues of this chapter is that Ribeiro gathers a vast array of textual references from the period, and goes well beyond canonical texts to support her claims. And while the analysis of the literature is primarily in service to gleaning a sense of how fashion is revealed, pamphlets and conduct books, frontispieces and engravings are treated with the careful attention that the other chapters give to court portraits.

Chapter Four focuses on the Restoration of the monarchy and an attendant renewal of a court-centered fashion. The moral strain of discourse around clothing so prominent during the earlier part of the period gives way to revival of “elite lifestyles” (215). High fashion for men during Charles II’s reign became increasingly effeminate: the wide “petticoat” breeches deco-

rated with yards of ribbons were as popular as the high-heeled shoes and the long, ubiquitous periwig. Two important trends in clothing emerged in the 1660s and 70s that would shape fashion for decades: for men, a “suit” consisting of a long waistcoat or vest and a matching outer coat; for women, the “mantua” or loose, often elaborately draped outer gown that was worn over the bodice and skirt. With the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire came an increase in markets—including those selling ready-made clothing and second hand goods—throughout the expanding city. French fashion flourished, while anti-French sentiment, “a constant current in English society,” continued unabated (256). Restoration drama both reflected and contributed to the cultural emphasis on fashion. Comedy often pointed out the distinction between the “man of fashion,” who is “at ease with his appearance” and “the foppish gallant obsessed with his costume” (260). The renewed interest in theatricality that emerges with the reopening of the playhouses is reflected in Baroque portraiture, which often depicts sitters in classical “costume” rather than in court clothing. With the arrival of William and Mary, and throughout the reign of Anne, we see a turn toward relative simplicity in attire; fashion took a back seat at court to the various wars and political factionalism that marked the last decades of the century. With a less dominant court culture, we again see a growing increase in fashion among urban commoners. A larger selection of fabrics, including the popular calicoes from India and cheaper domestic silks, were made available and the market in second hand garments was robust. While there is certainly evidence of extravagance in attire—seen noticeably in elaborate headdresses, powdered hair, long wigs, and expensive lace cravats—and shopping for clothes was as popular a pastime as displaying them in St. James’s Park, the Augustan period was marked by decorum. *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* both promoted “a new aesthetic of gentility,” seen in clothing that was “*modestly* in fashion” (323). Avoiding extremes, in clothing and in behavior, was the ideal of the time.

Fashion and Fiction is a significant achievement and an important contribution to the study of fashion in the early modern period. Admittedly, this reviewer was disappointed by the extent to which the discussion was skewed towards elite dress and surprised at how little attention was paid to England’s great wool industry. Further, readers looking for deep literary analysis likely will be unsatisfied. This disappointment, however, will be tempered by the large storehouse of material the author does discuss. And Ribeiro’s attempts

to connect modes of dress to the complex political background of the seventeenth century, which at times seems a bit too facile, nevertheless demonstrates the ambition that marks the entire book. By presenting the discourse of dress through an examination of both art and literature, Ribeiro's project is truly interdisciplinary, the sort of work which many of us value, but do not see enough of.

Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Pamela M. Jones, Franco Mormando, and Thomas W. Worcester, eds. *Hope and Healing: Painting in Italy in a Time of Plague, 1500-1800*. Worcester, Mass.: Clark University, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester Art Museum, 2005. viii + 264 pp. + 43 color and 68 b/w illus. \$39.95. Review by JEFFREY FONTANA, AUSTIN COLLEGE.

The subject of the present volume, which served as the catalogue to an exhibition of paintings held at the Worcester Art Museum in the summer of 2005, could not be more aptly or succinctly stated than by one of the curators of the show, Thomas Worcester: "This exhibition has sought to explore how early modern people (especially in Italy) thought about life and death, illness and health, plague and piety. It has sought to show how painting was a privileged expression of metaphors and symbols, by which painters and their audiences not only coped with plague and the threat of plague, but also expressed their fears and—especially—their deepest hopes for health and salvation in this world and in eternity" (170). The curators, who were also four of the seven authors, have succeeded admirably in their ambition to better define the place of plague in the early modern worldview and to illuminate how paintings functioned instrumentally as a response. Using an interdisciplinary variety of perspectives, the essays focus on the functional aspect of paintings as "spiritual remedies" to the plague, which is similar in approach to the essays in *Saints and Sinners: Caravaggio and the Baroque Image*, the catalogue to a 1999 exhibition in which the four curators of the present exhibition took part. A chief virtue of both books is the ability to resituate objects in their original spaces of belief, hope, longing, despair, death and institutional power, far distant from modern spaces of aesthetic contemplation such as the museum gallery or catalogue page.