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Faraday, Christina J. Tudor Liveliness: Vivid Art in Post-Reformation England

Goran Stanivukovic

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Faraday, Christina J.
Tudor Liveliness: Vivid Art in Post-Reformation England.
London: Paul Mellon Centre/New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023. Pp. ix, 198 + 124 col., b/w ill. ISBN 978-1-913-10737-6 (hardcover) £45.

In this engaging book, Christina J. Faraday writes that in the Tudor period the word "lively" "seemed to mean a powerfully realistic effect, one that had the power to influence others' thoughts or behaviour" (1). "Liveliness" covered "a full range of visual and material culture" (1), like large-scale portraits, portrait miniatures of women and men, funeral monuments, illustrations in printed books, tapestries and paintings, and household objects, which Faraday examines in impressive detail. The book's interdisciplinary focus and an extensive and fresh use of the rhetorical theory to read pictures and images, and connect the visual culture to literature, makes this an exemplary book of post-Reformation (Faraday's preferred designation) scholarship.

As Faraday demonstrates, in the classical and neoclassical rhetoric the concept of "lively" denotes an expression that uses powerful visual terms with which the creator vivifies the described object for the recipient. The theoretical term that produces the effect of "liveliness" is *enargeia*, which is the fulcrum of Faraday's groundbreaking monograph. *Enargeia*, or vivid description and workmanship, gives post-Reformation art the expressive force and bravura that gave delight to the period's viewers. The expressive skill of the creator makes the depicted real object lifelike, and thus believable, impressive, immediate—and "lively." The depth and subtlety with which Faraday analyzes the objects that she studies, and the connections of the rhetorical theory of "liveliness" and the painterly practice, make this monograph an original, major achievement in early modern art criticism from which literary scholars and historians will benefit. The poetic theories of the poet Philip Sidney and George Puttenham, and the rhetorical writing of Thomas Wilson, Richard Sherry, Angel Day, Erasmus, Susenbrotus, and Henry Peacham, among others, are woven into lucid analyses of the working of the art's "liveliness." The comprehensive introduction makes a timely claim, that by eliminating the concept "early modern" from her book and by replacing it with the historically justified and more accurate term "post-Reformation," Faraday is better able to emphasize the historical continuity with, rather than a sudden break from,

the period preceding the English Reformation, especially because of the role images played in the formation of Tudor art.

The first chapter, entitled "Liveliness," examines the key term of the debate in rhetoric. Its argument about the relationship between *enargia*, as the display of the expressive power of visual "liveliness" in representation, and the sensory and cognitive properties of painting, literature, and the "theories of sight" (17), is the strong basis for the argument about the intertwined workings of affect, form, style, and artistry in the creation of "liveliness." The second chapter, "Liveliness in the Court," examines religious objects, including the funerary art and monuments, like "jointed effigies" (32). The discussion focuses on how the post-Reformation art of "liveliness" developed in the proximity of idolatry. The chapter offers an original interpretation of the cultural uneasiness that post-Reformation artists experienced when they worked with images, and it shows how those artists navigated that situation by achieving "liveliness" in colour, craftsmanship, and shape.

The compulsion to memorialize and represent extends to large-scale and group portraiture as well, which is the subject of the third chapter, "Portraiture." A detailed discussion of the 1596 *Henry Unton Memorial Portrait* by an anonymous painter, "one of the most unusual paintings of the sixteenth century" (49), is the starting point for an exploration of the tension between realistic and imitative, or mimetic, representation. The "liveliness" of portraiture reveals the force of presenting details of the sitter's face, clothes, and body in a specific moment in life. The abundance of objects and forms in the portrait and the emblematic and representational complexity of their conceptual interaction, among one another and with the human figures in the picture, are the subject of an analysis helped by an astute interpretation of how rhetoric helps unlock the criticism about the mysteries in the arrangement of the elements in this painting. Unton's portrait is also the starting point for a discussion of how sitters are brought to life in single-figure portraits, like the fascinating *impresa* portrait of a most beautiful pensive sitter, Sir Peter Saltonstall, equerry to James I (c. 1610), also by an anonymous painter.

Beginning the fourth chapter, "Portrait Miniatures," by proposing that "liveliness and quickness" (77) were synonymous (as suggested by Richard Huloet's 1572 dictionary of Latin, English, and French), Faraday gives a fascinatingly detailed and nuanced analysis of the technique and the art of "intimate limning" (88), watercolour painting of portraits (mostly heads and

torsos) on vellum or playing cards, as one of the most visually bewitching of the English art of "lively" art in portraiture. Her critical narrative itself is a display of critical "liveliness": the abundance of historical information entwined with the subtlety of analytical uncovering of the technology of limning as an art of "liveliness" vitalizes the intimate lives of the sitters behind these most enigmatic and uniquely English small pictures.

The fifth chapter, "Book Illustrations," demonstrates how "liveliness" enriches illustrations in the printed book. From the representation of the building of a furnace to geometry and architecture and anatomy to pop-up figures in the pages of the printed book, tactility is the sensory experience engendered by "liveliness." The last chapter, "Liveliness in the Home," analyzes the forms of *enargeia* in the art objects depicting the "domestic environment" (114). From wall paintings to tapestries, to the presentation of the classroom, to woodcuts depicting scenes of dining and dancing and paintings depicting intellectual contemplation, and to glazed earthenware, this chapter analyzes the correlation between rhetorical teaching and "liveliness" as a technique and bravura of decoration and depiction, bringing together literature with visual and decorative art.

The subject of the epilogue, "Liveliness and Exploration," is the representation of the people and lands far away from England. Travel and proto-ethnographic writing are the sources of the visual representation of such subjects as the Turkish wrestlers from Nicholas de Nicholay's 1585 travelogue, John White's depiction of the tattooed and painted bodies of a Pict man and woman, as well as the Indigenous subjects from the New World of the Atlantic. In engaging with the lively copiousness of detail in these representations of distant worlds and their inhabitants, Faraday's wide-ranging book offers a persuasive argument that the blazoned "liveliness" of these visual representations of transcultural, non-European subjects reveals the applicability and effectiveness of "liveliness" to enliven the most different, other, transnational subject to the scrutiny of Tudor readers and observers.

The book is abundantly illustrated with high-quality glossy reproductions, and it is beautifully produced. It will be of use to art historians, students of literatures, and those interested in the cross-disciplinary application of rhetoric in north-Western Europe. At the same time, the book opens-up new ways of looking at the visual imagery of the worlds beyond Europe. In recognizing "liveliness" as a critical bridge between these two distinct bodies of work

emerging from the same theoretical and creative impulse driven by "liveliness" is one of this book's great scholarly virtues.

GORAN STANIVUKOVIC
Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
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