

**The Social, Political and Economic
Determinants of a Modern Portrait Artist:
Bernard Fleetwood-Walker (1893-1965)**

by

MARIE CONSIDINE

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ABSTRACT

As the first major study of the portrait artist Bernard Fleetwood-Walker (1893-1965), this thesis locates the artist in his social, political and economic context, arguing that his portraiture can be seen as an exemplar of modernity. The portraits are shown to be responses to modern life, revealed not in formally avant-garde depictions, but in the subject-matter. Industrial growth, the increasing population, expanding suburbs, and a renewed interest in the outdoor life and popular entertainment are reflected in Fleetwood-Walker's artistic output. The role played by exhibition culture in the creation of the portraits is analysed: developing retail theory affected gallery design and exhibition layout and in turn impacted on the size, subject matter and style of Fleetwood-Walker's portraits. Emerging, and soon dominant, tabloid newspapers shaped content and language to attract readers, influencing the articulation of the reception of the artist's work. This thesis also makes a contribution to the regional perspective, demonstrating the temporary co-existence of multiple, heterogeneous, modern art worlds. Throughout the thesis the relevance of economic factors is emphasised, reappraising the Marxist theory of modern art and concluding that a more complex economic description is required to provide a sensitive and insightful analysis of art history.

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ABBREVIATIONS

RA	Royal Academy
RWS	Royal Watercolour Society
RBSA	Royal Birmingham Society of Artists
NEAC	New England Art Club
ROI	Royal Institute of Oil Painters

INTRODUCTION

There is now on view at the Ruskin Galleries a collection of sixty examples—chiefly in oil and water colours—which claim attention by their free and independent character. They are the work of B. Fleetwood Walker, who is perhaps the most enterprising among the younger painters of the city, and certainly one to whom every encouragement is due from the fact that, at the crowning point of his studentship, the war happened, and, as in innumerable cases, his career was interrupted. Few, however, have set to work with greater determination to recover lost ground.¹

This is how Bernard Fleetwood-Walker was introduced to the readers of Birmingham's *Daily Post* in January 1927. There is no doubt that Fleetwood-Walker set to work, and continued to work, with 'determination'.² From 1919 onwards he exhibited—usually portrait and figure paintings—at the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists (RBSA);³ he was elected an Associate⁴ and subsequently Member⁵ of the RBSA and in 1950 he was invited to become

¹ E.S.H., 'Pictures by B. Fleetwood Walker, Exhibition at the Ruskin Galleries', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 18 January 1927, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

² *Ibid.*

³ His first exhibit is listed in *Spring Exhibition 1919*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, 1919. Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' (RBSA) Archive, Birmingham. See Appendix for a complete list of works exhibited.

⁴ Bernard Fleetwood Walker's proposer was W. Midgley, seconder E.S. Harper, voting was '14 aff., 5 neg., 2 neut.'. Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting, March 24th 1923, Minute Book 5 September 1912–25 July 1928, 256, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham. Note: layout of names given to meetings and of titles of minutes varies; in each case these are recorded exactly as they appear in the original documents

⁵ Bernard Fleetwood Walker was proposed for full Membership by Harold H. Holden, seconded by R. R. Carter and W. Midgley. Votes: 'for 20, against, 4, elected'. Minutes of the Royal Birmingham

President of that Society.⁶ He also exhibited frequently in London; his work was shown in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition every year, from 1925 to 1965, excepting 1929.⁷ In total 141 of his works were shown at the Royal Academy (RA).⁸ He was elected an Associate of the RA in 1946 and an Academician in 1956⁹ and was closely involved with many other exhibiting groups in the Midlands and in London.¹⁰ As well as pursuing his career as a portrait artist Fleetwood-Walker taught art throughout his life.¹¹ Bernard Fleetwood-Walker was one of the most prolific portrait artists in Birmingham in the first half of the twentieth century and an artist whose life and work reveals the social, political and economic factors affecting modern portraiture in a city that, because of its proximity to the capital, offers intriguing insights into art production in a regional setting.

The press cutting cited at the beginning of this introduction encapsulates many of the themes that this thesis seeks to explore and contest. The reviewer of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's exhibition at the Ruskin Galleries, by emphasising the artist's 'determination', concentrates on the artist's character and, when describing the work itself, through the use of words such as 'free' and 'independent', implies a belief that the artist's work is detached from society. As will be argued throughout

Society of Artists' General Meeting, March 22nd 1930, Minute Book 3 October 1928–3 February 1936, 40, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

⁶ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Annual General Meeting June 10th 1950, Minute Book, 7 November 1947–14 October 1955, 63, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

⁷ *Royal Academy Exhibitors, 1905-1970: A Dictionary of Artists and their Work in the Summer Exhibitions of the Royal Academy of Arts*, Wakefield, 1978, 76-77.

⁸ Of the 141 works by Bernard Fleetwood-Walker exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition during his lifetime only four were not portraits or figure studies. *Ibid.*

⁹ On 21 February 1956. Correspondence with Royal Academy archives, 14 December 2006.

¹⁰ See Chapter One.

¹¹ His first appointment as a teacher of art was in 1913, when he was appointed as a part-time teacher of modeling at Small Heath Branch School, working four evenings per week. Birmingham School of Arts and Crafts, Student Register of Addresses 1906-1914, SA/AD 012002, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

the thesis, behind this modern myth of artistic autonomy, lie social, political and economic factors which affect the artist as well as the critic. These issues will be explored against the modernist privileging of abstract art, which problematised portraiture because of its connection with reality and likeness.¹² At the same time the press cutting cited above, as a review of an exhibition of the artist's work, offers an insight into how Fleetwood-Walker's work was received by his contemporaries and stimulates a consideration of the reception of the work as well as its exhibition and display. This thesis too will explore the reception of Fleetwood-Walker's artistic output, as well as the display of the artist's work at the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, the space in which a significant proportion of his work was displayed. The connections between the reception and production of artistic output can thus be investigated. Without claiming full coverage of the themes, but rather considering these topics appropriate in light of this specific artist, the artist's biography (Chapter One), the consideration of the particular elements of the artist's output (Chapter Two) and of gallery space (Chapter Three) as well as the reception of the works (Chapter Four) will bring to the fore the social, political and economic factors that determined modern portraiture.

As well as its contribution to the investigation of modern portraiture, this thesis also provides a detailed list of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's output for the first time (see Appendix), which, if further research is undertaken, can be made into a catalogue raisonné. The starting point for this research was to document the works produced by Bernard Fleetwood-Walker. Around 400 portraits have been

¹² Shearer West, *Portraiture*, Oxford, 2004, 12.

identified from exhibition catalogues of the period;¹³ the vast majority of these portraits have not yet been traced and had virtually disappeared from public sight when this research was first envisaged. However in 2007 the artist's grand-daughter began to document the collection of drawings left in the artists' studio and to compile a database of known works; these can be seen on the website she has created, www.fleetwood-walker.co.uk.¹⁴ More recently, works in public collections have been (and continue to be) recorded by the Public Catalogue Foundation and can be seen in their directories¹⁵ and, from 2011, many can be viewed on the BBC Your Paintings website.¹⁶ The research for this thesis first created, therefore, a basic list of works exhibited.¹⁷ The titles of many of the portraits included in exhibition catalogues are simply a person's name, frequently a first—and often female—name, such as *Caroline*, exhibited RA 1954.¹⁸ Titles which infer family groups as subject matter are listed on several occasions; other portraits are of local politicians and clergymen; others again are of industrialists from Birmingham and the surrounding region.

Literature Review

The only biography of Fleetwood-Walker produced to date is one included in the catalogue accompanying the Memorial Exhibition held at the RBSA in the year

¹³ See Appendix.

¹⁴ This includes images from the artist's photographic archive of finished works; in some cases the paintings themselves have not yet been traced.

¹⁵ See for example, The Public Catalogue Foundation, *Oil Paintings in Public Ownership*, Birmingham, London, 2008.

¹⁶ www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings, accessed 18 March 2012.

¹⁷ These are detailed in the Appendix.

¹⁸ *Royal Academy Exhibitors, 1905-1970*, there are some instances where the same portrait was exhibited at different dates and using a different name (correspondence with Nicola Walker, granddaughter of the artist, 29 July 2008) of which this is one example. This work was also exhibited with the title *Wendy* at the RA in 1964: see *RA Illustrated*, London, 1964, 50.

after his death,¹⁹ elements of which were re-used in the catalogue to the John Lindsay Fine Art exhibition *Bernard Fleetwood-Walker 1893-1965* of 1981.²⁰

However, the reliability of these biographies is limited by their lack of reference to archival sources. Although the artist's family had carried out some genealogical research for this catalogue, most of the biographical details included here had to be verified for the first time during the course of this study.

Published work about the RBSA is restricted to *The History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists* which appeared in 1928.²¹ Written by Joseph Hill and William Midgley, this is a chronological account of events associated with the formation of the Society followed by a chapter of personal reminiscences and anecdotes. The work reflects the interests of its authors, themselves Members of the RBSA; although clearly compiled with care, the publication omits references to any sources. Other sources of information about the RBSA are *A Review of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists 1821–1999* by J. Barrie Hall (typescript)²² and a leaflet entitled *A Brief History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists*,²³ both available from the RBSA Gallery. J. Barrie Hall quotes at length from contemporary newspapers and therefore provides valuable reference material, however his work concentrates solely on the RBSA and does not show how the

¹⁹ Hon Secretary's Report, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual General Meeting, Saturday 1 April 1967, Minute Book 1 September 1961-1 April 1967, inserted after page 239, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁰ Irving Grosse, *Bernard Fleetwood-Walker 1893-1965*, exhibition catalogue, John Lindsay Fine Art Limited, Solihull and Belgrave Gallery, London, 1981.

²¹ Joseph Hill and William Midgley, *The History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists*, Birmingham, 1928.

²² J. Barrie Hall, *A Review of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, 1821-1999*, Birmingham, 2002, 2.6, unpublished typescript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²³ *A Brief History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists*, undated, unpublished leaflet, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

media coverage obtained by the Society compares with that secured by other artists or exhibitions. *A Brief History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists* summarises information provided by Hill and Midgley and by Hall and fulfils its purpose as an informative synopsis for visitors to the RBSA Gallery. Groups of artists and individual artists have been studied in the preparation of various exhibitions, and work has been published as a result of this research, most notably *The Birmingham School* by Stephen Wildman, published in 1990, a key introduction to artistic output in Birmingham.²⁴ Most of the existing research into the history of the RBSA has concentrated on the nineteenth century, with relatively little study made of the early-twentieth century. No comprehensive study of art in Birmingham in the first half of the twentieth century has been published nor has any there been any research into the works of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker.

Similarly, there has been little research into portraiture in early twentieth-century Britain. Whilst there are some monographs about British portraiture from the period, such as Robin Gibson's *Painting the Century: 101 Portrait Masterpieces 1900-2000*,²⁵ and *The British Portrait 1660-1960*²⁶ by Roy Strong and Brian Allen, Fleetwood-Walker is not included in any of these surveys. More recent publications which take early twentieth-century British portraiture as their subject include Philip Vann's *Face to Face: British Self-Portraiture in the Twentieth*

²⁴ Stephen Wildman, *The Birmingham School*, Birmingham, 1990. Stephen Wildman has also curated exhibitions, and produced the accompanying catalogues, of works by individual Birmingham artists such as Raymond Teague Cowern (1913-1986), Hubert Andrew Freeth (1912-1986) and Henry Rushbury (1889-1968).

²⁵ Robin Gibson, Introduced by Norbert Lynton, *Painting the Century, 101 Portrait Masterpieces 1900-2000*, London, 2000.

²⁶ Roy Strong and Brian Allen, *The British Portrait 1660-1960*, Woodbridge, 1991.

*Century*²⁷ and Paul Edwards' *Wyndham Lewis Portraits* published to accompany the exhibition held at the National Portrait Gallery in 2008.²⁸ Vann's publication is an in-depth survey of a collection of 100 portraits by artists working in Britain in the mid-twentieth century and covers the period of interest here; however, due to the large number of works and artists discussed, no individual artist is considered in great detail. *Wyndham Lewis Portraits* is a comprehensive study of the portraits of this artist, and relevant because of the insights it provides into the art environment of the period, but the scope of the publication is necessarily limited to the particular artist under consideration. And while there are studies of portrait artists working in Britain in the early-twentieth century, such as William Orpen (1878-1931) and Henry Lamb (1883-1960), or of artists who included portraiture in their output, such as Stanley Spencer (1891-1959) and William Coldstream (1908-1987), these focus on those whose career developed in the capital rather than regionally.²⁹ More general books on portraiture, such as those by Shearer West³⁰ and Richard Brilliant³¹ include sections on the twentieth century; however these works, as they provide comprehensive coverage of the subject, can only offer limited analysis of portraiture in the twentieth century.

There have been studies of Birmingham's history and the history of the economy and politics of the city, many of which are detailed in *Birmingham, Bibliography of*

²⁷ Philip Vann, *Face to Face: British Self-Portraiture in the Twentieth Century*, London, 2004.

²⁸ Paul Edwards and Richard Humphreys, *Wyndham Lewis Portraits*, exhibition catalogue, London, National Portrait Gallery, London, 2008.

²⁹ See for example, Bruce Arnold, *Orpen: Mirror to an Age*, London, 1981, Keith Clements, *Henry Lamb: The Artist and his Friends*, Bristol, 1985, Duncan Robinson, *Stanley Spencer*, Oxford, 1990 and Bruce Laughton, *William Coldstream*, London, 2004.

³⁰ West, *Portraiture*.

³¹ Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture*, Stockbridge, 1991.

a *City*, edited by Carl Chinn.³² Although this is a useful and detailed introduction and directory, there are few references to the visual arts in the twentieth century and no mention of the RBSA, its artists or of Birmingham's School of Art and its staff and students during that period. Certainly no publications concerning Bernard Fleetwood-Walker are listed. Thus this thesis will begin to uncover artistic production during this time in the light of the close, reciprocal, relationship between making art and socio-political and economic conditions, and between the production of art, its reception and exhibition.

Although the RBSA archive contains little detailed information about its Members and Associates from the twentieth century it does include exhibition catalogues, minutes of Society meetings and photographs of the exhibition galleries; these documents have been essential source material for this research. The comprehensive archive of press cuttings held by the descendants of Fleetwood-Walker has also been an invaluable resource, as has the collection of drawings held by family members.

Methodology, Premises and Central Argument

This thesis adopts a pluralistic social history of art approach, reflecting an interest in what Eduardo de la Fuente has recently called 'the "new sociology of art"',³³ a methodology that emphasises the benefits of including discussion of art objects

³² Carl Chinn, (ed.), *Birmingham, Bibliography of a City*, Birmingham, 2003.

³³ Eduardo de la Fuente, 'The 'New Sociology of Art': Putting Art Back into Social Science Approaches to the Arts', *Cultural Sociology*, 1:3, 2007, 414 and Jeremy Tanner, 'Michael Baxandall and the Sociological Interpretation of Art', *Cultural Sociology*, 4:2, 2010, 232.

themselves alongside considerations of production and consumption,³⁴ a technique which Jeremy Tanner has recently described as the 'intimate commingling of the social and the artistic which is at the core of the new sociology of art.'³⁵ At the same time this thesis seeks to avoid what Gail Day has called a 'teleology' of critical thinking in which 'theories succeed one another chapter by chapter in an etiolated intellectual meta-narrative'³⁶ by recognising the insights provided by early writers' discourses on the social history of art. Indeed, the boundaries between social history of art and sociology of art, as reflected in such writings, can be seen to be fluid. A social history of art is centred on an investigation of the artist's social background, whereas the sociology of art seeks to reveal common practices of artistic consumption and production and connect them with wider social structures. In Vera Zolberg's words: 'social scientists start from the premise that art should be contextualized, in terms of place and time in a general sense, as well as more specifically, of institutional structures, recruitment norms, professional training, reward and patronage or other support'.³⁷ Although many of the issues highlighted by Zolberg are to be explored here, this is with the aim of enriching an understanding of an individual artist's works, rather than of reaching more general conclusions. The fundamental approach in this thesis is, therefore, that of a social history of art.

Marxism has had a significant impact on art history in general and on the social history of art and the sociology of art, although, as Andrew Hemingway has

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 420.

³⁵ Jeremy Tanner, 'Michael Baxandall and the Sociological Interpretation of Art', 242.

³⁶ Gail Day, 'Persisting and Mediating: T. J. Clark and 'The Pain of "the Unattainable Beyond"', *Art History*, 23:1, 2000, 1.

³⁷ Vera L. Zolberg, *Constructing a Sociology of the Arts*, Cambridge and New York, 1990, 8.

observed, the history of art was not discussed in any detail by Marx himself.³⁸ In the 'Preface' to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*³⁹ Marx situated art within his world view, which divided society into the means of production, described as the base, and the superstructure, the site of political and economic power. Here Marx suggested that art formed part of the superstructure and was enmeshed with the ideology of the dominating classes. In Marx's view 'the production of art had to be understood as complexly determined by social interests'.⁴⁰ Orthodox Marxist art history therefore concentrated on developing the concept of base and superstructure, interpreting art as the product of social and economic forces.⁴¹ These ideas helped to shape the emerging concept of the social history of art, for example, Frederick Antal (1887-1954) introduced 'a rigorous method of the 'social history of art' inspired by classic Marxist principles',⁴² in his *Florentine Painting and its Social Background*, published in 1947. A sociology of art influenced by Marxism also developed, expressed by scholars such as Theodor Adorno (1903-1969).⁴³ These three distinct strands of thought have given rise to a widening exploration of art and its contexts characterised by a refining and overlapping of the initial approaches described here.⁴⁴ This thesis uses the Marxist viewpoint as articulated by Wolff as its means

³⁸ Andrew Hemingway (ed.), *Marxism and the History of Art: From William Morris to the New Left*, London 2006, 3-4.

³⁹ Karl Marx, translated by S. W. Zyaranskya, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, first published 1859, online version 1993, 3, www.marxists.org, accessed 21 July 2012.

⁴⁰ Hemingway (ed.), *Marxism and the History of Art: From William Morris to the New Left*, London, 4.

⁴¹ Michael Hatt and Charlotte Klonk, *Art History: A Critical Introduction to its Methods*, Manchester, 2006.

⁴² Paul Stirton, 'Frederick Antal', in Andrew Hemingway (ed.), *Marxism and the History of Art: From William Morris to the New Left*, London 2006, 45.

⁴³ Andy Hamilton, *Aesthetics and Music*, London, 2007, 166.

⁴⁴ Many of these developments are discussed in detail in Hemingway (ed.), *Marxism and the History of Art: From William Morris to the Left*.

of investigation.⁴⁵ Therefore, the theoretical strands used in the following are understood as investigative resources with which to approach social, political and economic determinants for modern portraiture.

Howard Becker's foundational⁴⁶ argument in *Art Worlds*, that artistic output is connected to the availability of means of artistic production, to venues and audiences, and to economic conditions, rather than being the result of individual genius, is used as a primary analytical tool.⁴⁷ This is fuelled by more general approaches to modernity in other disciplines, particularly in view of the economic investigation, which is based on seminal writings by Fredric Jameson who, as well as Postmodernism, also wrote about Modernism in the light of economics.⁴⁸ The chapters, particularly the first one, also take advantage of the concept highlighted by Janet Wolff in *The Social Production of Art*, that family background and education impact on the formation of individual artists and on the work eventually produced by the artist.⁴⁹ Here Fleetwood-Walker's early life is examined with the aim of identifying some of the socio-political and particularly the economic factors that led to his career as a portrait artist, informed by Wolff's assertion that the 'multiple sources of displacement of the author from the text (collective production, textual meanings, readers' licence, and the de-centralising of the author as possible unitary source of meaning) does not entail the evaporation of the

⁴⁵ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 55.

⁴⁶ Eduardo de la Fuente, 'The 'New Sociology of Art': Putting Art Back into Social Science Approaches to the Arts', 410.

⁴⁷ Howard Saul Becker, *Art Worlds*, Berkeley and London, 1982.

⁴⁸ Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form, Twentieth-century Dialectical Theories of Literature*, Princeton, 1971 and Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present*, London and New York, 2002..

⁴⁹ Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, London, 1993, 41-43.

producing subject, or the irrelevance of biographical information'.⁵⁰ Therefore aspects of biographical information and involvement with institutions which have direct bearing on the development of the artist will be considered in some detail. Where relevant, the relationship between the contemporary political and financial situation will be examined. Bernard Fleetwood-Walker benefited in the 1940s and particularly in the 1950s from the emergence of a new group of patrons whose commissioning of portraiture was itself linked to changes in Birmingham's economy. It will be demonstrated that these social factors impacted on the artist's development and in particular that economic issues influenced Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's career and work. This chapter will also be informed by Wolff's concept of ideology, in particular the perception of the artist as having a 'location in the social structure, potentially generating its own ideological form',⁵¹ and the view that simultaneously the society within which the artist is located 'will be characterised by general ideological forms arising out of the general economic conditions and the mode of production of that society',⁵² issues to be discussed in detail below.

The second chapter embraces one of the central interests of the new sociology of art, and examines a number of individual art works in detail, stimulated in part by the challenging observation that 'there has always been a blind spot in the sociology of art: any discussion of specific artworks'.⁵³ In this chapter Fleetwood-Walker's depictions of business people from Birmingham and the region are

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 152-153.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Howard Saul Becker, Robert R. Faulkner and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Art from Start to Finish*, Chicago and London, 2006, 1.

studied closely. Here the specific content of the portraits is considered. Whilst the Marxist premise as articulated by Wolff, that artistic output enacts ideology⁵⁴ is used to stimulate an interpretation of these works, this analysis is tempered by critiques of the Marxist approach, such as those expressed by Raymond Williams⁵⁵ and Austin Harrington.⁵⁶ At the same time, the considerations discussed here will be firmly focussed on an investigation of collaborative production and reception, without following Harrington's interest in aesthetics and value judgements.⁵⁷

Chapter Three introduces a social production of architecture methodology, as implemented by Suzanne MacLeod, in 'Rethinking a Site-Specific History of Production and Use'.⁵⁸ MacLeod's interest in the connections between the architectural design of museums and the impact of this on works displayed is used to consider the relationships between works exhibited by Fleetwood-Walker and the design of the RBSA Gallery, the space where many of Fleetwood-Walker's works were displayed.⁵⁹ The chapter also seeks to show the close connections between the gallery itself and how works were displayed in that space, with the production and consumption of art works. Here Michael Baxandall's persuasive approach, as exemplified in *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*,

⁵⁴ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 55.

⁵⁵ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford, 1977, 211; John Higgins, 'Raymond Williams and the Problem of Ideology', *boundary 2*, 11:1/2, 1982-1983, 145-147.

⁵⁶ Austin Harrington, *Art and Social Theory: Sociological Arguments in Aesthetics*, Cambridge, 2004, 81.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁵⁸ Suzanne MacLeod, 'Rethinking a Site-Specific History of Production and Use', Susanne MacLeod (ed.), *Reshaping Museum Space: Architecture, Design, Exhibitions*, New York, 2005, 9-25.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

has been particularly stimulating, despite its focus on a different period.⁶⁰ As has been emphasised by Jeremy Tanner, Baxandall demonstrated how social and visual elements were inextricably interwoven.⁶¹ A similar technique has been used by Anne Helmreich and Ysanne Holt in their recent article on the Chenil Gallery in London, published in 2010.⁶² These ideas are used to draw together the strands explored in the different chapters of the thesis, to provide an insight into portraiture in early twentieth-century Birmingham.

The fourth chapter draws on the theories of Hans Robert Jauss (1921-1997),⁶³ as well as recently-published articles by Sophie Krzys Acord and Tia DeNora,⁶⁴ to analyse the reception of Fleetwood-Walker's work in newspapers appearing during his life time and to reflect on the role of reception in the creation of artistic output, as, for Acord and DeNora, consumption and production are closely interrelated.⁶⁵ The issue of reception is enriched by the concept expressed by Robert Witkin that social structures have a direct impact on artistic output,⁶⁶ and that in turn

⁶⁰ Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*, Yale University, 1980, reprinted 1995.

⁶¹ Jeremy Tanner, 'Michael Baxandall and the Sociological Interpretation of Art'. There are many stimulating elements in Baxandall's work. However concentrating as it does on sculpture in late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century Germany, often designed for a specific setting, it demands a thorough investigation as to whether what he describes for his period can also be applied to modernism and the social and political aspects of distribution through galleries and artist-led exhibition venues. This alone would be worth a full exploration which, is, however, outside the parameters of this thesis.

⁶² Anne Helmreich and Ysanne Holt, 'Marketing Bohemia: The Chenil Gallery in Chelsea, 1905-1926', *Oxford Art Journal*, 33:1, 2010, 43-61.

⁶³ Ormond Rush, *The Reception of Doctrine: An Appropriation of Hans Robert Jauss' Reception Aesthetics and Literary Hermeneutics*, Rome, 1997, 11.

⁶⁴ Sophia Krzys Acord and Tia DeNora, 'Culture and the Arts: From Art Worlds to Arts-in-Action', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 619, 2008, 223-237.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁶⁶ Robert Winston Witkin, 'Constructing a Sociology for an Icon of Aesthetic Modernity: Olympia Revisited', *Sociological Theory*, 15:2, 1997, 101-125.

audiences can develop a deeper understanding of society through their engagement with the artist's work.⁶⁷

Throughout the four chapters the contested definition of modernity is considered, drawing on the concept of modernity more recently elucidated by David Peters Corbett in *The Modernity of English Art 1914-1930*.⁶⁸ Corbett refers to one of the earliest texts concerned with the modern,⁶⁹ that by Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867)⁷⁰ in 'The Painter of Modern Life',⁷¹ which emphasised a desired connection between contemporary lived experience and artistic output. He advocated a visual style which reflects a fast-changing environment: expressive records of the transient moment.⁷² Relevant to the later part of Fleetwood-Walter's career is Clement Greenberg's 'Modernist Painting'⁷³ in which he claimed that 'modernist painting in its latest phase has abandoned the representation of recognisable objects.'⁷⁴ Despite their different views of the appropriate content of representation, both of these writers suggest that a specific painterly form is the most appropriate visual response to contemporary experience, a concept that has been elaborated upon by Timothy James Clark⁷⁵ and Clark's proposition will be

⁶⁷ Ron Eyerman and Magnus Ring, 'Towards a New Sociology of Art Worlds: Bringing Meaning Back In', *Acta Sociologica*, 14:3, 282.

⁶⁸ David Peters Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art*, Manchester and New York, 1997.

⁶⁹ Goran Blix, 'Charting the "Transitional Period": The Emergence of Modern Time in the Nineteenth Century', *History and Theory*, 45:1, 2006, 51-57.

⁷⁰ David Carrier and Sima Godfrey, 'Charles Baudelaire', *Oxford Art Online*, In *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, edited by Michael Kelly. *Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t234/e0063, accessed 9 August 2011.

⁷¹ Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life*, translated and edited by Jonathan Mayne, London 1964, 13.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷³ Clement Greenberg, 'Modernist Painting', Francis Francina and Charles Harrison, with the assistance of Deirdre Paul, *Modern Art and Modernism*, London, 1982, 5-10.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷⁵ Timothy James Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*, London, 1984.

used to provide further insights into Fleetwood-Walker's work. Corbett's study of art in England during the period which includes the beginning of Fleetwood-Walker's career, *The Modernity of English Art 1914-1930*, concludes that 'in the years which followed the war the understanding of modernity through painting in England was subject to a struggle of competing definitions',⁷⁶ and that no distinct artistic practice emerged as the most appropriate visual representation of contemporaneity. In her review of David Peters Corbett's book *The Modernity of English Art 1914-1930* Wolff observes that Corbett is among the first to give careful consideration to non-modernist painting as a *different* mode of representation of the contemporary. His thesis is encapsulated in his statement that "modernity can be registered in cultural forms that are not modernist."⁷⁷

Corbett, with co-author Lara Perry, developed this position in *English Art 1860-1914; Modern Artists and Identity*, proposing that 'modernism refers to art which grows out of and responds to modern conditions, whether it is formally innovative or not.'⁷⁸ The work of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker will be scrutinised here to see how his portraiture responds to contemporary experience and can be seen as a contribution to a revised understanding of a concept of modernity that favours autonomy.

A further underlying strand of this thesis is concerned with the interwoven relationship between regionalism and modernity in the light of social, political and

⁷⁶ Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art*, 1.

⁷⁷ Janet Wolff, 'Modernism, Modernity and English Art' *Oxford Art Journal*, 21:2, 1988, 200.

⁷⁸ David Peters Corbett and Lara Perry (eds), *English Art 1860-1914; Modern Artists and Identity*, Manchester, 2000, 2.

economic formation of the artist and social production of the artist's work. Eric Storm has developed this concept, concluding that 'the fixation on modernism and the neglect of regionalism has not only distorted the picture of both, but has also led to a very biased image of the cultural development of the whole period'.⁷⁹

Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's career as a portrait artist and the specific social and economic conditions which shaped that career will be investigated with the aim of contributing to a deeper understanding of the geographic subtleties of modernity.

Related to the geographical component is the consideration of the characteristics of the art market in Birmingham during the first half of the twentieth century; this thesis proposes a plurality of histories of patronage systems sensitive to regional variations and suggests that the role of the artist in society must be interpreted with some awareness of his/her local setting. It has been argued that a new form of patronage emerged in the late-nineteenth century: the dealer-critic system.⁸⁰ The contention here is that although such observations have been justified when considering the art market in London, conditions in Birmingham delayed the simultaneous and uniform adoption of the dealer-critic model, therefore Fleetwood-Walker's output as a portrait artist reflects this regional distinctiveness in the evolution of patronage.

A further issue to be considered here is that of regional perceptions of the artist's role. Interest in the Pre-Raphaelites and the strength of the Arts and Crafts movement had an enduring effect on such perception. William Holman Hunt

⁷⁹ Eric Storm 'Regionalism in History, 1890-1945: The Cultural Approach' *European History Quarterly*, 33:2, 2003, 260.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 11, and endnote 7.

(1827-1910), one of the artists involved in the formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, considered himself to be 'an artist of dedicated social purpose',⁸¹ and participants in the Arts and Crafts movement believed in the artist working in and for society.⁸² The regional influence of such concepts is underscored by the purchase of Pre-Raphaelite art works and of Arts and Crafts furniture by Birmingham's wealthy industrialists.⁸³ The ideas from these movements continued to be felt in Birmingham in the early-twentieth century and suggest a view of the artist as integrated rather than alienated and formed rather than inspired. Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, it will be seen, was influenced by these attitudes.

This thesis will therefore explore Fleetwood-Walker's life and work in the light of social, political and economic factors and scrutinize these as a case study to probe concepts of modernity and geographical determination.

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis consists of four chapters which follow this introduction. Chapter One will look at Fleetwood-Walker's life in the context of politics, society and the economic climate.

⁸¹ John Duncan Macmillan, 'Holman Hunt's Hireling Shepherd: Some Reflections on a Victorian Pastoral', *The Art Bulletin*, 54:2, 1972, 196.

⁸² See for example Stephen F. Eisenham, 'Communism in Furs: A Dream of Prehistory of William Morris's *John Ball*', *The Art Bulletin*, 87:1, 2005, 92-110.

⁸³ Alan Crawford, 'The Birmingham Setting' in Crawford, Alan (ed), *By Hammer and Hand: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Birmingham*, Birmingham, 1984, 31 and see for example, William Holman Hunt, *The Lantern Maker's Courtship: A Street Scene in Cairo (1854-1861)*, in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, www.preraphaelites.org, accessed 6 April 2012.

The second chapter focuses on Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's portraits in the light of contemporary social, political and economic structures of Birmingham, particularly the numerous portraits of industrialists. These offer intriguing insights into the impact of the growth in Birmingham, in the inter-war period and onwards, of a small number of large companies that replaced the plethora of small workshops that existed earlier in the century.

The third chapter looks at the role of exhibitions and exhibition spaces in the creation of the portrait artist's output. Influenced by Janet Wolff as mentioned above, it analyses the relationship between exhibition spaces and artistic output. The artist-led RBSA in Birmingham, where Fleetwood-Walker was a frequent exhibitor, is considered in detail, as Fleetwood-Walker not only showed his work here, but was also involved as President from 1950 to 1952.⁸⁴ It thus acknowledges exhibition spaces as socially, politically and economically significant for the state of modern portraiture.

Chapter Four, the final chapter, examines the reception by the press of Fleetwood-Walker's portraits, and the relationship between the expanding newspaper industry, the emergence of tabloid culture and these portraits. The critical vocabulary used to describe the portraits is assessed and the origins of that terminology suggested. The background of individual writers and how this might

⁸⁴ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Adjourned Annual General Meeting 20 June 1950, Minute Book 7 November 1947 to 14 October 1955, 68, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham and Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual General Meeting 8 March 1952, Minute Book 7 November 1947 to 14 October 1955, 112, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

determine the interpretation of the works is explored. Together the strands of the fourth chapter probe the mutual relationship between production and reception.

The conclusion draws together the relationships between biography, art production, exhibition space and critical reception as topics appropriate for this artist. It also probes the premises of modernism and geography in light of social, political and economic factors for modern portraiture and thus contributes to a revised consideration of this genre. An appendix lists all works known to have been exhibited by Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, with details of their date and place of exhibition.

CHAPTER ONE

BECOMING A PORTRAIT ARTIST: THE SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF A PORTRAIT ARTIST'S CAREER

Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's family background and biography reveals much about the social factors affecting his career. Wolff, in *The Social Production of Art* pointed out the relevance of 'personal, familial and biographical influences'¹ to creative output, arguing that 'the way in which artists and writers take up their careers, and therefore the particular values and attitudes they bring to them from their family and class backgrounds, affects the kind of work they do as artists'.² The aim of this first chapter is to consider Fleetwood-Walker's biography in the light of this aspect of Wolff's theory of the social production of art and to examine the economic and political conditions which affected his development as a portrait artist. The chapter will begin by arguing that Fleetwood-Walker's family background demonstrates his parents' interest in economic and social progression, suggesting that family ambition may have stimulated the artist's interest in a career as a portrait artist and that this early encouragement, combined with the particular economic conditions in Birmingham at the beginning of the twentieth century, along with the availability of art training, helped determine Fleetwood-Walker's career. It will also be argued here that Fleetwood-Walker's

¹ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 20.

² *Ibid.*, 42.

artistic output was repeatedly affected by social and economic factors. The 1914-18 war, in which he served, delayed the start of his career and the 1939-45 war led to the emergence of a new category of patron for the portrait artist; during the 1950s political developments in Birmingham and demographic changes in the city, motivated his move to London.

This chapter will also investigate the relationship between art and ideology as observed in Fleetwood-Walker's portraiture. The meaning of the term 'ideology', as used by Marxist thinkers, developed during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Although the word 'ideology' was not used by Marx in his early writings, this period saw his articulation of the concept of inversion, which can be seen as a precursor to the Marxist concept of ideology. Stimulated by Ludwig Feuerbach's suggestion that as man created religion, God is therefore a human creation and that therefore the suggestion that God made man is an 'inversion',³ Marx proposed that this inversion is not simply a misconception, it is an expression of the paradox of human existence. Marx developed the concept of ideology, as a form of inversion, presenting these ideas in *The German Ideology*.⁴ Here Marx emphasised his view that social issues, rather than being the result of flaws in human nature, are in fact the cause of humanity's difficulties: the application of 'inversion' to the then received wisdom of societal situations. Marx's thinking continued to develop, leading to an analysis of the role played by ruling and subordinate classes in the maintenance of stability in society: although superficially individuals develop their own understanding of economic society and

³ Ludwig Feuerbach, translated by Marian Evans, *The Essence of Christianity*, London, 1854.

⁴ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Christopher John Arthur (ed.), *The German Ideology*, London, 1970, 47.

their place within it, ruling classes ensure that they themselves have a substantial input into such an understanding because the preservation of the power of the ruling class is essential for its continuing prosperity. The ruling classes therefore instil in subordinate classes an understanding of social structures that obscures any recognition of the associated power relationship, so misrepresenting economic and social systems to protect the ruling class/subordinate class societal and economic structure, what Marx called respectively false consciousness and ideology. Following Marx's death this aspect of the theory of ideology was further scrutinised by Louis Althusser (1918-1990), notably in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*,⁵ who proposed that institutions teach 'a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression'.⁶ Wolff emphasised her reliance on the Marxist concept that artistic output reproduces the interests of dominant elements of society⁷ and proposed a definition of the theory of ideology: 'the theory of ideology states that the ideas and beliefs people have are systematically related to their actual and material conditions of existence'.⁸ In this thesis, therefore, when studying individual portraits, it is Wolff's definition of ideology that will be considered: the aim is to attempt to discern how visual elements of the work reinforce the powerful position of the ruling classes.

⁵ Louis Althusser, translated by Ben Brewster, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, London and New York, 1971.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁷ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 49-71.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 50: a fuller discussion of Wolff's use of this term can be found in Chapter 3, 'Art as Ideology', *Ibid.*, 49-70.

This investigation also takes into account Harrington's critique of the Marxist approach, outlined in *Art and Social Theory*, that 'classical Marxist accounts tend to presuppose excessively reductive theories of determination by social class structures'.⁹ Harrington observes in particular that the classic Marxist view does not allow for 'material and economic structures as in any way enabling of artistic agency [...]. The chief reason for this is that classic Marxist thinking asserts a normative claim for the ultimate dependence of freedom of individuals on abolition of class structures'.¹⁰ This brings us back to Baxandall; as Tanner has concluded, Baxandall's strategy is very relevant to contemporary approaches to the sociology of art: 'while being centrally concerned with the social and economic bases of art, grounded in systems of patronage and the social organisation of production, it does not reduce artistic action to such bases'.¹¹

Family Influences

In order to explore the determinants of the family for Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, it is necessary to look into the genealogy of the artist. Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's mother, Electra Amelia Varley,¹² married William Walker, the son of a shoe-maker, at St Paul's Church in Birmingham on 24 March 1889.¹³ The wedding took place in the local church, only a few streets away from their home at 89 Vyse Street, in the city's Jewellery Quarter. William and Electra were both newcomers to the area: Electra had been born in Greenwich, near London and the Walkers came

⁹ Harrington, *Art and Social Theory: Sociological Arguments in Aesthetics*, 81.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹¹ Tanner, 'Michael Baxandall and the Sociological Interpretation of Art', 249.

¹² 1901 Census, www.censusonline.com, accessed 25 November 2006.

¹³ Copy of marriage certificate in Walker family private archive and copy of Electra Amelia Varley's birth certificate which gives her date of birth as 28 June 1870 at 7 Stand...(illegible) Terrace, Melton Road, Greenwich, Walker family private archive, Birmingham.

from the Warwickshire countryside, where only a generation before becoming shoe-makers, they had been agricultural labourers.¹⁴ Their eldest daughter Doris was born a few years after they married, followed by two boys, Bernard and his twin brother Howard, born in 1893. Two more daughters followed.¹⁵ It seems that both Fleetwood-Walker's father and his maternal grandfather had moved to Birmingham for economic reasons, suggesting that both families were in need or interested in economic and social progress.¹⁶

William Walker, Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's father,¹⁷ was born in Butler's Marston, a village a few miles south of Stratford-upon-Avon, but by the time he was sixteen he was living with his uncle in Birmingham and working as an office boy.¹⁸ Years later the local paper reported that he 'studied electricity and kindred subjects, and joined one of the Varleys in the manufacture of dynamos and electro-plating plant.'¹⁹ The Varley whom he joined was Theophilus Varley, a

¹⁴ Copy of marriage certificate, 29 September 1864, William Walker bachelor, shoemaker, resident in Butler's Marston married Mary Ann Grant, aged 29, a spinster of no profession. Both of their fathers were labourers. Walker family private archive, Birmingham.

¹⁵ Grosse, '*Bernard Fleetwood-Walker (1893-1965)*', 3. Precise dates of birth have not been traced but the 1901 Census shows that Bernard Fleetwood Walker was living with his parents, twin brother and two sisters, Doris born around 1891 and Marjory who had been born in 1901, at 32 City Road in the Rotton Park ward in Birmingham, www.censusonline.com, accessed 25 November 2006. Another daughter, Gabrielle Varley Walker or Gay was born in 1908; interview with Pat Fleetwood-Walker, daughter-in-law of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker 12 September 2006 and correspondence dated 11 March 2008.

¹⁶ The population of Birmingham grew dramatically in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, almost doubling between 1850 and 1880 and doubling again between 1880 and 1910, Andrew Lees and Lynn Hollen Lees, '*Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*', Cambridge, 2007, 287. Close to half of this growth was the result of movement from rural to urban areas, Martin Danunton (ed.), '*The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume III 1840-1950*', Cambridge, 2000, 189.

¹⁷ 1901 Census, www.censusonline.com, accessed 25 November 2006 and Grosse, '*Bernard Fleetwood-Walker (1893-1965)*', 3.

¹⁸ 1881 Census, www.ancestry.co.uk, accessed 25 November 2006. This describes William Walker, born in Butler's Marston, office boy, living with his uncle William Grant aged 29, and his uncle's wife, Elizabeth, also aged 29 at no 12 Stone Street in Harborne, Birmingham.

¹⁹ In an article about William and Electra's 50th Wedding Anniversary. Anon., '50 Years On', *Birmingham Mail*, 24 Mar 1939, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

telegraph engineer.²⁰ William married Theophilus' daughter Electra and probably became a partner in the firm, although archive sources do not confirm which came first. The Varleys and the Walkers lived and worked together in accommodation typical of late nineteenth-century Birmingham, part of a converted Georgian house which doubled as workshop and living space.²¹

Electra came from a family with a distinguished history in both the arts and the sciences.²² Her grandfather was Cornelius Varley (1781-1873),²³ a professional artist and maker of electrical and optical instruments, who was also a founder Member of both the Old Water Colour Society²⁴ and the Royal Microscopical Society.²⁵ Varley described himself as an 'artist and patent agent'²⁶ and was the inventor of the graphic telescope, an optical tool for drawing, similar to the camera obscura.²⁷ Both science and art were of interest to other members of the family. Several of Cornelius' sons were telegraph engineers²⁸ and his brother was the watercolourist John Varley (1778 -1842),²⁹ also a founder Member of the Society

By 1892 he is listed in the local trade directory as an electrical engineer at 'Varley and Walker, electrical engineers, 89 Vyse street' (sic). *Kelly's Directory, Commercial*, 1892, 513 and 516.

²⁰ 1871 Census. Theophilus Varley died in 1906 at the age of 72. Deaths registered in January, February and March 1906, www.ancestry.co.uk, accessed 26 November 2006. His will has not yet been traced.

²¹ John Cattell and Bob Haskins, *The Birmingham Jewellery Quarter, An Introduction and Guide*, London, 2000, 16.

²² John Varley Jeffery, 'The Varley Family: Engineers and Artists', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 51:2, 1997, 263-279.

²³ 1841 Census and 1851 Census, www.ancestry.co.uk, accessed 25 November 2006.

²⁴ Jeffery, 'The Varley Family: Engineers and Artists', 275.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ 1841 Census, www.ancestry.co.uk, accessed 25 November 2006.

²⁷ Michael Pidgley, 'Cornelius Varley, Cotman, and the Graphic Telescope', *The Burlington Magazine*, November 1972, 780-786.

²⁸ Jeffery, 'The Varley Family: Engineers and Artists', 263-279.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

of Painters in Water-Colours.³⁰ Michael Kauffmann points out that in the early years of the nineteenth century John Varley led the development of a new way of working in watercolour, abandoning the use of imagined landscape in order to paint directly from nature and producing 'landscapes dominated by the unbroken, un-modulated layers of wash with sharply defined edges'.³¹ In *The Business of Watercolour*, Simon Fenwick and Greg Smith comment that John Varley 'took advantage of the ease with which simple effects and compositions could be produced in bulk in watercolours to concentrate on manufacturing large numbers of lower priced pictures'.³² Fenwick and Smith's account highlights John Varley's awareness of the financial benefits of his watercolour technique and his willingness to take advantage of that knowledge so as to increase sales of his work. This biographical background suggests that Fleetwood-Walker may have become familiar with arts and science at an early age through his uncles and that although Fleetwood-Walker's father was an electrical engineer, the family would not have been against a career in the arts if they thought it a financially viable option.

Bernard and his twin brother Howard³³ were almost certainly named after one of their grandfather's elder brothers, Cromwell Fleetwood Varley, who had died in 1883,³⁴ as both of the boys were given unusual middle names. Bernard was named Bernard Fleetwood Walker and Howard, Howard Cromwell Walker.

³⁰ Anne Lyles. "Varley." In *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T087973pg1, 17 September 2007.

³¹ C[laus]. M[ichael]' Kauffmann, *John Varley 1778-1842*, London, 1984, 28.

³² Simon Fenwick and Greg Smith, *The Business of Watercolor, a Guide to the Archives of the Royal Watercolour Society*, Aldershot, 1997.

³³ 1901 Census. See above.

³⁴ Jeffery, 'The Varley Family: Engineers and Artists', 274.

Bernard's 'Fleetwood' was simply a middle name; the double-barrelled 'Fleetwood-Walker' was adopted in later life, apparently so the artist could distinguish himself from other contemporary artists with the name Walker;³⁵ these included Ethel Walker (1861–1951), a figure and portrait artist³⁶ considered by her contemporaries to be enjoying a successful career,³⁷ and Mrs K. Winifred Walker, elected Associate of the RBSA in 1934.

The Politics of Late Nineteenth-Century Birmingham

A future artist's immediate family is not the only factor which can have an effect on the formation of an artist. Following Wolff's line of argument that the artist's formation includes the absorption of ideology and social constructions,³⁸ it is here proposed that the political and economic context in which Bernard Fleetwood-Walker grew up impacted on his future direction. In the early-twentieth century, political power in Birmingham was gained by the Liberal Unionists. Prior to this it had been the progressive Liberals, led by Joseph Chamberlain, who had dominated local politics³⁹ and according to Roger Ward in his book *City-State and Nation: Birmingham's Political History c1830-1940*, 'it was Chamberlain's radicalism which epitomised the left in British politics, occupying the limelight and provoking intense controversy'.⁴⁰ However, in 1886 Chamberlain was closely

³⁵ Interview with Pat Fleetwood-Walker on 24 October 2006. Family anecdotes also relate that this was so that his name would appear higher up on alphabetical lists; correspondence with Nicola Walker, 29 July 2008.

³⁶ Denys J. Wilcox, *The London Group*, Aldershot, 1995, 240.

³⁷ Alison Thomas, 'Walker, Dame Ethel (1861–1951)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2006, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36689, accessed 15 July 2007.

³⁸ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 46.

³⁹ Roger Ward, *City-State and Nation: Birmingham's Political History c. 1830-1940*, Chichester, 2005, 75.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 86.

involved in the political events that contributed to the decline of the Liberal Party across the country.⁴¹ He continued to pursue his political career, bringing Liberal policies closer to those of the Conservatives, particularly in Birmingham and finally, towards the end of the nineteenth century, he was invited by the newly-elected Conservative government to join the Cabinet.⁴² The local political environment during Fleetwood-Walker's early years was therefore dominated by the Conservatives' alliance with the Liberals as Liberal Unionists, with Joseph Chamberlain playing a leading role both locally and nationally. Central to Chamberlain's political stance at this stage was his belief that control of the Empire would lead to economic prosperity, a conviction that contributed in part to the outbreak of the South African War, which lasted from 1899 to 1902.⁴³ Although contemporaries felt that the motivation for this war was financial gain,⁴⁴ by 1903 the country was in recession with mass unemployment.⁴⁵ Unemployment agitation began in London early that year and soon spread to Birmingham with protest marches being held in 1905 and unrest continuing for several years.⁴⁶

⁴¹ George J. Barnsby, wrote that Chamberlain 'broke the Liberal party in 1886'. George J. Barnsby, *Birmingham Working People*, Wolverhampton, 1989, 381. He opposed the Liberal Prime Minister, William Ewart Gladstone, in his attempt to establish home rule in Ireland, Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone*, New York, 1997, 537-576.

⁴² Barnsby, *Birmingham Working People*, 379. Roger Ward has explained the impact of the 1895 election: 'The Unionists secured a majority, the largest since 1832, which laid the basis for a decade of government. These events re-shaped the politics of Birmingham, giving them a distinctiveness which was to last for two generations.' Ward, *City-State and Nation: Birmingham's Political History c. 1830-1940*, 105.

⁴³ Ward, *City-State and Nation: Birmingham's Political History c. 1830-1940*, 316.

⁴⁴ See for example George Cadbury's comments quoted in Barnsby, *Birmingham Working People*, 381. For a detailed discussion of possible motives for this war see Andrew Porter, 'The South African War (1899-1902): Context and Motive Reconsidered', *The Journal of African History*, 31:1, 1990, 43-57.

⁴⁵ Barnsby, *Birmingham Working People*, 380.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 394.

Unemployment and economic slowdown were therefore a feature of Fleetwood-Walker's formative years and may have been part of his own family's experiences. William Walker had done well at first, as from at least 1894 the family no longer lived and worked in the same building in the Jewellery Quarter. They moved to a semi-detached house at 36 Gillott Road in Edgbaston, a suburb to the south-west of Birmingham described as 'the place where the city's industrial and commercial elite lived in splendid isolation from mere mortals'.⁴⁷ William Walker ran the business from separate premises at nearby Spring Hill Wharf, and with his business associates, registered a number of patents concerned with improved batteries.⁴⁸ A press cutting in the Walker family archive reveals just how successful a career in electrical engineering could be in late nineteenth-century Birmingham:

The interest excited by the recent invention of a non-polarising electric battery by Messrs. Walker and Wilkins, of Birmingham, shows no sign of abating. The officials of the syndicate which has been formed to promote the commercial application of the invention have been besieged with applications from all parts of the country to inspect the new voltaic battery.⁴⁹

By 1901 William Walker and his family had moved to 32 City Road, a street of somewhat less imposing houses,⁵⁰ which, in light of the general economic

⁴⁷ Terry Slater, *Edgbaston: A History*, Chichester, 2002, ix.

⁴⁸ See for example patent no 646 dated 1894, patent no 19,308 dated 1896 and patent no 19,215 of 1899. European Patent Office website, <http://ep.espacenet.com>, date accessed 14 January 2007.

⁴⁹ Anon., 'Fifty Years Ago: The "Post" February 6, 1895', *The Birmingham Post (assumed)*, press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁵⁰ 1901 Census. The financial implications of the development of William Walker's businesses and how this related to the wider economic picture and to Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's training would be a revealing subject for future researchers to consider.

situation, may imply a downturn in family finances prompted by economic slowdown.

Bernard Fleetwood-Walker attended the local school, Barford Road Junior School,⁵¹ and then went on to King Edward's Grammar School, Five Ways,⁵² one of five grammar schools established in 1883 by the King Edward's Foundation in Birmingham⁵³ where, according to the school's own history, 'Birmingham's lower middle-classes were prepared for industry and commerce'.⁵⁴ Records held at King Edward's show that he was a pupil at that school from 1904 to 1907.⁵⁵ However, neither Bernard nor his twin brother Howard entered industry or commerce when they left school—after leaving King Edward's they both went on to the Birmingham School of Art. Archival material does not reveal why this was the case, although there are a number of possible factors. It may simply have been that both boys were good at art. A painting believed to be of his mother by Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, in which she looks as though she might be in her late thirties or early forties, and which he would have therefore painted as a teenager, indicates some skill. It might have been felt that a career as an electrical engineer was no longer

⁵¹ Richard Seddon, *Royal Birmingham Society of Artists B. Fleetwood-Walker Memorial Exhibition*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, 1965. This catalogue refers to Barford Street School; however no references to a school in Barford Street have been found, whereas there was a board school at Barford Road, a short walk from City Road; although archive material from this school exists at Birmingham Archives and Heritage Service, Central Library, Birmingham, no references to Fleetwood-Walker have been preserved.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Anthony Trott, *No Place for Fop or Idler, the Story of King Edward's School, Birmingham*, Birmingham 1992, 80.

⁵⁴ Rachel Waterhouse, (introduction by), *Six King Edward Schools, 1883-1983 : King Edward VI Aston School, King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys, King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Girls, King Edward VI Five Ways School, King Edward VI Handsworth School, King Edward VI High School for Girls*, Birmingham, 1983, 22.

⁵⁵ Correspondence with D. J. Wheeldon, Headmaster, dated 11 December 2006. Waterhouse, in *Six King Edward Schools, 1883-1983*, 24, explains that over half the boys attending the school held scholarships but information available does not indicate whether Bernard Fleetwood-Walker attended as a fee paying or scholarship student.

secure, therefore enabling the boys to follow their own talent and skill.

Membership of the Institution of Electrical Engineers trebled between 1890 and 1910⁵⁶ which could indicate that there was an over-supply of electrical engineers at that time, making it more difficult for an engineer to find employment, and Theophilus Varley's profession as telegraph engineer had been under threat from international competition from the 1880s.⁵⁷ These factors imply that electrical engineering was not seen to offer an adequately secure future. At a time when crucial decisions about his education were being taken, the artist's family, if not Fleetwood-Walker himself, must have been aware of recession and unemployment; even if not fiercely ambitious they must have been anxious to ensure that the young person had some prospects of earning his own living; such considerations impacted on the next step in Fleetwood-Walker's education and the development of the future artist.

Birmingham School of Art

It was against a background of economic unrest that Bernard Fleetwood-Walker started at the Birmingham Municipal School of Arts and Crafts.⁵⁸ By October 1908 unemployment amongst those workers who were members of a trade union reached 'the staggering level of 9.5%' of members in the country as a whole and

⁵⁶ R. A. Buchanan, 'Institutional Proliferation in the British Engineering Profession, 1847-1914' *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 38:1, February 1985, Table 1, 44.

⁵⁷ Theophilus Varley described himself as a Telegraph Engineer in the 1871 Census. A summary of factors affecting the prosperity of the telegraph cable industry is given in Daniel R. Headrick and Pascal Griset, 'Submarine Telegraph Cables: Business and Politics, 1838-1939', *The Business History Review*, 75:3, Autumn, 2001, 543-578.

⁵⁸ The earliest surviving record of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's attendance at the School of Art is in the register for the academic year 1906-1907; he was then aged 13 years and 7 months and was living at 32 City Road, Birmingham School of Arts and Crafts, General Register, 1906-1907, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

'Birmingham was no exception'.⁵⁹ Unemployment and its consequences were to be felt on the city streets that year in a long campaign of demonstrations and marches including one on Monday 28 September 1908 when around 5,000 people gathered in Chamberlain Square,⁶⁰ just minutes away from the School of Art, to demonstrate against unemployment. It is certainly possible that Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, now about fourteen years old, could have witnessed this and other scenes of unemployment-related agitation which took place in Birmingham over the next two years and that this would have made the future artist and his parents consider his career choices very carefully.

In attending the School of Art Fleetwood-Walker benefited from a more extensive education than was compulsory at the time as, even in 1914, children only had to stay on at school until the age of thirteen.⁶¹ Electrical engineers, for example, were trained through a system of apprenticeship and pupilage, partly due to a lack of provision for technical education, but also because of the past success of this method of training. Even when more formal instruction was introduced, the system of examination was meant to work alongside and not instead of work-based training.⁶² Nevertheless, Fleetwood-Walker's additional education, although in art, was very much practical, vocational training.

⁵⁹ Cyril Collard, 'Unemployment agitation in Birmingham 1905–1910', *Worlds of Labour*, Anthony Wright and Richard Shackleton, Birmingham, 1983. 35.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁶¹ Christine Heward and Richard Whipp 'Juvenile Labour in Birmingham: A Notorious Yet Neglected Case, 1850-1914.' *Worlds of Labour*, Anthony Wright and Richard Shackleton, Birmingham, 1983. 29.

⁶² These changes had been made by 1914. R. A. Buchanan, 'Institutional Proliferation in the British Engineering Profession, 1847-1914', 59.

Although in his first year at the School of Art Fleetwood-Walker paid a tuition fee of 5 shillings,⁶³ the next year, 1907-1908, he enjoyed 'Free Admission',⁶⁴ and in 1908-1909 he was awarded a William Kenrick Scholarship, a benefit which he retained until 1912.⁶⁵ These scholarships were offered to students who had already done some study at the school; the intention was to prepare them for their careers. The *Programme for the Session 1906–1907* describes these scholarships as:

founded by the Chairman of the Committee, Alderman the Right Hon. William Kenrick, in order to enable apt boys to remain in the day classes at the Central School long enough to acquire such a knowledge of their respective crafts as they can use in local workshops immediately on leaving the School of Art, and thus to assist in raising the standard of local workmanship.⁶⁶

In addition to free admission to the school, each Kenrick Scholar was given a cash allowance⁶⁷ and in the case of Fleetwood-Walker this amounted to £20 per annum. In return, full attendance was required of the scholars. Surviving members of the family have said that the scholarship monies provided a welcome contribution to the family income.⁶⁸ Art education in Birmingham at this time took

⁶³ Birmingham School of Arts and Crafts, Student Register of Addresses 1906-1914, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Birmingham Municipal School of Art. Programme for the session 1906-1907, beginning on Monday, the 10th of September 1906, in School of Art Programmes, Sessions 1902-3 to 1908-9, 2. Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

⁶⁷ 'Resolved that the William Kenrick £12 and £14 scholars be required to continue their studies until the end of July: this alteration taking effect from the end of the session 1908-9', Minute 3846, Birmingham School of Art Management Sub-Committee Minutes, Volume 10, 211, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

⁶⁸ Interview with Mrs Pat Fleetwood-Walker, daughter in law of the artist, 24 October 2006. A detailed analysis of the financial circumstances of Kenrick Scholars would be instructive on this point, but more generally Katherine Jenns has argued that in the late nineteenth century children 'helped the family economy by running errands or by part-time work fitted around schooling' and it

place in the context of a strong arts and crafts tradition, emphasising practical workshop-based training in the crafts, as explained in the programme for the school:

The hours of the class meetings and the fees are so arranged as to be suited to all classes of the community—craftsmen, designers, manufacturers, purchasers, teachers. The main object of the school is to make workmen better workmen.

The subjects of instruction are grouped with this view; they bear directly on local trades.⁶⁹

Artists were to be trained to develop employable skills and saleable products. The students had to start training at the School of Jewellery and Silversmithing and Fleetwood-Walker started his training as a goldsmith.⁷⁰

Both Becker and Wolff have written about the importance of institutional factors⁷¹ in determining the career of the artist, and the School of Art's approach to training illustrates how relevant such factors were to Fleetwood-Walker's artistic development. The curriculum reflected the belief that the development of the artist could be achieved by practical training and attainment of skills; it was training, not inspiration, that produced the artist. David K. Holt has summarised changing perceptions of the artist's role, explaining that in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Romantic movement conceived a new interpretation of the role of the artist, compared to that of the Renaissance, with the artist now 'regarded as

is probable that this continued into the early twentieth century. Katherine Jenns, 'Work and Employment in Birmingham', Carl Chinn (ed.), *Birmingham, Bibliography of a City*, 2003, 203.

⁶⁹ Birmingham Municipal School of Art. Programme for the session 1906-1907, beginning on Monday, the 10th of September 1906', in School of Art Programmes, Sessions 1902-3 to 1908-9, 2, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

⁷⁰ Seddon, *Royal Birmingham Society of Artists B. Fleetwood-Walker Memorial Exhibition*.

⁷¹ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 29 and Becker, *Art Worlds*, 153.

alienated and isolated from mainstream culture and society'.⁷² However, the School of Art curriculum indicates that artists in Birmingham in the early twentieth century, far from being alienated, were seen as an integral part of society; this is demonstrated by the wide-ranging curriculum and the School's vision of the artist as a professional working in society. This view is supported by Alan Crawford who wrote that the Arts and Crafts movement was strong enough in Birmingham 'to create a second generation of architects, artists and craftsmen, working between the Wars'.⁷³

It is not just institutional policies which play a part in determining a student's career; the influence of individual teachers should also be taken into account. Arthur Gaskin (1862-1928) was the Head Master of the School of Jewellery and Silversmithing in Birmingham from 1903 until 1924⁷⁴ and without doubt Fleetwood-Walker would have encountered Gaskin during his time at the School. Gaskin's work included drawing, painting⁷⁵ and book illustration⁷⁶ as well as jewellery making.⁷⁷ He was an active contributor to the arts in Birmingham: he was elected as full Member of the RBSA in 1905⁷⁸ and in 1917 was to be closely involved in inviting Roger Fry to stage an exhibition of Post-Impressionist works in the

⁷² David K. Holt, 'Postmodernism: Anomaly in Art-Critical Theory', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 29:1, 1995, 87.

⁷³ Alan Crawford, 'A Famous City of White Stone', Alan Crawford (ed.), *By Hammer and Hand, The Arts and Crafts Movement in Birmingham*, Birmingham, 1984, 129.

⁷⁴ Alan Crawford, 'Gaskin, Georgie Evelyn Cave (1866–1934)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/66046, accessed 22 March 2012.

⁷⁵ Wildman, *The Birmingham School*, 60 and 70.

⁷⁶ Bill Waters, 'Book Illustration, Vision with Design', Alan Crawford (ed.), *By Hammer and Hand, The Arts and Crafts Movement in Birmingham*, Birmingham 1984, 92.

⁷⁷ Glennys Wild and Alan Crawford, 'Metalwork', Alan Crawford (ed.), *By Hammer and Hand, The Arts and Crafts Movement in Birmingham*, Birmingham 1984, 107.

⁷⁸ Minute 2971, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Annual General Meeting, March 11 1905, Minute Book 21 October 1903-9 September 1908, unpaginated, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

galleries of the RBSA.⁷⁹ In 1910 Fry had organised the exhibition *Manet and the Post-Impressionists* at the Grafton Galleries in London and his *Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition*, also shown at the Grafton Galleries, took place in 1912.⁸⁰ The exhibition at the RBSA was entitled *An Exhibition of Works Representative of the New Movement in Art* and took place in summer 1917.⁸¹ Gaskin's career, therefore, encompassing teaching, the development of his own eclectic art practice and involvement in the RBSA, may well have provided Fleetwood-Walker with an example of the kind of career an artist could develop.

After a short period at Vittoria Street, Fleetwood-Walker's art training took place at the School of Art in Margaret Street. Here lessons included a wide range of craft techniques as well as drawing and painting.⁸² Wolff has stated that 'in the production of art, social institutions affect, amongst other things, who becomes an artist, how they are then able to practise their art, and how they can ensure that their work is produced, performed and made available to a public.'⁸³ The research findings described here have shown that Fleetwood-Walker's family background, the policy of the School of Art and the exhibition careers of artists such as Gaskin, affected Fleetwood-Walker's choice of career. It will also be argued here that these factors affected the kind of work he produced, and the way in which he made his work available to the public through involvement in the RBSA and other institutions, as well as his focus on the saleability of his output.

⁷⁹ Minute 472, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists General Meeting, August 29th 1917, Minute Book 5 September 1912-25 July 1928, 182-3, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

⁸⁰ Frances Spalding, *British Art since 1900*, London, 2002, 37-38.

⁸¹ Denys Sutton (ed.), *Letters of Roger Fry*, London, 1972, 413, footnote 404.

⁸² Alan Crawford, 'The Birmingham Setting', Alan Crawford (ed.), *By Hammer and Hand, The Arts and Crafts Movement in Birmingham*, Birmingham 1984, 27-29.

⁸³ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 40.

Wolff's belief in the social production of art has been critiqued by writers who consider that her interpretation does not recognise the role of individuality in creative production. Edmond Wright commented that it is 'not enough to say that since a particular convergence of determining causes has produced a unique individual, his uniqueness is entirely captured by a catalogue of such causes. The question is begged, how that coming together of the known causes produces the unknown result.'⁸⁴ In the case of this study the fact that Fleetwood-Walker's twin did not follow the same career as Bernard could undermine Wolff's theory. Bernard and Howard were brought up together by their parents and Howard is recorded in the Birmingham School of Art registers as attending the school at the same time as Bernard.⁸⁵ The brothers were still at the School of Art at the age of 19, and living at the same address in Edgbaston, where they had lived since 1910.⁸⁶ Yet although the brothers, who were identical twins, benefited from the same family background and education, it was only Bernard who went on to become a portrait artist. Although this could support the theory that the characteristics of the individual affect the outcome of the determining influences, it is, nevertheless intriguing that Howard became a 'commercial artist'. He taught at the School of Art for a short period during the 1914-18 war, covering the work of teachers who had been called up or who were working on munitions,⁸⁷ perhaps

⁸⁴ Edmond Wright, 'The Social Production of Art; Beyond Art. What Art Is and Might Become if Freed from Cultural Elitism', *Poetics Today*, 4:1, 1983, 141-144.

⁸⁵ Birmingham School of Arts and Crafts, General Registers, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

⁸⁶ They lived at 63 Carlyle Road. Birmingham School of Arts and Crafts, General Registers, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

⁸⁷ Minute no 1999, Meeting of the School of Art Sub-Committee on 12 December 1916, Minutes of the School of Art Sub-Committee, unpublished manuscript, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

suggesting that he was not called up due to health issues. He is listed in the local trade directories under 'Artists Commercial' from the 1930s to the 1950s.⁸⁸

Teaching and Studying before the 1914-18 war

In the academic year 1913-14 Bernard Fleetwood-Walker was appointed as a teacher at the school although he continued to attend some classes, for which the fee was waived in view of this appointment.⁸⁹ His first post was as a teacher of modelling at Small Heath Branch School. Here he taught from 7.30 to 9.15pm on Monday to Thursday evenings and was paid 28 shillings.⁹⁰ Fleetwood-Walker, like his own lecturers such as Gaskin, was able to teach three-dimensional work as well as painting.

Richard Seddon, in the biography which forms part of the Memorial Exhibition catalogue, states that Fleetwood-Walker was taught in London and 'received part of his training in Paris, under Fleury'.⁹¹ Although precise details about Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's education in London and in Paris have yet to be traced, the

⁸⁸ See for example *Kelly's Directory of Birmingham* 1935, 1298 and 1956, 1480. He is listed as Walker, Howard Cromwell and his address is given as 106 Varna Road, Birmingham 6. Commercial artists were artists, often working on a freelance basis, who created illustrations to a brief, for use in commercial applications such as advertising. The specialism developed in the UK from 1914 onwards. See John McEwan, *Advertising as a Service to Society*, London, 1956, 29-31; Malcolm Neville, 'Creative Work, the Heart of an Agency', *The Times Review of Industry: An Advertising Appraisal*, London, 1960, 55-56 and Sean Nixon, *Advertising cultures: Gender, Commerce, Creativity*, London, 2003, 82.

⁸⁹ Birmingham School of Arts and Crafts, Student Register of Addresses 1906-1914, SA/AD 012002, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham. Fleetwood-Walker carried on following courses at the School until 1919. Birmingham School of Arts and Crafts, General Register, 1906-1907, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

⁹⁰ Archival material does not explain what period this salary covered as the School of Art Minute Book from 1908-1916 has not survived.

⁹¹ Seddon, *Royal Birmingham Society of Artists B Fleetwood-Walker Memorial Exhibition*, 3. No archive material has been found to substantiate these aspects of Fleetwood-Walker's training.

tutor Seddon mentions was probably Tony Robert-Fleury (1837–1911),⁹² whose work in the classical tradition had been well-received in the Paris Salons from 1864 onwards⁹³ and who became a Commandeur of the French Legion d'Honneur in 1907.⁹⁴ Robert-Fleury taught at the well-known Académie Julian, one of several private academies in Paris that attracted students from Europe and the U.S.A., allowing them to attend the life class for a small fee.⁹⁵ Robert-Fleury executed a number of mural paintings including one in the Hotel de Ville in Paris.⁹⁶ His *Lesbia and the Sparrow*, shares some of the features of Fleetwood-Walker's own figurative works, most particularly in the treatment of the sitters' hands. This delicate rendering can be seen for example in Marjorie (known as Mickey) Fleetwood-Walker's left hand in *The Family at Polperro*, suggesting that Robert-Fleury's teaching was absorbed by Fleetwood-Walker. Tony Robert-Fleury was a Member of the Institut Nationale des Sciences et des Arts,⁹⁷ a powerful body made up of five academies, one of which was the Académie des Beaux-Arts, which not only organised the Salon but also awarded prizes and diplomas including the Prix de Rome.⁹⁸ John Milner, in his work *The Studios of Paris, the Capital of Art in the Late Nineteenth Century*, describes the power of the Institut, with Members elected by existing Members and approved by the French government. Selection

⁹² His father, Joseph-Nicolas Robert-Fleury, who was director of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, had died in 1890. See James Harding, *Artistes Pompiers, French Academic Art in the 19th Century*, London, 1970, 122.

⁹³ Athena S. E. Leoussi. "Robert-Fleury." In *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T072380pg2, accessed 4 December 2006.

⁹⁴ Harding, *Artistes Pompiers, French Academic Art in the 19th Century*, 122.

⁹⁵ Many students simply attended the Académies in order to use the model, to help prepare themselves to apply for entry to the Ecole des Beaux Arts, or to prepare work for submission to the Salon. See John Milner, *The Studios of Paris, the Capital of Art in the Late Nineteenth Century*, New Haven and London, 1988, 11-14.

⁹⁶ Harding, *Artistes Pompiers, French Academic Art in the 19th Century*, 122.

⁹⁷ Milner, *The Studios of Paris, the Capital of Art in the Late Nineteenth Century*, 91.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

for the Salon was crucial for the artist, as Milner explains: 'for those whose art was compatible and preferred, financial necessity argued compliance, for there lay the main possibility of promotion in a competitive, precarious and difficult career.'⁹⁹

Robert-Fleury would therefore have been an excellent choice of teacher and mentor for an artist keen to further his career, as he would have been able to guide the artist through the submission process for Salon exhibitions as well as to indicate the kind of work that would be most likely to win acclaim in this environment.

Fleetwood-Walker's probable association with Tony Robert-Fleury underlines the crucial role played by education in the development of the artist, as it is likely that Robert-Fleury would have shared his own experience of mural painting techniques with his students. This training would have contributed to the extension of Fleetwood-Walker's artistic practice and indeed he was later to be commissioned to produce murals for both the domestic market¹⁰⁰ and for public spaces.¹⁰¹ These examples support the argument articulated by Becker that art is socially produced rather than the work of an isolated genius.¹⁰² Furthermore, the production of murals shows that in some instances artists do not simply make works and then seek a market for them; the form of artistic output can be determined by external factors such as the availability of commissions. This ability to take advantage of market forces is also the result of social factors: Fleetwood-Walker could benefit

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰⁰ Press cutting 'A scheme for a private residence in Lincolnshire', *Birmingham Mail*, 19 October 1933, Walker family private archive, London. During war service he had also decorated an abandoned warehouse at Auberchicourt near Douai for the troops' Christmas party, letter and photographs from Gilbert Jesty, 5 December 1958, Walker family private archive, Manchester.

¹⁰¹ Fleetwood-Walker's mural decorations for Essex County Hall, Chelmsford are discussed later in this chapter.

¹⁰² Becker, *Art Worlds*, 35.

from the opportunity as a result of his training. This aspect of his career therefore exemplifies the theory that artists, indeed, are affected by market constraints.¹⁰³ Fleetwood-Walker's connection with Robert-Fleury also underlines the role played by institutions in the development of the artist. Knowledge gained as to how the Salon worked probably contributed to Fleetwood-Walker's inclusion in the Salon exhibitions and his medal-winning success in these exhibitions in the inter-war period.¹⁰⁴ This second phase of Fleetwood-Walker's art education illustrates Wolff's contention that the development of artists is influenced by the values and strategies, as well as the practice, of the institutions involved in their training.¹⁰⁵ It also evidences the close relationship between different artistic institutions: the training aimed to help artists succeed within the Salon structure, therefore supported the continuity of what Becker has called 'art worlds': 'all the people whose activities are necessary to the production of the characteristic works which that world, and perhaps others as well, define as art'.¹⁰⁶

The 1914-18 War and Beyond

During the 1914-18 war Bernard Fleetwood-Walker served in the army. According to the 'Biographical Note' in the Memorial Exhibition catalogue, he joined the Artists Rifles¹⁰⁷ and fought as a sniper in France where he was 'wounded and

¹⁰³ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 18.

¹⁰⁴ Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's *A Village Madonna* won a bronze medal in 1929 and *The Children of Vernonnet* won a silver medal in 1939. Béatrice Crespon-Halotier, *Les Peintres Britanniques dans les Salons Parisiens des Origines à 1939*, Dijon, 2003, 191.

¹⁰⁵ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 42.

¹⁰⁶ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 35.

¹⁰⁷ The decision was made in 1937 that the apostrophe would no longer be used in the title of this regiment —see www.artistsriflesassociation.org, date accessed 29 January 2008 and this practice continues, see for example, Barry Gregory, *A History of the Artists Rifles 1859-1947*, Barnsley, 2006.

gassed';¹⁰⁸ however, no records to verify this information have been traced.¹⁰⁹ Although at the beginning of the war members of the Artists Rifles served as a fighting unit, subsequently parts of the regiment were dedicated to the training of officers who could then be transferred to other regiments.¹¹⁰ This may have been the case for Fleetwood-Walker as records at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, referring to their purchase of his painting *Amity* in 1933, state that his war service was in France from 1915 to 1918 and that he was a 'Private in Infantry and C.P. in Royal Engineers'.¹¹¹ From this it may be concluded that Fleetwood-Walker initially joined the Artists Rifles once conscription was introduced in 1915 and subsequently became a corporal (although the correct abbreviation for Corporal is Cpl. rather than C.P.¹¹²) with the Royal Engineers.

The war ended in November 1918 but demobilisation in most cases was a slow process.¹¹³ However, the minute book of the School of Art sub-committee of 11 February 1919 states: 'The Chairman reported that Mr B. F. Walker having been demobilised he would resume his teaching at St Benedict's Rd Branch School of Art viz Mr H. C. Walker to whom a month's notice of the termination of his

¹⁰⁸ Seddon, *Royal Birmingham Society of Artists B Fleetwood-Walker Memorial Exhibition*.

¹⁰⁹ The Artists Rifles was a volunteer regiment founded in the mid nineteenth century. Bernard Fleetwood Walker is not listed in S. S. Higham's *The Regimental Roll of Honour and War Record of the Artists' Rifles*, London, 1922, which includes soldiers wounded in the 1914-18 war although 'this list does not include men originally enlisted in other Units who were subsequently transferred or attached to the Artists' (introduction to section 4, page 434).

¹¹⁰ Gregory, *A History of the Artists Rifles 1859-1947*, 140.

¹¹¹ From the curatorial file relating to purchase of *Amity*, correspondence with Walker Art Gallery, William Brown Street, Liverpool.

¹¹² Oxford English Dictionary, www.oed.com.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk, accessed 14 December 2006.

¹¹³ Almost 2,750,000 soldiers from the British Army had been demobilised by August 1919 but the whole process was not completed until 1922. Andrew Rawson, *British Army Handbook 1914-18*, Stroud, 2006, 344. Letters in the family archive suggest that Fleetwood-Walker was still in France over Christmas 1918, correspondence with Nicola Walker, 29 July 2008.

temporary appointment at that School had been given'.¹¹⁴ The minutes also explain that Fleetwood-Walker's rate of pay before enlistment was two shillings per hour and that the recommended rate on his return was three shillings per hour.¹¹⁵ His earnings from teaching increased steadily over the next few years.¹¹⁶ He was a teacher at King Edward's Grammar School in Aston for about ten years from 1919.¹¹⁷ His salary on appointments was £180 per year and his final salary was £380 per year.¹¹⁸ He maintained contact with the School of Art and by 1922 was working there for a few hours a week as a 'Visiting Teacher'.¹¹⁹ He could have been earning over £100 per year taking evening classes¹²⁰ and combined with his earnings from King Edward's, his total income was substantially above the £250 per year which Sue Bowen has suggested 'was regarded as the dividing line

¹¹⁴ Minutes of the School of Art Sub- committee 1916 - 1921, Minute Book number 12, catalogue number SAAD 2-12, Meeting held at the Education Offices on 11th February 1919, minute number 2532, 295, unpublished manuscript, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Schedule showing the Increase of Teacher's Salaries Recommended, attached to page 308.

¹¹⁶ In July 1919 his pay was increased to 3/7 ½ per hour (i.e. 3 shillings 7 and a half pence per hour); Minutes of the School of Art Sub- committee 1916 - 1921, Minute Book number 12, catalogue number SAAD 2-12, Meeting held at the Education Offices on 17 July 1919, minute number 2909. 338; in 1921 he was described as a 'Class Teacher', his rate of pay was raised to 4/5 plus a War Allowance of 2/1 (two shillings and one penny) making the total pay 6/6 (six shillings and six pence). Minutes of the School of Art Sub- committee 1921-1922, School of Art Sub-Committee Meeting held at the Education Offices on 14 June 1921, Salaries Sub-Committee Report inserted after page 6, unpublished manuscript, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

¹¹⁷ Seddon, *Royal Birmingham Society of Artists B Fleetwood-Walker Memorial Exhibition*, and David Buckman, *Dictionary of Artists in Britain since 1945*, Bristol, 1998, 429.

¹¹⁸ Telephone conversation with Alison Wheatley, Archivist, King Edward's Foundation Archive, Birmingham, 6 December 2011.

¹¹⁹ Minutes of the School of Art Sub- committee 1921-1922, School of Art Sub-Committee Meeting held at the Education Offices on 14 June 1921, Salaries Sub-Committee Report inserted after page 70, unpublished manuscript, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

¹²⁰ A report in 1926 explains that Aston Branch School of Art meets 'on 4 evenings a week' for 28 weeks of the year and that Fleetwood-Walker was a sessional teacher of drawing being paid 7 shillings and six pence per hour. Minutes of the School of Art Sub- committee 1925-1926, Meeting of the School of Art Sub-Committee 13 July 1926, Report of the Chief Education Officer to the School of Art Sub-Committee, inserted after page 40, unpublished manuscript, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

marking out, in income terms, the working classes from the rest of society.¹²¹ In 1929 Fleetwood-Walker left the school to take up a full-time position at the Birmingham School of Arts and Crafts. He was 'appointed a full-time assistant teacher of Painting and Drawing at a salary according to scale'¹²² and by 1930 his salary as 'Teacher of Painting at Central School' was raised from £384 per year to £399.¹²³ In 1929 his painting *A Village Madonna* won a bronze medal at the exhibition of *La Société des Artistes Français*.¹²⁴ Fleetwood-Walker was doing well.

He continued to teach at the School of Art whilst pursuing his career as an artist, leaving in 1951,¹²⁵ and later moving to London where he worked at the Royal Academy School as an assistant teacher of painting.¹²⁶ Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's first wife, Marjorie White, also attended the School of Arts and Crafts.¹²⁷ The two were married in 1920¹²⁸ and had two sons. Marjorie died in 1938 after a long illness,¹²⁹ and he subsequently married the medical doctor Peggy Frazer (née

¹²¹ Sue Bowen, 'Consumption and Consumer Behaviour', Chris Wrigley (ed.) *A Companion to Early Twentieth-Century Britain*, Oxford 2003, 358.

¹²² Minute no 3237, Minutes of the School of Art Sub-Committee 1929-1930, Meeting of the School of Art Sub-Committee 19 November 1929, 9, unpublished manuscript, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

¹²³ Minutes of the School of Art Sub- committee 1929-1930, Meeting of the School of Art Sub-Committee 17 June 1930, Salaries Sub-Committee Report, report inserted after page 44, unpublished manuscript, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

¹²⁴ Crespon-Halotier, *Les Peintres Britanniques dans les Salons Parisiens des Origines à 1939*, 191.

¹²⁵ Grosse, *Bernard Fleetwood-Walker (1893-1965)*, 7.

¹²⁶ Correspondence with Royal Academy archives, 14 December 2006.

¹²⁷ Marjorie White, of 32 Summerfield Crescent, studied at the school for 1909 to 1912. Student register of addresses 1906-1914, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

¹²⁸ Grosse, *Bernard Fleetwood-Walker (1893-1965)*, 7.

¹²⁹ Interview with Mrs Pat Fleetwood-Walker, daughter in law of the artist, 24 October 2006 and Anon., 'Mrs Fleetwood Walker Dead. Artist Bereaved', *Birmingham News*, 24 December 1938, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

Levi), herself a widow, in 1939.¹³⁰ He later moved to London,¹³¹ where he lived until his death in 1965.¹³²

Fleetwood-Walker's Exhibiting Career

Fleetwood-Walker was developing his professional practice with an eye on his future career. In 1919, the year that he started teaching at the School of Art, he showed his first work—*Gabrielle: A portrait*—at the RBSA in the Spring Exhibition.¹³³ This was an open submission exhibition: any artist could enter work for selection by a committee made up of Members of the Society. The portrait was not priced, suggesting that it was not for sale. Probably Fleetwood-Walker was showing a work that had been sold or given to the sitter, and was using the exhibition to launch his career as a portrait painter.

As Janet Wolff has observed, 'economic considerations, often of a quite fundamental kind, are always relevant to the social production of art'.¹³⁴ The proposition detailed here—that Fleetwood-Walker's decision to establish himself as a portrait painter was based on economic arguments—could be justified by considering conditions in the art market in the years after the 1914–18 war. The

¹³⁰ Grosse, *Bernard Fleetwood-Walker (1893-1965)*, 7. Both Marjorie and Peggy were Jews, which might have had an impact on Fleetwood-Walker's career, particularly during the 1930s, but neither practised their religion; the Whites had been in the UK for four generations and had anglicised their name from Weisse to White from at least 1851 which suggests some deliberate degree of assimilation. Correspondence with Nicola Walker 29 July and 6 August 2008 and Phyllis White, unpublished manuscript, Fleetwood-Walker family private archive, Birmingham.

¹³¹ Grosse, *Bernard Fleetwood-Walker (1893-1965)*, 7.

¹³² *Ibid.*, title page and Buckman, *Dictionary of Artists in Britain since 1945*, 429.

¹³³ *Spring Exhibition 1919*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, 1919. RBSA Archive, Birmingham. This painting has not yet been traced, although an unsigned portrait attributed to Fleetwood-Walker and entitled *The Artist's Sister* may well be this work. It is not included in the illustrations due to quality and reproduction issues, but an image may be seen at www.fleetwood-walker.co.uk, accessed 24 September 2011.

¹³⁴ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 46.

Trustees of the Chantrey Bequest were buying art to donate to the Tate Gallery and most of the works they acquired were portraits: 'More than a third of the 1918–1930 purchases were portraits and the majority of them are characterised by forms of realism and impressionism'.¹³⁵ The importance of the Royal Academy for sales of works at this time resulted in part from the fact that the Academicians were also the trustees of the Chantrey Bequest¹³⁶ and many of the portraits purchased with Chantrey Bequest funds had been previously exhibited at the Royal Academy.¹³⁷ In 1924 the trustees purchased *A Smiling Woman* by Francis Dodd (1874-1949)¹³⁸ for £107 and 10 shillings; in 1926 they paid £200 for *Rosalind* a portrait by Douglas S. Gray (1890-1959)¹³⁹, and in 1930 a painting of two children by John Lavery (1856-1941)¹⁴⁰ called *The Chess Players* was acquired for £1050.¹⁴¹ These were very high prices: in the RBSA Autumn Exhibition of 1930 most works were priced at under £20; only Birmingham's best-known artists, such as Joseph Southall (1861-1944),¹⁴² who showed *The Crystal* at a catalogue price of £315, priced their work in the hundreds of pounds.¹⁴³ Therefore a painting by a

¹³⁵ Theophilus Paul Cowdell, *The Role of the Royal Academy in English Art 1918-1930*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1980, 126.

¹³⁶ For basic information about the Chantrey Bequest see www.tate.org.uk, date accessed 19 September 2007.

¹³⁷ See for example Anon., 'The Chantrey Trustees and the Nation', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 5:14, 1904, 116-117.

¹³⁸ www.tate.org.uk, accessed 25 March 2012.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Cowdell, *The Role of the Royal Academy in English Art, 1918-1930*, 233-234. A guinea was original an 'English gold coin, not coined since 1813, first struck in 1663 with the nominal value of 20s., but from 1717 until its disappearance circulating as legal tender at the rate of 21s.'; professional fees, luxury goods and artworks continued to be priced in guineas well into the third quarter of the twentieth century. *Oxford English Dictionary*, www.oed.com, accessed 20 July 2012. As a guinea was worth 21 shillings and there were 20 shillings in a pound, £1050 was the equivalent of 1000 guineas (£1000 + (1000 x 1 ÷ 2 = £1050).

¹⁴² George Breeze, *Joseph Southall 1861-1944: Artist-Craftsman*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham, c1980.

¹⁴³ *The Autumn Exhibition 1930*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, 1930, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

renowned artist, when sold in London, could fetch almost three times Fleetwood-Walker's annual salary, by then £414 per year.¹⁴⁴ The place to attract attention as a portrait painter was the Royal Academy: the exhibitions themselves were society events, with private views part of the London Season and extensively covered in the press;¹⁴⁵ they were also well attended, attracting over 160,000 visitors per exhibition.¹⁴⁶ Although the press regularly criticised the exhibitions because they did not showcase developments in contemporary art, a pragmatic career artist would have recognised the opportunities provided by them—a point underlined by Reginald Howard Wilenski in his article published in *The Studio* in 1929, which suggested that portraiture should not be shown as portrait painters seemed to use the exhibition as a way of attracting commissions.¹⁴⁷

In early twentieth-century London therefore the existence of an art world encompassing portraiture, the Royal Academy, and the audiences viewing the works in that venue, is evident and it seems that Fleetwood-Walker could see the benefits of belonging to this art world. As Becker has demonstrated, such infrastructures 'provide distribution systems which integrate artists into their society's economy, bringing art works to publics which appreciate them and will pay enough so that the work can proceed.'¹⁴⁸ Fleetwood-Walker's track record shows a commitment to exhibiting his work there. *Peace* was the first of his

¹⁴⁴ Minutes of the School of Art Sub-committee 1930-1931, Meeting of the School of Art Sub-Committee 14 July 1931, Salaries Sub-Committee Report, report inserted after page 56, minute 4439 resolves that recommendations of report are implemented, unpublished manuscript, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

¹⁴⁵ Cowdell, *The Role of the Royal Academy in English Art 1918-1930*, 226.

¹⁴⁶ The average number of visitors to each exhibition between 1918 and 1930 was 163,965. *Ibid.*, 225.

¹⁴⁷ Reginald Howard Wilenski, "The Royal Academy: The Personal View of a Modern Critic", *The Studio*, 98, 1929, 472.

¹⁴⁸ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 94.

paintings to be hung in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. The year was 1925 and from then until 1965, with a break of just one year—1929—works by Fleetwood-Walker featured in every Summer Exhibition. Although *Peace* remains untraced, *Petronilla*,¹⁴⁹ exhibited in 1928, was a portrait. The strong lighting and realistic treatment of *Petronilla* is similar to that seen in Meredith Frampton's *Marguerite Kelsey*,¹⁵⁰ also from 1928: the sitter's direct gaze and relaxed pose, as well as Fleetwood-Walker's choice of floral upholstery fabric and his simplified depiction of the softly-draped dress, are reminiscent of portraits by John Singer Sargent (1856-1925) from the 1890s, such as *Lady Agnew of Lochnaw*.¹⁵¹ It could be argued that Fleetwood-Walker aspired to the financial success of Sargent, who was the best-known portraitist of the time, and emulated his techniques whilst at the same time demonstrating his skill in working in a saleable contemporary idiom. *Petronilla* is very unlike some of the other portraits being produced around that time, such as Vanessa Bell's portrait of *Mrs St John Hutchinson* of 1915,¹⁵² in spite of the fact that Fleetwood-Walker must have been aware of these new ways of painting as Post-Impressionist work had been shown at the RBSA in 1917.¹⁵³ Although Fleetwood-Walker was on active service during this exhibition, it is most unlikely that he would not have heard about it as it was reviewed in the local

¹⁴⁹ Illustrated in Hill and Midgley, *The History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists*, plate 139. Here the painting is captioned *Petronilla* although entitled *Petronella* in the RA catalogue of 1928 and the R.I. catalogue of 1933. The portrait was rediscovered in February 2012, www.fleetwood-walker.co.uk, accessed 22 March 2012.

¹⁵⁰ Now in the Tate Collection, London, see www.tate.org.uk, accessed 22 March 2012.

¹⁵¹ Richard Ormond, 'Sargent, John Singer', in *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T076043, accessed 24 March 2012.

Lady Agnew of Lochnaw (1892) is at the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh.

¹⁵² Now at in the Tate Collection, London, see www.tate.org.uk, accessed 22 March 2012.

¹⁵³ Roger Fry, 'An Exhibition of Works Representative of the New Movement in Art', exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, Birmingham, 1917, Birmingham Archives and Heritage Service, Central Library, Birmingham, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' exhibition catalogues, control number 988957.

newspaper.¹⁵⁴ Comments about the exhibition were not all favourable. Roger Fry himself reported that the 'majority, even of the Society who asked me, are honest believers in the RA so you may imagine the howl that began almost before I'd finished hanging'.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, the art critic of the *Morning Post* had felt that the first Post-Impressionist exhibition showed a determination to 'destroy the whole fabric of European painting'.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, some works sold. Roger Fry wrote to Vanessa Bell saying: 'I'm so pleased Michael Sadler has bought one of your things at Birmingham, the *Bosham*. He bought seven pictures altogether'.¹⁵⁷ Comments from the Birmingham press, as Fry had predicted, were not favourable, the *Daily Post* saying 'the first thing which strikes the spectator is the awful gap that lies between the highfalutin exposition of the aims of this body and the unbelievable squalor of their production'.¹⁵⁸ These comments are unlikely to have encouraged an artist, trained by strict academic discipline and ready to develop his career, to try a new way of working. Here, consideration of patronage is very relevant. The Royal Academy, as an institution, helped bring together artists and clients interested in portraiture, acting as a market-place for patronage. Its support of portrait and figure work, for example through its involvement in acquisition decisions for the Chantrey bequest, meant that it also acted as a mediator,

¹⁵⁴ See for example quotations in Hall, *A Review of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, 1821-1999*, 2.6.

¹⁵⁵ Sutton (ed.), *Letters of Roger Fry, Volume Two*, 414.

¹⁵⁶ Kate Flint, 'Moral Judgement and the Language of English Art Criticism 1870-1910', *Oxford Art Journal*, 6:2, 1983, 61.

¹⁵⁷ Sutton (ed.), *Letters of Roger Fry, Volume Two*, 415. The buyer that Fry refers to was Michael Ernest Sadler, vice chancellor of Leeds University from 1911 to 1923, 'a prominent educator who amassed one of the first and finest collections of modern art in England'. Michael Saler, 'Making it New: Visual Modernism and the Myth of the North in Interwar England', *The Journal of British Studies*, 37:4, 1998, 422. The Minutes of the RBSA General Meeting on August 29th 1917 say 'one work was purchased', Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting, August 29th 1917. Minute Book 5 September 1912-25 July 1928, 183, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

¹⁵⁸ Quoted in Hall, *A Review of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, 1821-1999*, 2.6.

reinforcing the validity of portraiture as a genre. These economic factors would have encouraged the development of the kind of portraiture that would be approved by the Royal Academy as mediator, and promoted in that marketplace. *Petronilla* was a portrait that was more likely to arouse the interest of reviewers and potential clients than to antagonise them. It may have been that Vanessa Bell's relatively secure financial position and her connections with her own, London based, art world¹⁵⁹ facilitated the development of her work in a different direction to that taken by Fleetwood-Walker; in contrast Fleetwood-Walker was bound by a sensitivity to the interests of his own, predominantly regional, portrait commissioning public. This suggests that his artistic output was both an outcome of and an indicator of his connections with Birmingham's art world, illustrating how relevant Becker's observation, that 'the patterns of economic activity characteristic of a society shape what artists can get to work with',¹⁶⁰ is to Fleetwood-Walker's career.

During the early part of the twentieth century, as has been observed earlier in this chapter, the concept of artistic alienation re-emerged and, alongside this concept, the view that such alienation was vital for creativity. This alienation related both to how the artist was perceived by society and to the artists' own self-perception: as Linda Nochlin has written, 'implicit—and perhaps even central—to our understanding of avant-gardism is the concept of alienation—psychic, social,

¹⁵⁹ The death of her father meant that she had 'limited but adequate capital': Jane Dunn, *A Very Close Conspiracy: Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf*, London, 1990, 80; her income in 1918 was over £500 per year, when a live-in nurse was earning £25 per year, Frances Spalding, *Vanessa Bell*, London, 1983, 160. Bell also benefited from the support of the London Artists' Association: Andrew Stephenson, 'Strategies of Situation: British Modernism and the Slump c.1929-1934', *Oxford Art Journal*, 14:2, 1991, 30-51; see also Spalding, *Vanessa Bell*, 160.

¹⁶⁰ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 92.

ontological’;¹⁶¹ she concludes that, for avant-garde artists, ‘their very existence as members of the bourgeoisie was problematic, isolating them not merely from existing social and artistic institutions but creating deeply felt internal dichotomies as well.’¹⁶² Robert Jensen has linked this interpretation of the artist’s role to patronage, arguing, in *The Avant-Garde and the Trade in Art*,¹⁶³ that by the early-twentieth century the art market was fuelled by a belief that art must necessarily move from one style of approach and execution to another, that ‘historically significant art depends on the creation of new aesthetic modes’.¹⁶⁴ Jensen suggests that large numbers of artists were operating in an increasingly-crowded market and that artists operating in this market had to differentiate their output. Galleries only dealt with the few artists ‘selected by the dealer because their work was perceived as being substantially different from that of the mass of contemporary artists’.¹⁶⁵ As a result, ‘the success of the modernist artist was bound indissolubly to the commercial gallery’¹⁶⁶ and commercial galleries achieved a special status by their ability to act as advocates for avant-garde art, developing ‘an abstract aestheticism, supported by historicizing discourses and rising prices’¹⁶⁷ as the justification for showing a certain artist’s work.¹⁶⁸ Avant-garde artists were able to project an image of individuality and independence because they had access to sources of patronage outside the Royal Academy and other

¹⁶¹ Linda Nochlin, *The Politics of Vision, Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society*, London, 1991, 12.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁶³ Robert Jensen, ‘The Avant-Garde and the Trade in Art’, *Art Journal*, 47:4, 1988, 360-367.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 363.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 361.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

exhibiting societies; the newly developing dealer-critic system.¹⁶⁹ At the same time artists protected their own markets as they ‘censored art that did not conform to their particular ideals’,¹⁷⁰ with the result that dealers’ interest became focused on the work of a very limited number of specific artists. In effect, artistic alienation became a safe route to success for avant-garde artists as the art they produced became ‘certain of an audience preconditioned not only to expect the novel but to accept it as part of a culturally—and financially—safe tradition’.¹⁷¹

It might be proposed that Fleetwood-Walker would have benefited from working in a genre other than portraiture in order to make his way as an artist. However, this would not have been an easy route to financial stability. As Penny Johnson and Judith Collins have noted, at that time only a few of the London galleries ‘supported new art, they were the Leicester, the Lefèvre, and later the Major and Zwemmer galleries, but usually artists had to group together into exhibiting societies to get their work shown’.¹⁷² Johnson and Collins have studied the gallery set up by Lucy Wertheim¹⁷³ to promote emerging artists. Although benefiting from a central London location and financial support from her husband, Wertheim found it ‘hard to meet her expenses’.¹⁷⁴ Had Fleetwood-Walker embraced, for example, surrealism, it is highly unlikely that the work would have been saleable. Sales from Wertheim’s exhibition of work by the Birmingham surrealist John Melville in

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Holt, ‘Postmodernism: Anomaly in Art-Critical Theory’, 86.

¹⁷¹ Robert Jensen, ‘The Avant-Garde and the Trade in Art’, 361.

¹⁷² Penny Johnson and Judith Collins, *Adventure in Art, Modern British Art under the Patronage of Lucy Wertheim*, exhibition catalogue, Salford, Salford Museum and Art Gallery, Eastbourne, Towner Art Gallery, Wakefield, Wakefield City Art Gallery, Dudley, Dudley Art Gallery and Museum, Salford, 1992, 26.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

1932 were very disappointing and the correspondence between Wertheim and Melville highlights the financial consequences of the poor sales.¹⁷⁵ A safer source of sales might have been the London Artists Association, founded by John Maynard Keynes, Royer Fry and Lady Ottoline Morrell,¹⁷⁶ but this was a short-lived experiment.¹⁷⁷ As a result it was the traditional routes to market that were most attractive to Fleetwood-Walker.

The Local Economy and Politics in the Inter-War Period

The destruction of the 1914-18 war had a direct impact on Birmingham: 13,000 killed and 35,000 wounded¹⁷⁸ out of a total population of around 500,000.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless the local economy benefited from the city's involvement in the manufacture of munitions, with the result that the end of the war brought economic problems as orders for weapons and ammunition ceased.¹⁸⁰ The war had also stimulated industry in Birmingham, especially in engineering and in the manufacture of vehicles—where high import tax imposed in 1915 had helped UK factories—and the positive effect of this growth was felt even after the war.¹⁸¹ By the 1920s the strength of the local economy was having a distinct effect on local politics. Nationwide the Liberal Party was continuing to decline and in Birmingham the Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association and the Birmingham Conservative

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ Frances Spalding, *Roger Fry: Art and Life*, St Albans, 1980, 252.

¹⁷⁸ Ward, *City-State and Nation: Birmingham's Political History c1830-1940*, 184.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁸⁰ Anthony Sutcliffe and Roger Smith, *History of Birmingham Volume III, Birmingham 1939-1970*, London, 1974, 55 and 76.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 185.

Association had joined forces in 1919 and were now known as the Unionists.¹⁸² Effectively two political parties which had once been opposed were now amalgamated. While in other areas the breakdown of the Liberal Party had facilitated the development of the Labour Party,¹⁸³ 'the city's prosperity and the immense prestige of the Unionists, who were still led by members of the Chamberlain family, prevented Labour from establishing more than a foothold in Birmingham'¹⁸⁴ and even by 1926 only a quarter of the seats on the local Council were held by Labour members, although it was the Labour Party that was the main source of opposition to the Unionists.¹⁸⁵

The strength of the Unionists must have been felt in the cultural community as members of the wider Chamberlain family were closely involved in the arts. William Kenrick, chair of the managing committee of the Birmingham School of Art and the creator of the Kenrick scholarships at the School of Art, had married Joseph Chamberlain's eldest sister, Mary Chamberlain, and he, like Joseph Chamberlain, was at first a Liberal then a Liberal Unionist.¹⁸⁶ Although William Kenrick died in 1919, the Kenrick family continued to be involved in the cultural life of Birmingham: George Hamilton Kenrick (1850-1936) frequently visited Barford Road School (Fleetwood-Walker's junior school) in the late-nineteenth and early-

¹⁸² Gordon Emanuel Cherry, *Birmingham: A Study in Geography, History and Planning*, Chichester, 1994, 111.

¹⁸³ In 1918 Labour had 57 seats in parliament, after the 1929 general election it had 291 seats. Keith Laybourn, *A Century of Labour, A History of the Labour Party*, Stroud, 2000, 34.

¹⁸⁴ Sutcliffe and Smith, *History of Birmingham Volume III, Birmingham 1939-1970*, 12.

¹⁸⁵ Cherry, *Birmingham: A Study in Geography, History and Planning*, 111.

¹⁸⁶ Roy Church, 'Kenrick Family (*per. c.* 1785-1926)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, online edition January 2007, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/53590, accessed 2 September 2007.

twentieth century,¹⁸⁷ Wilfrid Byng Kenrick (1872-1962) was chair of the Education Committee in the second quarter of the twentieth century and Wilfrid's son William Edmund Kenrick (1908-1981)¹⁸⁸ was governor and chair of the governors of the College of Art and Design between 1962 and 1970.¹⁸⁹

Fleetwood-Walker, in the years immediately after the 1914–18 war, targeted the established exhibiting societies in order to gain election and therefore opportunities to show his work with those societies. As well as his involvement with the RBSA, he was elected a Member of the Royal Institute of Oil Painters in 1934, having first exhibited *Petronilla* there in the preceding year. As soon as he was elected an Associate of the RBSA Fleetwood-Walker began to make the most of his Membership. He created opportunities for himself as well as taking advantage of the chance to show his work. Only a year after his election he suggested that a special exhibition of drawings could be staged at the Society's galleries.¹⁹⁰ This was to be an exhibition of drawings by Fleetwood-Walker's great-grandfather, Cornelius Varley and Cornelius' brother John Varley. Artists from Birmingham were particularly aware of the heritage of the Varleys, as John Varley had taught David Cox (1783-1859),¹⁹¹ who himself had always had a strong reputation in the West Midlands.¹⁹² Fleetwood-Walker anticipated that there would

¹⁸⁷ Barford Road School Visitors Book 1887–1910, Reference S 13/6 Birmingham Archives and Heritage Service, Central Library, Birmingham.

¹⁸⁸ Church, 'Kenrick Family (*per. c.* 1785-1926)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting January 4th 1924, Minute Book 5 September 1912-2 May 1928, 320. RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

¹⁹¹ Stephen Wildman, 'Cox, David (1783–1859)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2011, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6520, accessed 22 March 2012.

¹⁹² John Murdoch, 'Cox: Doctrine, Style and Meaning', *David Cox 1783-1859*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1983.

be significant interest in an exhibition of Varley drawings and that this could raise the profile of the owner of the work, a point emphasised by the detailed minutes describing what happened:

Mr Fleetwood Walker, the owner of the Varley drawings, was invited to be present at the meeting and he showed to the Members several examples of the proposed exhibits. After some discussion it was resolved that the society take no responsibility for any sales and charge no commission. It was resolved (Mr Walker assenting) that the question of insurance be left to Mr Walker. Resolved that admission to the exhibition be 6d ... Resolved that the exhibition be advertised in the following London papers. The Observer, Sunday Times, The Times, Nation and Manchester Guardian at the cost of the Society.¹⁹³

Fleetwood-Walker's ownership of the collection was made clear and the extra advertising booked would have helped raise Fleetwood-Walker's own profile.

Later minutes explain:

The exhibition of the works of John and Cornelius Varley, lent for the purpose by Mr B. Fleetwood Walker proved a great attraction. The Times sending a special critic to review the collection. It was opened on Feb 6th by Mr J. R. Holliday on which occasion there was large gathering, and the exhibition was well visited until Feb 19th the closing day.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting January 4th 1924, Minute Book 5 September 1912-2 May 1928, 320. RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

¹⁹⁴ 'Report of Hon Secretary March 22nd 1924, Annual Meeting, Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Annual Meeting 1924, Minutes book September 5th 1912-May 2nd 1928, loose page inserted after page 264, RBSA Archive, Birmingham. James Richardson Holliday, born in 1840 described as a 'lawyer and bibliophile', was closely involved in the Birmingham Guild of Handicraft and donated a substantial number of works by David Cox and also by Pre-Raphaelite artists to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, see Stephen Wildman, *David Cox, 1783-1859, A Bicentenary Exhibition*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, 1983, London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1983-84 and Crawford, *By Hammer and Hand, The*

As well as creating opportunities, Fleetwood-Walker seized them. The RBSA had agreed to publish a history of the Society and in 1927 this was completed and ready to print. The book was to include as many illustrations of Members' work as possible, starting from the foundation of the Society. Living Members were asked if they would like their work to be illustrated in the book, provided they cover the cost of the printing blocks; Associates were also invited to be included.¹⁹⁵

Fleetwood-Walker responded to the invitation, considering the financial investment worthwhile. The work he chose to illustrate was the perfect advertisement for a portrait artist looking for new commissions—*Petronilla*.¹⁹⁶ as had been suggested earlier in this chapter, *Petronilla* is reminiscent of the work of some of the most successful (in financial terms) portraitists of the early-twentieth century. *Petronilla* also reflected contemporary fashions. It is a portrait of a young woman with her hair cut short in the style popularised in the 1920s by models for designers like Coco Chanel and illustrated in magazines like *Vogue*.¹⁹⁷ This suggests, echoing both Becker and Wolff's ideas, that by using this painting to promote his work, Fleetwood-Walker was targeting potential clients who had the means to enjoy the luxury of contemporary style and preferred fashionable portraits, so the appearance of the painting was therefore determined by the assumed tastes of prospective buyers. Wolff's claim that social factors affect the appearance of

Arts and Crafts Movement in Birmingham, 31 and footnote 50, 138 and Paul Goldman, *John Everett Millais, Illustrator and Narrator*, Aldershot, 2004, note 1, 52.

¹⁹⁵ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting October 26th 1927, Minute Book 5 September 1912-2 May 1928, 320, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

¹⁹⁶ Illustrated in Hill and Midgley, *The History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists*, plate 139. Here the painting is captioned *Petronilla* although entitled *Petronella* in the RA catalogue of 1928 and the RI catalogue of 1933.

¹⁹⁷ See for example Figure 2 in Mary Louise Roberts' "Samson and Delilah Revisited: The Politics of Women's Fashion in 1920s France", *The American Historical Review*, 98:3, 1993, 668.

artistic output¹⁹⁸ has been challenged by Nick Zangwill, who contends that ‘the artist must desire and intend to create something with specific aesthetic qualities’.¹⁹⁹ It could be that the intentions themselves are also the result of social factors, for example Mary Louise Roberts highlights the link between social issues and 1920s fashion,²⁰⁰ stating that this fashion was both ‘a visual language for the war’s social upheaval’²⁰¹ and ‘a visual analogue of female liberation’.²⁰² In Weimar Germany, for example, the bob was considered to typify the *neue Frau*.²⁰³ *Petronilla*, with her cropped hair and floating flowery dress, seems to embody both feminine glamour and masculine independence. Zangwill also expresses the belief that aesthetics are the ultimate drivers for demand, stating that while ‘the production of art is usually profit driven, that is only because there is a demand for those works, due, in part, to the aesthetic satisfaction they afford.’²⁰⁴ It is here suggested that these two stances are compatible. Aesthetics and social conditions can both drive demand: it is difficult to envisage how an art market could exist without some response to aesthetics, but the selection of a particular type of representation will be influenced by social factors. As Wolff has argued, ‘the artists may adjust their work, and the finished product may be affected as a result of certain economic or other factors’.²⁰⁵ Fleetwood-Walker’s *Petronilla* reflects the complex social issues of its period as well as one individual’s selection

¹⁹⁸ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 118.

¹⁹⁹ Nick Zangwill, ‘Against the Sociology of Art’, *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 32:2, 2002, 207.

²⁰⁰ This article focuses on fashion in France in 1920s but as Fleetwood-Walker was exhibiting in Paris at that time and French fashions were reported in UK publications like *Vogue* the issues raised are relevant to Britain in the 1920s.

²⁰¹ Roberts, ‘Samson and Delilah Revisited: The Politics of Women’s Fashion in 1920s France’, 661.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 665.

²⁰³ Erika Esau, ‘The Künstlerehepaar: Ideal and reality’, *Visions of the ‘Neue Frau’*, Marsha Meskimmon and Shearer West (eds), Aldershot, 1995, 35.

²⁰⁴ Zangwill, ‘Against the Sociology of Art’, *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 213.

²⁰⁵ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 34.

of aesthetic qualities. Viewed in the light of Wolff's theory of ideology, discussed in the introduction to this chapter, *Petronilla* can also be seen as a portrait that enacts ideology through its emphasis on the importance of fashion. It legitimizes the domination of society by fashionable people, who, for financial reasons, are very likely to be members of the dominant classes; equally it promotes the following of fashion as this is in the economic interests of dominant society because this encourages expenditure and therefore the increasing dominance of those who profit from the fashion industry. However, the lack of documentary material revealing the background to the portrait commission means that such ideological interpretation cannot be substantiated by archival evidence, a primary requirement, in Wolff's assessment, for such interpretation.²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, this early portrait by the Fleetwood-Walker signals the development of a style of portraiture in response to social, economic and ideological factors and there are in addition undoubtedly substantial opportunities, beyond the scope of this thesis, for further research into the relationship between the reception of Fleetwood-Walker's portraits of women and subsequent portrait commissions as well as a for a more wide-ranging investigation of Fleetwood-Walker's portraits of females from the perspective of a feminist art history.

In the inter-war period Fleetwood-Walker carried on with his teaching, including leading painting holidays: in February 1932 an exhibition was held at the Ruskin Gallery, a commercial gallery in Chamberlain Square, of 'Paintings and drawings

²⁰⁶ See for example Janet Wolff, 'The Problem of Ideology in the Sociology of Art: A Case Study of Manchester in the Nineteenth Century', *Media, Culture, Society*, 4:63, 1982, 72.

by the Sémur sketching party under the direction of B. Fleetwood Walker',²⁰⁷ which included works by fourteen artists including Miss E. Bridgwater, probably the future Birmingham surrealist Emmy Bridgwater. He also exhibited with other groups, for example, the Birmingham Group, in November 1933.²⁰⁸ Fleetwood-Walker seems to have been alert to the possibilities that could come from association with groups of artists. He joined the St Ives Society of Artists²⁰⁹ and exhibited with them between 1936 and 1948. This group had been set up in 1927 by artists living and working at St Ives in Cornwall. Its aim was to encourage artists 'to work together more to promote and market the colony as a whole and to raise general standards'.²¹⁰ The group held regular exhibitions, some attracting over 4,000 visitors, as was the case in 1936,²¹¹ and had ambitions for exposure beyond the local region. They arranged touring exhibitions throughout the 1930s, showing in London and Birmingham as well as in many other regional centres.²¹² Fleetwood-Walker first participated in a St Ives Society of Artists' exhibition in 1936, when a group show was held at the City of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. Two of his oil paintings, *Mary and Gillian* and *Nicolette* were included in a remarkably successful exhibition, attracting 64,000 visitors.²¹³ Later in 1936 *The Maidens*

²⁰⁷ *Paintings and drawings by the Sémur sketching party under the direction of B Fleetwood Walker*, exhibition catalogue, Ruskin Gallery, Birmingham, 1932, catalogues of Ruskin Gallery, archive reference number LF547, Birmingham Archives and Heritage Service, Central Library, Birmingham.

²⁰⁸ *The Birmingham Group*, exhibition catalogue, Ruskin Gallery, Birmingham, 1933, catalogues of Ruskin Gallery, archive reference number LF547. Birmingham Archives and Heritage Service, Central Library, Birmingham.

²⁰⁹ Fleetwood-Walker would 'take a group of students down to Cornwall, often staying in Polperro, and it was no doubt on one of these trips that he visited St Ives and was persuaded to join the St Ives Society of Artists' David Tovey, *Creating a Splash, The St Ives Society of Artists, The first 25 years (1927-1952)*, Tewkesbury 2003, 89.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 20-30.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 26.

(1934)²¹⁴ one of his larger figure compositions, was shown at the society's exhibition in St Ives; this work was then replaced by *The Toilet* (1936), a painting very similar in subject-matter and composition, when *The Maidens* was needed for exhibition at the Walker Art Gallery.²¹⁵ Fleetwood-Walker was conscious of the need to build his profile and took every opportunity to participate in prominent exhibitions, even when this meant moving paintings from one exhibition to another. His work would be seen by large numbers of visitors and the exhibitions were reported in the press. These exhibiting societies were institutions which Fleetwood-Walker utilised for the development of his career.²¹⁶ This close connection with exhibiting groups illustrates Fleetwood-Walker's connection with the art world and how the artist benefited from institutional support. This would have included, as Becker has noted, both the practical opportunities noted and more intangible encouragement: placing the recipient in the flow of ideas in which change and development take place and providing day-to-day validation of work concerns and help with daily problems, things denied those who are merely successful in more conventional career terms.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ Drawings relating to this work and other works have been studied at the Walker family private archive, Manchester. More recently these have been made available to view at www.fleetwood-walker.co.uk.

²¹⁵ Tovey, *Creating a Splash, The St Ives Society of Artists, The first 25 years (1927-1952)*, 89.

²¹⁶ For example, the Coventry and Warwickshire Society exhibitions were covered in the local press: 'Mr Fleetwood Walker, whose nude studies created a considerable amount of interest at last year's Royal Academy exhibition, is represented by one of the pictures that hung on "the line" on that occasion.' Anon., 'Coventry and Warwickshire Society's Annual Effort. More works by local artists. Outstanding pictures and sculptures', *The Midland Daily Telegraph*, 8 May 1936, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²¹⁷ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 153.

Despite the interest shown in figure compositions in the 1930s, this was not a genre that Fleetwood-Walker continued to pursue. The economic situation in the later inter-war period could have prompted the artist to focus on portraiture. Fleetwood-Walker himself observed the effect of market forces on his output as an artist, commenting in an interview in 1957: 'I hardly ever paint nudes now. At the time I painted *The Bane* there was a tremendous vogue for nudes. I painted a lot of them. Nowadays there is not much call for them'.²¹⁸ This remark indicates that the artist was aware of changes in demand and willing to adapt his output accordingly, and therefore that Fleetwood-Walker's career was subject to fluctuations in the wider economy, so illustrating Wolff's contention that the artist works in a capitalist economy.²¹⁹ Such observations demonstrate the connections between the evolving interests of patrons and changes in the content of artistic output, an issue emphasised by both Baxandall²²⁰ and Becker²²¹ and one that is to be discussed in further detail in Chapter Two.

Although Birmingham on the whole suffered less from the depression of the 1930s than other parts of the country,²²² by late 1932 about a sixth of the working population was unemployed,²²³ and even by 1935 there were still 22,000 unemployed in Birmingham.²²⁴ Newer industries, like the automotive industry,

²¹⁸ Mail staff reporter, 'Wardroom nude was 'afterthought' loan', *Birmingham Mail* (presumed), undated annotated '1957', unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²¹⁹ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 19.

²²⁰ Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*, 97-99.

²²¹ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 94.

²²² Asa Briggs, *History of Birmingham, Volume II, Borough and City 1865-1938*, Oxford, 1952, 286.

²²³ There were around 53,000 unemployed and in the same year Poor Relief was paid to 20,000 people. *Ibid.*, 289.

²²⁴ Ward, *City-State and Nation: Birmingham's Political history c1830-1940*, 225.

were growing, but more traditional ones suffered.²²⁵ Although he carried on exhibiting regularly with the RBSA, sales through the gallery were sparse. An article in the *Birmingham Post* in 1938 records the reduction in sales through the RBSA: 'in 1878, the income (from sales etc.) was £5,500 whilst the combined Spring and Autumn Show [held in 1938] raised £500.'²²⁶ Many of the works Fleetwood-Walker exhibited were not priced, suggesting that he might have been keeping works for exhibitions in London and Paris; figures given for the large exhibition pieces were considerable: *The Children at Vernonnet* was shown at the RBSA in 1931 priced at £262 and 10 shillings;²²⁷ a painting exhibited in 1937, *The Family at Polperro*, had a catalogue price of £500. The price of this painting equalled the total value of sales over the two RBSA exhibitions held in 1938. The artist may also have been reluctant to part with works he was particularly pleased with: *The Family at Polperro* remained unsold and was eventually donated to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery in memory of his first wife.²²⁸ Some years later the price given for the half-length figure composition, *Nicolette*, shown in 1938, was £105,²²⁹ still a significant figure when compared with the artist's salary as a lecturer. Much of the work Fleetwood-Walker was exhibiting at the RBSA was not priced which suggests that it was commissioned work. Fleetwood-Walker seems to have been cushioned from the impact of the struggling economy, achieving some economic stability through his career in teaching. His move from teaching in school to teaching at the College of Art would have had a positive

²²⁵ Briggs, *History of Birmingham, Volume II, Borough and City 1865-1938*, 288.

²²⁶ Hall, *A review of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, 1821-1999*.

²²⁷ 250 guineas.

²²⁸ Anon., 'Contemporary Artists' Work', *Birmingham Post*, 1 February 1939, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²²⁹ 100 guineas.

effect on his artistic production, as lecturers were expected to develop their own practice; student contact time was limited to four days a week to ensure that staff had time for their own work.²³⁰ Fleetwood-Walker's salary allowed him to be relatively comfortable. In August 1930 he was earning £384 per year, increasing to £399 on 1 September 1930.²³¹ This salary was more than adequate but in spite of this Fleetwood-Walker chose not to purchase²³² but to rent²³³ a house in Harborne, 48 Wentworth Road, where he lived from 1930 to 1938.²³⁴ He could easily have afforded to relocate to the suburbs, like his parents who had moved to South Yardley.²³⁵ Fleetwood-Walker's decision to continue to live close to the city may well have been connected to his commissions. His home in Harborne, not far from the railway station, was centrally placed and convenient for clients. Proximity to the University of Birmingham must have been helpful when painting the portrait of Dr. Ethel Poulton (also known as Mrs Humphrey Watts), a Research Scholar at the University.²³⁶ Other sitters were members of his family, such as Phyllis White, his wife's sister²³⁷ and his contacts with artists led to work such as the portrait of

²³⁰ Interview with Kate Fryer, formerly Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's assistant at the School of Art, 2 September 2006.

²³¹ 'At A Meeting of the School of Art Sub-Committee Held at the Education Office on 17 June 1930', 'Report of the Chief Education Officer', inserted after page 44, School of Art Sub-Committee Minutes 1929-1939, unpublished manuscript, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

²³² Although 'a modest semi-detached house in a suburban location at £450 (as it might cost in the mid-1930s), purchase could be made for a deposit of £25 and repayments over 20 years would not exceed 13s a week.', Cherry, *Birmingham: A Study in Geography, History and Planning*, 117.

²³³ Correspondence with Pat James, 21 September 2006.

²³⁴ Catalogues of exhibitions held at the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²³⁵ Archive material does not reveal when this took place but in an article about William and Electra's 50th Wedding Anniversary in the local press the couple are described as celebrating their golden wedding anniversary at their home in South Yardley. Anon., '50 Years On', *Birmingham Mail*, 24 March 1939, unpaginated press cutting Walker family private archive, London.

²³⁶ www.pamphlets.org.au/?page_id=175, accessed 12 September 2007.

²³⁷ Phyllis White, autobiography and family history, untitled, undated, unpublished manuscript, Walker family private archive, Birmingham.

Nora Luker (painting untraced).²³⁸ It may be that portraits were also painted in client's homes, although most of the portraits from this era that have been traced do not include identifiable features in the background and there is no documentary evidence to indicate where portraits were painted.

By this time then, Fleetwood-Walker was working at the School of Art and painting portraits for local people, as well as friends and family. He was also looking for additional exhibition opportunities and pursuing other sources of commissions. Around 1938 he painted the mural *John Ball and the Peasants Rising of 1381* for the Council Chamber at Essex County Hall in Chelmsford.²³⁹ The British School at Rome had been training mural painters since 1911,²⁴⁰ and in the inter-war period, particularly the 1930s, there was a revival of mural painting in Britain which was promoted by the Royal College of Art and in particular by its principal William Rothenstein.²⁴¹ Fleetwood-Walker's involvement in mural painting illustrates the effect of patronage on artistic output. The scenes to be depicted were selected by Essex County Council; the overall scheme of decoration was planned by the architect Vincent Harris²⁴² and was designed to show 'events that were of importance in Essex history'²⁴³—all paid for by Councillor William Julien

²³⁸ Mrs Frances Luker of 21 Woodbridge Road, Moseley had a work accepted in the Royal Academy exhibition. Anon., untitled, *Birmingham Sunday Mercury*, 15 May 1938, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²³⁹ Correspondence with The Public Catalogue Foundation 2006.

²⁴⁰ Louise Campbell, 'A Call to Order: The Rome Prize and Early Twentieth-Century British Architecture', *Architectural History*, 32, 1989, 135.

²⁴¹ Gill Clarke, *Evelyn Dunbar, War and Country*, Bristol, 2006, 23.

²⁴² Essex County Council, *The Council Chamber of the Essex County Council, An Account of the Decorations, The Gift of Councillor William Julien Courtauld*, Chelmsford, 1938, 3.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 4.

Courtauld.²⁴⁴ Fleetwood-Walker's mural was therefore not the output of one individual but an example of collective creation, a product affected by the needs and wishes of the many different stakeholders involved in the project, much in the same way as a consumer product is developed in response to market forces.

Fleetwood-Walker became more involved with the RBSA after he was elected a full Member in 1930.²⁴⁵ He attended the plenary meeting to welcome new Associates and distribute diplomas in 1931 and in that year attended thirty out of forty meetings. The next year he was asked to join a committee formed to encourage greater support of social evenings and throughout the 1930s he was present at most meetings: not a meeting was missed in 1932-1933,²⁴⁶ but this was not the case the following year when he was seriously ill between May and September.²⁴⁷ In the inter-war period he attended more than half of the meetings held each year, for example at the 1938 A.G.M. it was noted that he had attended nine meetings out of fourteen, in a year when thirteen Members attended none at all.²⁴⁸ In 1938-39, the time of his wife's illness and death,²⁴⁹ he missed thirteen

²⁴⁴ Courtauld specified 'that anything he provided should be in addition to what the County Council would have spent, and that only the best work and material were to be accepted' *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁴⁵ He was proposed for Membership by Harold Holden and initially seconded by William Midgley; R.R. Carter also seconded the proposal; there were 20 votes for and 5 against. Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Annual General Meeting March 22nd 1933, RBSA Minute Book 3 October 1928-3 November 1936, 40, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁴⁶ Ten meetings were called and Fleetwood-Walker attended all ten, Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists General Meeting March 25th 1933, RBSA Minute Book 3 October 1928-3 November 1936, 82, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁴⁷ Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists General Meeting May 1st 1922, RBSA Minute Book 3 October 1928-3 November 1936, 126. RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁴⁸ Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists General Meeting March 26 1938, RBSA Minute Book 20 March 1936-25 March 1939, 112 and 113, RBSA Archive, Birmingham. There were about 40 Members during this period, for example at the Annual Meeting in 1939 membership was 43 Members, 48 Associates, 3 Hon Members and 1 Hon Retired Member. Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Annual Meeting 23 III 1939, RBSA Minute Book 20 March 1936-25 March 1939, 112 and 113, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

meetings out of seventeen. The other Members were clearly aware of his wife's death, as they arranged to send a letter of condolence, and possibly also of the preceding illness. Fleetwood-Walker was active in promoting the Society by putting artists forward for election, for example proposing Alan Bridgwater and Mrs Theresa Clarke as Associates in 1937; both artists were elected.²⁵⁰ Fleetwood-Walker also wished to encourage the Associates' involvement in the RBSA by including them in the process of hanging and selecting work for exhibition. In open submission exhibitions, a Selection Committee elected by the Members chose which works were to be shown from the items entered; the exhibition was then installed by a Hanging Committee, also elected by the Members. As Associates could not sit on these committees, they would have felt little involvement in the exhibitions. In 1937 the minutes explain that 'Mr Walker suggested that the Associates should elect one of their number to be present at the selection Committees and also be eligible for election on the Hanging Committee.'²⁵¹ Making this change was a long process: the minutes continue the 'whole matter was again postponed for a definite resolution at a future meeting'²⁵² and eventually, at the Annual Meeting on 24 June 1944, it was agreed that 'two Associates should be appointed to act in the judging committee for the Spring Exhibition. The Associate Members to be chosen each year in order of seniority of election to Associateship'.²⁵³

²⁴⁹ Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists General Meeting 6 February 1939, RBSA Minute Book 20 March 1936-25 March 1939, 160, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁵⁰ Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists General Meeting 1 February 1937, RBSA Minute Book 20 March 1936-25 March 1939, 52, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁵¹ Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists General Meeting 3 May 1937, RBSA Minute Book 20 March 1936-25 March 1939, 76, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 77.

²⁵³ Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Annual Meeting 24 June 1944, RBSA Minute Book, 25 March 1939-16 December 1948, 191, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

Associates were not, at this time, involved in electing new artists to the Society. For an artist to become an Associate and then a Member, the artist had to be proposed and seconded by an existing Member, a vote was then taken by all the Members to see whether the artist should be elected. This meant that Associates, who often remained Associates for several years before being elected Member,²⁵⁴ could not influence the make-up of the Society. To develop the input of Associates into the running of the RBSA, Fleetwood-Walker put forward a proposal, for discussion at the A.G.M., that 'Associates should be allowed to vote in the election of Associates'.²⁵⁵ Perhaps Fleetwood-Walker felt that he would have enjoyed and benefited from more involvement with the Society at an early stage and that this would aid the next generation of artists. It may be that he was in personal contact with Associates and so had become aware of their dissatisfaction on this point or he might have wanted to ensure the integration of younger artists to secure the Society's future. Whatever Fleetwood-Walker's motivations, this proposal, when considered in the light of Becker's analysis of the growth and decline of art worlds, is very revealing. Becker emphasised the crucial importance of mobilising people 'to join in a co-operative activity on a regular basis'²⁵⁶ in order for art worlds to be nurtured, and that, equally, art worlds would fade when 'new personnel cannot be recruited to maintain the world's activities.'²⁵⁷ This incident serves therefore to demonstrate the existence of the specific art

²⁵⁴ For example William Haywood was elected Associate in 1919 and did not become a member until 1945. Summary of election dates, unpublished typescript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁵⁵ Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Annual Meeting June 1st 1948, RBSA Minute Book 7 November 1947-14 October 1955, 9, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁵⁶ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 311.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 349.

world within which Fleetwood-Walker operated, and his perception of the need to foster this world.

The 1939-45 War

The declaration of war in September 1939²⁵⁸ had an immediate effect on Fleetwood-Walker: he moved to 91 Hagley Road, because the family from whom 48 Wentworth Road was rented returned to Birmingham from London, where they had lived before the war, feeling it would be safer.²⁵⁹

The war affected Birmingham in many ways. The city was bombed, damaging housing and factories, leaving over 2,000 dead and 3,000 injured;²⁶⁰ workers were called to active service, children were evacuated.²⁶¹ Many manufacturing industries turned from their own products to the manufacture of munitions,²⁶² whilst new factories were set up to produce fighter aircraft.²⁶³ Employment opportunities for artists diminished rapidly with the onset of war, with Sutcliffe and Smith noting that 'most artists, especially those who could not fall back upon the reduced opportunities in sales, teaching, design or commercial work, grew more and more distressed'.²⁶⁴ Fleetwood-Walker, with his permanent post at the School of Art, was sheltered from such unemployment and, although his studios in the School of Art were left unusable after bombing, as 'on the night of Friday 25 October incendiary bombs fell on the roof of the Life Rooms causing considerable damage

²⁵⁸ Ward, *City-State and Nation: Birmingham's Political History c1830-1940*, 250.

²⁵⁹ Letter to author from Mrs Pat James dated 21 September 2006.

²⁶⁰ Sutcliffe and Smith, *History of Birmingham Volume III, Birmingham 1939-1970*, 36.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁶⁴ Brian Foss, *War Paint: Art, War, State and Identity in Britain 1939-45*, New Haven and London, 2007, 11.

to the roof',²⁶⁵ salaries continued to be reviewed: in 1941 his salary was raised to £504.²⁶⁶ This mirrored a widespread increase in salaries after the beginning of the war,²⁶⁷ especially amongst those artists who, after initially suffering financial hardship on the outbreak of war, went on to become full-time war artists at a starting salary of £650 per year.²⁶⁸

As well as these serious issues, people had to deal with the day-to-day difficulties of the war and, as Sutcliffe and Smith have noted, 'people became very bored';²⁶⁹ this had some beneficial side effects for artists. Although the RBSA galleries in New Street were closed briefly at the beginning of the war, they were quickly reopened²⁷⁰ and exhibitions during the war were comparatively well-attended.²⁷¹ Fleetwood-Walker continued to exhibit regularly at the RBSA during this period and his work attracted favourable comments from the press, such as one from the *Birmingham Mail* quoted by Barrie Hall: 'Thanks for (sic) Bernard Fleetwood-Walker and Joseph Southall, visitors are given at least two impressive pictures to look at.'²⁷² Other art groups and Birmingham Art Gallery held exhibitions there too,²⁷³ factors which indicate that artists in Birmingham tried to continue to pursue their careers during the war. This surely was the case for Fleetwood-Walker, as in

²⁶⁵ Minutes of the Meeting of the School of Art Sub-Committee on 20 November 1940, School of Art 1940-1941, 4, unpublished manuscript, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

²⁶⁶ Minutes of the Meeting of the School of Art Sub-Committee 16 July 1941, Salaries Sub-Committee Report, School of Art 1940-1941, report inserted after page 31, unpublished manuscript, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

²⁶⁷ Ian Gazeley, 'Women's Pay in British Industry during the Second World War', *Economic History Review*, 61:3, 2008, 659.

²⁶⁸ Foss, *War Paint: Art, War, State and Identity in Britain 1939-1945*, 23.

²⁶⁹ Sutcliffe and Smith, *History of Birmingham Volume III, Birmingham 1939-1970*, 37.

²⁷⁰ Hall, *A review of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists 1821-1999*, 3.6.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 3.8.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 3.7.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 3.7.

1940 he was elected an Associate Member of the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours,²⁷⁴ where he exhibited throughout the war years and on until 1957,²⁷⁵ and in 1945 he was elected a Member of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters (RP).²⁷⁶ Fleetwood-Walker also carried on exhibiting at the Royal Academy and was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1946.²⁷⁷ The value of Fleetwood-Walker's election as an Associate of the Royal Academy comes across in the minutes of the RBSA:

The Society has great satisfaction in that one of its Members Mr. B. Fleetwood Walker has lately received the very high distinction of being elected an Associate of the RA. Mr Fleetwood Walker is already a full Member of the RWS and the ROI and I feel sure that the President and Council will wish to put on the records of this Society how much they appreciate that these honours achieved by a fellow Member, has also added so much to the status of the Society.²⁷⁸

The effect of Fleetwood-Walker's election as an Associate of the RA is further evidenced by the minutes²⁷⁹ and when Charles Wheeler was re-appointed as President, he referred to Fleetwood-Walker's success at the RA in his acceptance speech and proposed a vote of congratulation.²⁸⁰ Shortly after this, Fleetwood-

²⁷⁴ *Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours Founded in 1804 Spring Exhibition The Two Hundred and Fourteenth Exhibition of the Society 1940*, exhibition catalogue, Archive of the Royal Watercolour Society, London.

²⁷⁵ Royal Watercolour Society Exhibition catalogues, Archive of the Royal Watercolour Society, London.

²⁷⁶ Anon., *Birmingham Post*, 16 June 1945, untitled and unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²⁷⁷ Anon., 'Honour for artist', *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 30 April 1946, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²⁷⁸ Hon Secretary's report, Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Annual Meeting 1 June 1946, RBSA Minute Book 25 March 1939-16 December 1948, 230, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁷⁹ For example, he was asked to open an exhibition Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists General Meeting 1 May 1946, RBSA Minute Book 25 March 1939-16 December 1948, 225, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁸⁰ Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Annual Meeting 1 June 1946, RBSA Minute Book 25 March 1939-16 December 1948, 234-235, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

Walker was elected RBSA Professor of Painting: the letters ARA had certainly helped his standing at the RBSA, again illustrating the effect of institutions on the artist's career.

Bernard Fleetwood-Walker continued to seek out extra work. Although he had carried out commissions for local business men before the war, showing *Mrs Walter Barrow* at the RBSA in 1928, and for politicians, including the portrait of *Alderman H. W. Hughes* hung at an RBSA exhibition in 1936, this later period is characterised by the many portraits painted and the abandonment previously described of the large nudes that were a feature of the inter-war period. From 1944 to 1946 he was one of the artists commissioned by Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd (ICI) to paint portraits of employees for a series of press advertisements, published in book form in 1946.²⁸¹ Each image was accompanied by text emphasising the contribution made by the person depicted. Clearly these works were intended to improve public perceptions of the values of the work delivered by individual employees, with the ultimate aim of driving sales for ICI products. The portraits could certainly, therefore, be considered in terms of ideology as they were used to express the interests of the dominant classes.

Birmingham after the 1939-45 War

Once the war came to an end, Birmingham entered a new phase of politics. During the war itself a more moderate stance had evolved amongst the Unionists in Birmingham until 'their policies were indistinguishable in many respects from

²⁸¹ Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd., *Portraits of an Industry*, London, 1946.

those of Labour'.²⁸² After the war the Conservative party seemed reluctant to carry out the social reforms that had been considered during the war,²⁸³ a stance which undermined the power of the Unionists in Birmingham and contributed to the increased domination of the Labour Party.²⁸⁴ Later the Unionists 'hardened their party line on many issues' and the Labour movement continued to grow.²⁸⁵ The divergence between the two parties, Unionist and Labour, was also affected by the declining involvement of the prominent liberal families, such as the Kenricks, in local politics. Sutcliffe and Smith have pointed out that politicians from these families 'normally enjoyed the respect of the Labour members for their liberal and humanitarian views'.²⁸⁶ They explain that a 'high proportion of the councillors among them were defeated at the polls. Some of the older aldermen found that owing to the fall in the number of Unionist councillors, places could not be found for them when the time came for their re-election. Others were forced to retire by their advancing age'.²⁸⁷ At the same time Unionists were physically moving away from Birmingham, evidenced by 'the growing number of Unionist members who had homes in Solihull, Sutton Coldfield, and other suburban or rural areas near the city'.²⁸⁸

The war was also followed by a difficult economic climate. Clearing up after bomb damage and dealing with housing problems caused by derelict properties and overcrowding were priorities, yet it was difficult for the City Council to progress

²⁸² Sutcliffe and Smith, *History of Birmingham Volume III, Birmingham 1939-1970*, 53.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ Ward, *City-State and Nation: Birmingham's Political History c1830-1940*, 254.

²⁸⁵ Sutcliffe and Smith, *History of Birmingham Volume III, Birmingham 1939-1970*, 99.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 122.

with these tasks because of 'shortages of labour and materials'.²⁸⁹ Birmingham's post-war reconstruction impacted on the population of the city.²⁹⁰ The 1931 census showed that the population of Birmingham was 1,002,603; in 1947 the population was 1,086,000.²⁹¹ However, Wallis Taylor in his analysis of population movement in Birmingham shows that in 1946, over 50,000 people moved out of Birmingham; in 1947 a further 47,000 people left the city.²⁹² As Sutcliffe and Smith have explained with regards to Birmingham's growth as a city, 'while the boundaries remained static from 1931, the population of middle class commuter suburbs outside the boundaries steadily expanded.'²⁹³

Towards the end of the 1940s the relationship with the RBSA that Fleetwood-Walker had nurtured since he was first elected an Associate of the Society was soured by an incident at the Annual General Meeting in 1948. At the Council meeting earlier that year the Council 'considered the question of a President to follow Mr Wheeler who desired to retire. It was decided to ask Mr B. Fleetwood Walker (sic) to allow his name to be put forward'.²⁹⁴ Although Fleetwood-Walker accepted, on the day of the A.G.M., the retiring President proposed fellow sculptor William Bloye. As explained in the minutes of that meeting 'William Bloye RBSA was elected without a vote being taken as the only other candidate B. F. Walker (sic) generously offered to stand aside for the present so that the election should

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 55.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 141-142.

²⁹¹ Wallis Taylor, 'Migration in Birmingham', M.J. Wise (ed), *Birmingham and its Regional Setting, a Scientific Survey*, Birmingham, 1950, 261.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 262.

²⁹³ Sutcliffe and Smith, *History of Birmingham Volume III, Birmingham 1939-1970*, 122.

²⁹⁴ Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists adjourned Council meeting May 10th 1948, RBSA Minute Book 7 November 1947–14 October 1955, 7, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

be unanimous'.²⁹⁵ Fleetwood-Walker resigned from the Society after this meeting.²⁹⁶ Clearly this incident was of significance to Fleetwood-Walker, as a note in the minutes of the next Council meeting adds 'The Secretary is notified by Mr B. F. Walker that he requires his name to be deleted from all the Society's literature and further catalogues'.²⁹⁷ This resignation had far reaching consequences because at the Annual General Meeting on 2 July 1949 'William S. Eggison was appointed Professor of Painting'; taking the place left vacant following Fleetwood-Walker's resignation.²⁹⁸ This incident had a significant effect on Fleetwood-Walker's later career: the break with the RBSA helped loosen his ties with Birmingham. Over twenty years earlier Fleetwood-Walker had needed the RBSA to help launch his career; now he was a Member of many of the London exhibiting societies, he no longer needed to be involved with the RBSA

The 1950s and Fleetwood-Walker's Later Career

Although Fleetwood-Walker continued to live at 91 Hagley Road, Birmingham's workforce was moving out of the city in a trend which had first been observed in the immediate post-war period and which was particularly noticeable in the 1950s.²⁹⁹ By 1951 over 100,000 of the city's working population, mainly those described by Sutcliffe and Smith as 'better-educated'³⁰⁰ and 'more comfortably-off',³⁰¹ lived outside the city boundary.³⁰² This was partly due to a lack of housing in Birmingham: most new building was carried out by the City Council as social

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

²⁹⁹ Sutcliffe and Smith, *History of Birmingham Volume III, Birmingham 1939-1970*, 216.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 217.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 155.

housing; those who left ‘tended to belong to those social groups which wanted and could obtain mortgages’.³⁰³

This population movement impacted on Fleetwood-Walker’s career. His customers were moving out of Birmingham as indicated by addresses of sitters of portrait commissions. For example Francis Gerald Ratcliff, the subject of *F. Gerald Ratcliff Esq. J.P.*, exhibited RA 1953, who had been born in Edgbaston, now lived at The Warren in Dorridge, a village outside Solihull which had become a commuter dormitory by the time his portrait was painted.³⁰⁴ Before the 1950s, Fleetwood-Walker’s home and studio in Edgbaston would have been located conveniently close to his customers. By the mid-1950s the situation had changed, with his customers dispersed into the semi-rural areas around Birmingham. The growth of this commuter belt was a factor in the development of Fleetwood-Walker’s later career, contributing to his decision to move to London.

In 1950, two years after his resignation from the RBSA, some of the Members discussed the possibility of proposing Fleetwood-Walker as next President and asking him to rejoin the Society³⁰⁵ and later that year, at the A.G.M., having already become a Member of the RP³⁰⁶ and the New English Art Club (NEAC),³⁰⁷ he was asked to become President:

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 201.

³⁰⁴ *The Birmingham Post Year Book and Who’s Who 1953*, Birmingham, 1953, 846.

³⁰⁵ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Council Meeting June 5th 1950, RBSA Minutes book, 7 November 1947 to 14 October 1955, 58 -59. RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁰⁶ Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1947, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, 1947, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁰⁷ Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Festival of Britain Exhibition, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham 1951, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

The Election of President and Vice Presidents was next taken. A lively discussion ensued on the subject and finally it was decided on the proposition of Mr Harold H. Holden that B. Fleetwood Walker (sic) should be invited to become President for the ensuing years and Mr Bloye and Mr Holden agreed to see Mr Fleetwood Walker (sic) about it.³⁰⁸

A note has been added to the minutes in a different pen: 'Mr B. Fleetwood Walker has accepted the invitation'³⁰⁹ and in 1953 a resolution was passed re-instating his Membership.³¹⁰

By 1951 Fleetwood-Walker was a Senior Lecturer at the School of Art and was paid £1,000 per year.³¹¹ However, in 1951 Birmingham's Chief Education Officer set a Senior Lecturer's salary at £1,150 per annum.³¹² Archive material does not indicate whether Fleetwood-Walker knew that he was being paid 11% less than the figure recommended, but if he did, he would surely have been very dissatisfied. However it is known that it was in 1951 that Fleetwood-Walker left Birmingham School of Art.³¹³ Previous biographical information states that he retired then,³¹⁴ but as he would only have been 58 he may simply have decided to leave. A state pension scheme had been introduced in the UK shortly after the

³⁰⁸ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Annual General Meeting June 10th 1950, RBSA Minutes Book, 7 November 1947 to 14 October 1955 63. RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Annual General Meeting March 14th 1953, RBSA Minutes book, 7 November 1947 to 14 October 1955, 144, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³¹¹ Minutes of the School of Art Sub-committee 1950-1951, Meeting of the School of Art Sub-Committee 16 May 1951, 142a, unpublished manuscript, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

³¹² Minutes of the School of Art Sub-Committee 1950-1951, Meeting of the School of Art Sub-Committee 16 May 1951, Memorandum by the Chief Education Officer detailing Scales of Salaries for Teaching Staff, Burnham (Further Education) Report 1951, included in minutes of meeting 16 May 1951, unpublished manuscript, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

³¹³ Grosse, *Bernard Fleetwood-Walker (1893-1965)*, 7.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

end of 1939-45 war, but pensions were only payable once the recipient had reached the retirement age, which was 65 for a man, and could only be claimed if all paid work had ceased.³¹⁵ Fleetwood-Walker's family have said that he suffered a stroke at this time³¹⁶ and that ill-health prevented him from continuing with his teaching.³¹⁷ He became an assistant teacher of painting at the Royal Academy Schools where he received 6 guineas per visit.³¹⁸ Information obtained from the Royal Academy archive does not reveal how often he visited; however, if he only visited once a week during term time, this would have meant a considerable drop in salary. It is probable that this is what occurred, as members of the artist's family remember him travelling by train to London once a week.³¹⁹

Issues concerning sales of portraiture may also have been relevant to Fleetwood-Walker at this time. It has been argued by W. D. Rubinstein that during this period much of the country's wealth was concentrated in London.³²⁰ Rubinstein has carried out 'a detailed examination of the geographical distribution of the business and professional portions of the income tax'³²¹ and, as a result, suggests that over 33% of middle class income assessed between 1875 and 1911 was declared in London.³²² Although Rubinstein's research only covers the years up to 1914, the pattern he identified was consistent for the forty years covered by the research, so

³¹⁵ Barbara Lewis, R.H.B. Condie, 'The British Social Security Programme', *The Journal of Politics*, 12:2, 1950, 336.

³¹⁶ This is all that is known about Fleetwood-Walker's health at this time, interview with Pat Fleetwood-Walker, 8 January 2007.

³¹⁷ Interview with Pat Fleetwood-Walker, 8 January 2007.

³¹⁸ Correspondence with Royal Academy archives, 14 December 2006.

³¹⁹ Interview with Pat Fleetwood-Walker, 8 January 2007.

³²⁰ W. D. Rubinstein, *Elites and the Wealthy in Modern British History*, Brighton, 1987, 28.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

³²² *Ibid.*, 94 and 95, Table 4.1. Rubinstein explains how he defined the 'middle classes' on page 89.

it is reasonable to suppose the pattern continued.³²³ The concentration of earning power in London would be very relevant to a portrait artist looking for commissions. Interest in portraiture in London in the 1950s is indicated by the popularity of the exhibitions of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters. In 1953 that society reported record visitor numbers and catalogue sales, 'representing almost a 50% increase on last year'.³²⁴ The high proportion of affluence in London would have been particularly important to an artist who was by now a Member of most of the exhibiting art societies in London, and as a result, perhaps, Fleetwood-Walker increasingly looked to London rather than Birmingham for portrait commissions. After leaving the School of Art Fleetwood-Walker at first continued to work for a local Birmingham clientele as a portrait artist. In 1953 he carried out a large group painting of the directors of Kenrick and Jefferson, one of the largest printers in the country, whose directors were related to the Kenricks who had provided his scholarship to the School of Art.³²⁵ In 1956 he painted portraits of Canon Ronald Lunt, the Chief Master of King Edward's School and of Thomas Bodkin, Director of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts at the University of Birmingham. Both portraits were exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. However these portraits were not well-received. Cannon Lunt's widow has explained that 'the portrait was not considered to be an adequate representation of Ronald Lunt. It was therefore never displayed'.³²⁶ The portrait of Bodkin was commissioned by the Friends of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and at the time of the commissioning of the portrait, Ellis Waterhouse, Bodkin's successor at the Barber Institute, commented

³²³ *Ibid.*, 96.

³²⁴ 'Report re Exhibition Attendances etc up to 12 December 1953', RP Archive, ref. M/SA/N/ACC/3489/7, London Metropolitan Archives, London.

³²⁵ See Chapter 2 for a fuller discussion of this group portrait.

³²⁶ Letter to the author from Veslemoy Lunt dated 10 February 2007.

that he thought that Fleetwood-Walker's paintings 'are fit to serve as temporary roofing for hen houses'.³²⁷ It does not seem likely that Bodkin himself appreciated the work as in 1936 he had criticised what he called 'the tradition of indiscriminate portrait painting which has proved so often detrimental to the cause of art in Great Britain',³²⁸ adding: 'it is to be hoped that the scientific needs of historians and biographers will in future be served by the photographer rather than by the journey-man painter'.³²⁹ A letter regarding the commission from Holland W. Hobbis, chair of the Friends committee, observes: 'I feel now the wish of the Rank and File of the Friends has been met',³³⁰ as though implying popular demand for a work by that artist, rather than critical or academic acclaim for the sitter, had stimulated the commissioning of the portrait. These documents evidence the suggestion made by Becker, that patronage systems control art works,³³¹ although in this case initially indirectly as it would appear that the individuals directly involved in this purchase would not have commissioned a portrait from Fleetwood-Walker from personal choice; the commission was placed in response to demands made by other players in the art world. At the same time, the fact that the portrait of Lunt was never displayed emphasises the extent of the control patrons have over an artist's work and over access to other patrons, as displaying the portrait in a school may well have led to further commissions.

³²⁷ Letter from 'Ellis', presumably Ellis Waterhouse, of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, to 'Trenchard' presumably Trenchard Cox, the Director of Birmingham Art Gallery, dated 27 March 1955, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery curatorial file, Portrait of Professor Thomas Bodkin, P114'55, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham.

³²⁸ Thomas Bodkin, 'Some Problems of National Portraiture', *The Burlington Magazine*, 69:405, 1936, 251.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ Note from Holland W. Hobbis dated 15 August 1955. Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery curatorial file, Portrait of Professor Thomas Bodkin, P114'55, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham.

³³¹ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 99.

As will be considered in more detail in Chapter Two, the depiction of individuals in positions of responsibility and authority can stimulate considerations of the representation of dominant ideology. However, archival evidence regarding the emergence of the portrait of Bodkin demonstrates the need for subtlety in the application of the methodology of ideology. Research findings indicate that the portrait of Bodkin was produced in response to demand from the broader membership of the museum's Friends; it was not initiated by Bodkin himself, and therefore was not the result of an individual's desire to reinforce a powerful position. Conversely, it could be argued that the portrait was commissioned in order to continue to reinforce dominant ideology by averting dissent amongst the Friends. These circumstances suggest that David Craven's conception of the struggle for domination within society—that it is not necessarily a polarised confrontation between proletariat and others, but 'the interaction of competing groups that continually negotiate power'³³²—is the position embodied by Fleetwood-Walker's portrait of Bodkin.

The move to London and to the Royal Academy was significant in other ways. Fleetwood-Walker was elected a Royal Academician in 1956³³³ and so was, it would seem, at the peak of his career. Economic conditions in Birmingham were relatively stable and would continue to be so until his death—in the 1950s and early 1960s the unemployment rate was less than 1%, only rarely rising to over

³³² David Craven, 'Marxism and Critical Art History', Paul Smith and Carolyn Wilde (eds), *A Companion to Art Theory*, Oxford, 2002, 267-285.

³³³ *Royal Academy Exhibitors, 1905-1970*, 77.

2%.³³⁴ Yet in a letter to Richard Seddon dated 4 June 1957, Fleetwood-Walker wrote 'I shall need all the work I can get'.³³⁵ Economic conditions could have been behind this statement and in particular developments in the infrastructure of the art market in Birmingham—or perhaps the artist simply needed to boost his income. The economics of the visual arts had changed in the years immediately following the 1939-45 war. As Nicholas Pearson explains in *The State and the Visual Arts*, the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (C.E.M.A.), initially established by a private trust, increasingly obtained its funding from central government. In 1946 this institution evolved into the Arts Council.³³⁶ The creation of the Arts Council was the outcome of a consultation exercise, carried out by The Arts Enquiry, into the state of the visual arts in Britain.³³⁷ Pearson explains that a critique of the Royal Academy was central to this report, remarking that this body, 'as the most powerful art institution in the nineteenth century symbolized for the Arts Enquiry all that was wrong with art. The Academy had dominated, or responded to, popular taste; provincial museums and art gallery collections had been established as if permanent academies; serious and difficult art had been neglected'.³³⁸ The report revealed a determination for state control to be exercised over patronage so as to avoid the domination of popular taste,³³⁹ a stance which could be seen as a reflection of the reinforcement of dominant ideology. As Andrew Brighton has pointed out, there was a close link between the

³³⁴ Barbara Tilson (ed), *Made in Birmingham: Design & Industry 1889-1989*, Studley, 1989. 10.

³³⁵ Letter from Bernard Fleetwood-Walker to Richard Seddon, 4 June 1957, in Richard Seddon's correspondence, Archive of the Royal Watercolour Society, London.

³³⁶ It was incorporated on 9 August 1946. Nicholas Pearson, *The State and the Visual Arts. A Discussion of State Intervention in the Visual Arts in Britain, 1760 to 1981*, Milton Keynes, 1982, 48.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

formation of the Arts Council and the Bloomsbury artists, as John Maynard Keynes, a friend of several of the artists involved,³⁴⁰ was chairman of C.E.M.A. The function of the Arts Council was to be an alternative Academy, aiming, as Brighton writes, 'to confer status and recognition on certain artists and kinds of art and to deny it to others'.³⁴¹ Pearson's commentary on these events testifies to the difficulty of applying the Marxist theory of ideology to the production, reception and display of art works. It suggests that works shown at the Royal Academy, which could be considered to be an institution reflective of dominant ideology, was critiqued by the Arts Enquiry because it reflected and promoted popular taste and so challenged the opinions of a different section of the dominant classes. The dominant classes embodied in the Arts Enquiry wanted to promote difficult and challenging art, possibly to make it more difficult to understand and therefore exclusive. As Craven has recorded, Marx recognised the complexity of these issues and moved away from a simple class model later in his career: 'in a polemical tract aimed at galvanizing popular insurrection, this two-class model was serviceable enough. But it foundered on the shores of more nuanced historical analysis. Thus, Marx shifted his usage of class at several notable points throughout his career.'³⁴² In the example of the debate between the Royal Academy and the Arts Enquiry, an approach suggested by Harrington may be more illuminating: 'cultural forms are seen as transmitting power from some groups in society over others without necessarily revealing any single originating

³⁴⁰ See for example Spalding, *Vanessa Bell*, 160.

³⁴¹ Andrew Brighton, "'Where Are the Boys of the Old Brigade?'" The Post-War Decline of British Traditionalist Painting', *Oxford Art Journal*, 4:1, 1981, 36.

³⁴² David Craven, 'Marxism and Critical Art History', 74.

source of domination'.³⁴³ For Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, an artist who had spent the preceding twenty years exhibiting with the Royal Academy, the Arts Enquiry report must have been a matter of some concern. Evidently he did not abandon his allegiance to the Royal Academy, as his election as an Academician came ten years after the Arts Enquiry report was published. The Arts Council policy in the regions was also relevant to his situation. Although C.E.M.A. had several regional offices, including one in Birmingham, once the Arts Council was formed these were shut down. Reaction to this in the regions was very negative. However as Pearson suggests, closure of the regional offices was inevitable as 'the change was implicit in the assumptions about art, standards, excellence, quality and a metropolitan culture that had been built into Arts Council early on'.³⁴⁴ The Arts Council's aim to regulate taste and patronage and concentrate on developing the arts in the capital could have had serious implications for Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, leading to his anxious comments in his letter to Richard Seddon. These concerns would have been exacerbated by the relocation of potential patrons away from Birmingham itself and the reduction of access to patrons in Birmingham that is implied by the comments made surrounding the portraits of Lunt and Bodkin.

A lack of sources of income for Fleetwood-Walker could also be related to the lack of art dealers in Birmingham. The gradual decline in the number of art dealers in the early-twentieth century can be seen from the entries in the local trade directory. In 1925 there were eighteen galleries listed, in 1935 there were thirteen,

³⁴³ Harrington, *Art and Social Theory: Sociological Arguments in Aesthetics*, 19-20.

³⁴⁴ Pearson, *The State and the Visual Arts*, 58.

in 1946 there were seven, and by 1956 just three.³⁴⁵ The only gallery which continued to operate throughout this period was the Graves Gallery. This was at 44 Cherry Street and is recorded in the directory as early as 1920. Its proprietor for at least twenty-five years was Ernest Haydon Hare³⁴⁶ but it changed hands in 1946 and again in 1947, before finally disappearing around 1958. Information about this gallery is scarce. Birmingham Archives and Heritage Service only holds three catalogues, dating from 1907, 1916 and 1926. Another gallery, the Ruskin Gallery, was very active before the 1939-45 war. Originally established by John Gibbins who died in 1932, this gallery eventually closed at the end of March 1940 'owing to the effects of war and to its staff being of military age'.³⁴⁷ Some archive material about the Ruskin Gallery exists in the collection of Birmingham Archives and Heritage Service including a set of exhibition catalogues for the period May 1931 to March 1940. The 'closing down notice' included in the March 1940 catalogue says that the aim of the gallery was 'an endeavour to show the best in modern art and that of the Old Masters, with the hope that one day the Midlands could support a Gallery not excelled in London'.³⁴⁸ Archive material concerning the other galleries listed in *Kelly's* directories has not been traced. This lack of archive material suggests that the impact of dealers on art sales in Birmingham was limited.

³⁴⁵ This information was obtained by searching volumes of *Kelly's Directory of Birmingham* covering the years 1925 to 1956.

³⁴⁶ 'Closing down notice' included in bound volume of catalogues of exhibitions held at Ruskin Gallery May 1931 to March 1940, Birmingham Archives and Heritage Service, Central Library, Birmingham.

LF545.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

It was probably in 1957 that Fleetwood-Walker was commissioned to paint King Faisal II of Iraq, who was later assassinated in the coup d'état in Iraq in July 1958.³⁴⁹ An interview with Mrs Pat Fleetwood-Walker, the artist's daughter-in-law, revealed that Fleetwood-Walker and his wife went to Iraq to carry out this commission,³⁵⁰ and in 1957 two studies of King Faisal II were shown at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. In the catalogue for that exhibition Fleetwood-Walker's address was given as 91 Hagley Road in Edgbaston, but the following year, when the finished work was exhibited,³⁵¹ his address was given as 13 Wallgrave Road, London SW5. The portrait of King Faisal II is another work in which an ideological content could be discerned, particularly as the Iraqi monarch had been installed by the British government. Fleetwood-Walker's finished picture is a standing portrait of the king in uniform and is very like the Gerald Kelly (1879-1972) portrait of George VI. The portrait of King Faisal II could be seen as an enactment of ideology in that it reinforces the political interest in the subordination of Iraq. However, a lack of archival documentation means that a more subtle analysis cannot be carried out, as it is not known who commissioned the painting and the work itself has not been traced.

Family members have explained that Fleetwood-Walker left Birmingham for Iraq and returned to live permanently in London once that commission was completed, and this is substantiated by the *Kelly's* directories for the period.³⁵² Ordnance

³⁴⁹ John Galvani, 'The Baathi Revolution in Iraq', *MERIP Reports*, 12, 1972, 15.

³⁵⁰ Interview with Pat Fleetwood-Walker, 8 January 2007.

³⁵¹ *Royal Academy Exhibitors, 1905-1970*, 77.

³⁵² The 1956 directory shows Fleetwood-Walker was living at 91 Hagley Road. The next directory, 1958, has no entry for that address and the following directory, 1960, shows that 91 Hagley Road was in use as offices. *Kelly's Directory of Birmingham*, 1956 and 1958.

Survey maps (revised in 1968) show that the house at 91 Hagley Road was still standing several years after the artist's death, confirming that the redevelopment of this part of Birmingham as a 'downtown' office district took place several years after the artist's departure, as confirmed by a press cutting in the Walker family private archive.³⁵³

All evidence seems to suggest therefore that Fleetwood-Walker moved to London by choice. Following the misunderstanding over the election of Bloye as President, Fleetwood-Walker's involvement with the RBSA declined. His election as a full Academician came in 1956³⁵⁴ and the move to London would have helped the artist take advantage of this new status. Fleetwood-Walker himself observed that there was little demand for art in Birmingham, commenting: "I've been in houses with thousands of pounds' worth of furniture, where they spend £3 a week on flowers, yet spend not a penny on pictures".³⁵⁵ As has been noted, some of his portrait commissions from the 1950s were not well-received. There was a general lessening of interest in the work of artists from Birmingham, as indicated by the disposal by Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery of works by regional artists.³⁵⁶ As previously recorded, Fleetwood-Walker's customers were no longer based in Edgbaston and the other districts of Birmingham itself, but were moving out to the suburbs and semi-rural villages away from the city. The strengthening Labour

³⁵³ Anon., 'The neat and unspoilt house in Hagley Road, Edgbaston, where Mr B. Fleetwood-Walker, the portrait painter, lived and worked until his recent removal to London', caption from photograph in untitled, undated, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

³⁵⁴ See Introduction.

³⁵⁵ Anon., 'Midland art ideas based on fashions', *Birmingham Gazette*, 5 January 1951, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

³⁵⁶ Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery Collecting Policy, www.bmag.org.uk/pdf/collecting_policy_2003-8_amended_2005.pdf, 7, date accessed 10 April 2008.

Party in Birmingham was at once the indicator and the stimulus of this situation. At the beginning of Fleetwood-Walker's career disposable income in Birmingham tended to be held by sectors of the population who were politically aligned with the Liberals; later this alignment was with the Liberal Unionists and later still the Conservatives. As the Labour Party developed, the Conservatives moved out and so did Fleetwood-Walker's clients. Rubinstein has described the Conservative Party at this stage as one 'largely based on the Anglican, London and suburban middle classes'³⁵⁷ and if Fleetwood-Walker's customers were largely Conservatives, he would have had to move to London to follow them. The situation for Fleetwood-Walker reflected the wider political landscape. The dominance of London and its surrounding regions during the first half of the twentieth century has been analysed by Peter Scott who concludes that this was a product not just of the problems of Britain's peripheral regions but of the economic and political strength of London. The capital's economic interests (and, particularly, those of its international financial and business services activities) were seen as synonymous with the national interest, enabling government to pursue economic policies that inflicted severe and persistent damage on its provincial regions while provoking remarkably little mainstream political protest.³⁵⁸

However, according to family history, more personal economic factors were also behind the final decision to move. Fleetwood-Walker's second wife's father died,

³⁵⁷ Rubinstein, *Elites and the Wealthy in Modern British History*, 109.

³⁵⁸ Peter Scott, *Triumph of the South: A Regional Economic History of Early-Twentieth Century Britain*, Aldershot, 2007, 286.

leaving an inheritance which paid for the move to London.³⁵⁹ Here he continued his portrait practice. At the same time, business structures were changing. Companies were increasingly run by boards of directors recruited for skill sets rather than by family members, perhaps leading to a reduced sense of individual and family identity within organisations and as a result, less demand for boardroom portraits in the late 1950s and early 1960s.³⁶⁰ Fleetwood-Walker's later commissions were from very traditional sectors— there were bishops, professors and headmasters, but very few industrialists after the mid 1950s.³⁶¹ The final few years of his career were dominated by ill-health, and the number of commissions exhibited at the RA diminished, Fleetwood-Walker showing instead many paintings of children, especially those of friends.³⁶²

Birmingham and Glasgow: a Comparison

It has been argued that until the late-nineteenth century 'artists and writers were well integrated into the social structures in which they worked, painting and writing to commission from aristocratic patrons, exhibiting in Academies, and in no sense defining themselves as outcasts or as opponents of the social order'.³⁶³ A change took place towards the end of the century when the dealer-critic system began to emerge.³⁶⁴ However, as has been emphasised by Anne Helmreich, most research

³⁵⁹ Interview with Pat Fleetwood-Walker 12 September 2006.

³⁶⁰ From 1955 until his death 10 years later no portraits of industrialists by Fleetwood-Walker were shown at the RA

³⁶¹ For example *The Right Rev. H.C. Montgomery Campbell, M.C., D.D., Bishop of London; Bishop of Guildford, 1949–56*, shown at the RA in 1957, *Norman B. Capon, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.P., F.E.C.O.G., Professor Emeritus of Child Health, University of Liverpool*, shown at the RA in 1958 and *T.A. Woodcock, Esq., M.A., O.B.E., J.P. Headmaster, Ashby Grammar School* shown at the RA in 1957, *Royal Academy Exhibitors, 1905-1970*, 76-77.

³⁶² For example *Janet, daughter of Mr and Mrs Henry Rushbury*, shown at the RA in 1960, *Ibid.*

³⁶³ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 11.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

to date into the dealer-critic system has concentrated on such developments in France.³⁶⁵ Helmreich herself considers the growth of the art market in Britain in her article about art dealer David Croal Thomson, observing that Thomson's career coincided with 'decades in which the profession of art dealer gained in respectability and financial rewards'.³⁶⁶ Although Helmreich remarks upon the volatility of the art market, singling out, for example, the year 1892 as a period of instability caused by political and economic upheavals, and comments upon the fierce competition between dealers, art societies, auction houses, booksellers and printsellers, she emphasises that the dealers were considered wealthy and powerful.³⁶⁷ Helmreich also highlights Thomson's position as editor of the *Art Journal*, saying that this meant that Thomson 'shaped current fashion in art'.³⁶⁸ Thomson, then, was a dealer working in London within the dealer-critic system. His career lasted from circa 1885 to 1930, coming to an end just as Fleetwood-Walker began to exhibit regularly at the RBSA, and so forms a relevant example of the way in which art was traded in Britain at the time.

However, the research conducted in the preparation of this thesis suggests that this new business model did not completely overturn previous ways of working and that the speed of adoption of the new system was not uniform throughout Britain. As has been described, in Birmingham art-dealers became less numerous in the

³⁶⁵ Anne Helmreich, 'The Art Dealer and Taste: the Case of David Croal Thomson and the Goupil Gallery, 1885-1897', *Visual culture in Britain*, 6:2, 2005, 45 and see for example Robert Jensen, *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, Princeton, 1994.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 43.

twentieth century, so that by the 1950s the few that remained would not have had the critical mass to create an infrastructure for the promotion of artists' work.

In *By Hammer and Hand*, Alan Crawford compared the blossoming of the Arts and Crafts in Birmingham with the success of the movement in other parts of the country, concluding that the only other city in the U.K. in which the Arts and Crafts took hold to a comparable extent was Glasgow.³⁶⁹ However Glasgow differed from Birmingham in the way patronage systems for art matured. Here a dealer-critic system did emerge. Instrumental in developing the market in Glasgow was the dealer Alexander Reid. Reid had trained at the Paris dealer Boussod Valadon et Cie. under Theo van Gogh; here he met Vincent van Gogh and was exposed to the work of contemporary artists in France, resulting in his exhibitions of Impressionist works in London and Glasgow from the early 1890s.³⁷⁰ Following on from this Reid identified the sales-potential of works in a similar style executed by contemporary regional artists Samuel John Peploe and George Leslie Hunter and, later, Francis Campbell Boileau Cadell. Reid's exhibition of the work of Hunter, held in 1916,³⁷¹ received what has been described as 'a glowing review' in the local publication *The Bailie*³⁷² and subsequently works by the Scottish Colourists, as they became known, became highly collectable in Glasgow.

Alexander Reid's family background could also have contributed to the growth of a dealer-critic network in Glasgow. His early connections bridged the art world and

³⁶⁹ Crawford, 'The Birmingham Setting', 39.

³⁷⁰ Frances Fowle, 'Three Scottish Colourists: Early Patronage of Peploe, Hunter and Cadell', *Apollo*, 152:464 2000, 27.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

industry as his father was a successful carver and gilder, and partner in the firm Kay and Reid which produced furnishings, including ornate figureheads, for the Glasgow shipbuilding industry.³⁷³ Alexander Reid first started work in the family firm in 1870,³⁷⁴ opening his own gallery in Glasgow in 1889,³⁷⁵ this company continuing to trade for over one hundred years.³⁷⁶ By the early-twentieth century this dealer was therefore well-established; Reid would no doubt have been well-known to both artists and patrons and would have enjoyed a stable financial basis from which to conduct his business.

In Birmingham patronage did not develop in the same way. In the mid-nineteenth century the principal venue for sales of contemporary art in Birmingham was the RBSA. Jeannie Chapel's recently published introduction to the extensive archive of art collector Joseph Gillott (1799-1872) draws attention to a number of dealers active in Birmingham in the nineteenth century with whom Gillott worked.³⁷⁷

However, it seems that most of these had disappeared from the art scene before Fleetwood-Walker's career was under way and certainly none of them is listed in the trade directory for 1920.³⁷⁸

³⁷³ Jack Webster, 'Such a notable brush with Van Gogh', *The Herald* (Glasgow), 24 February 2000, www.lexisnexis.com, date accessed 7 June 2008 and Olive Checkland *Japan and Britain after 1859: Creating Cultural Bridges*, London, 2003.

³⁷⁴ Checkland, *Japan and Britain after 1859: Creating Cultural Bridges*, 117.

³⁷⁵ Frances Fowle, 'Three Scottish Colourists: Early Patronage of Peplow, Hunter and Cadell', 27 footnote 10.

³⁷⁶ Reid and fellow dealer Aitken Dott went into partnership in 1921, *Ibid.*, 32. They merged with a London dealer in 1926 becoming known as Alex Reid and Lefevre, continuing in existence until 2002. Colin Gleadell, 'London Out of the Frame as Gallery Closes', *The Daily Telegraph*, London, Saturday 12 January 2002, www.lexisnexis.com, date accessed 7 June 2008.

³⁷⁷ These include William C. Holmes an auctioneer who went bankrupt in 1858, William Henry Hall (1812-1880) of 14 Hagley Road Birmingham and Mayfield Kings Heath Birmingham, Edwin Abraham Butler (?d 1869) of 77 High Street Birmingham; and Allen Edward Everitt (1925-1882) who continued the business started by his father, trading at 66 New Street, Birmingham; this business became Everitt & Hill and later, Hill & Thrupp, Jeannie Chapel, 'The Papers of Joseph Gillott (1799-1872)', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 20:1, 2008, 37-84.

³⁷⁸ *Kelly's Directory of Birmingham*, 1920, 1112.

Reid's success was partly due to a different economic situation in Glasgow, as many of his clients were extremely wealthy, such as ship owner William Burrell (1861-1958)³⁷⁹ whereas in Birmingham the scale of individual wealth was limited because its growth was due to the expansion of a considerable number of workshops and small factories, rather than the development of a small number of large companies.³⁸⁰

Other reasons for regional differences could be related to the limited involvement of Birmingham in national affairs. Hartmut Berghoff has examined this issue³⁸¹ and found that until 1914 business leaders in Birmingham, compared in his study with those of Manchester and Bristol, were particularly isolated from social and political life in London and struggled to find influence or recognition on a national scale. Berghoff describes this as an 'amazingly uneven distribution of honours and offices'³⁸² and his research shows that this was in spite of Birmingham's economic success.³⁸³ Berghoff's article shows how difficult it was for a Birmingham business man or politician to gain recognition in London in the years up to 1914 and it seems plausible that it was equally difficult for an artist from Birmingham to gain recognition even as late as the 1950s.

³⁷⁹ Frances Fowle, 'Three Scottish Colourists: Early Patronage of Peploe, Hunter and Cadell', 26-33.

³⁸⁰ See for example Hartmut Berghoff, 'Regional Variations in Provincial Business Biography: The Case of Birmingham, Bristol and Manchester, 1870-1914', *Business History*, 37:1, 1995, 65 and 76.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 64-85.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 75.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, 77.

Summary

Harold Osborne once stated that it is ‘a basic assumption of our culture that what we call ‘fine art’ cannot be reduced to reason and rule, craftsmanship and skill, but is the product of something vaguely known as ‘genius’’.³⁸⁴ This stance was challenged by Howard Becker in *Art Worlds* who observed that the artist ‘works in the centre of a network of co-operating people, all of whose work is essential to the final outcome’,³⁸⁵ and by Wolff who wrote that ‘financial, economic and organisational factors’ are ‘material and non-ideological aspects of the social production of art’.³⁸⁶

This chapter has demonstrated that Bernard Fleetwood-Walker’s artistic career was closely connected to a wide range of social factors. Economic conditions were of considerable influence. Fleetwood-Walker’s origin in a working family rather than a family with a private income meant that he had to take up a trade or profession. Although he was not born into a family of established portrait painters, his family did not oppose art as a profession because of the existence of artists amongst their ancestors. The training available at the School of Art, with its focus on the preparation of young people for a career, and the perception of the social status of the artist in a city which celebrated the Arts and Crafts artist, facilitated Fleetwood-Walker’s choice of profession. This favourable view of art as a career was strengthened by the success of artists such as Gaskin, who successfully embraced a portfolio career in the arts, and by the close involvement of business people and politicians in the support and patronage of the arts. The existence in

³⁸⁴ Harold Osborne, ‘Aesthetics and the Artist Today’, *Leonardo*, 4:1, 1971, 51.

³⁸⁵ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 25.

³⁸⁶ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 30.

Birmingham of an institution supporting artists, the RBSA, and of other networks, was another positive factor. Unstable financial conditions regionally and nationwide at different times in his career, also had an effect. As portraiture was considered to be one of the genres of art which was the most likely to lead to regular work, portraiture was the genre adopted by Fleetwood-Walker. At the same time, an exhibiting career was made possible by the income he earned from teaching. Birmingham's RBSA introduced Fleetwood-Walker to the structure of Academies, reinforced by his early experience in Paris and training as to how to take advantage of such institutions. His links with this and many similar organisations helped to further his career, culminating in his election as an Academician. This biographical detail demonstrates both the importance of an integration with an art world for the development of the artist and how the artist's connection with social structures can have an impact on the ideological content of artworks. Connections with the art world facilitated the development of a career as an artist, as did close links with institutions like the School of Art and the RBSA.

Simultaneously Birmingham itself affected his work, early city identity and civic pride and later connections with wartime munitions production leading to commissions. Regional issues were also a factor in his career. Fleetwood-Walker started his training when the artist's career in Birmingham was still part of a relatively secure system because of the strength of the Arts and Crafts movement. He benefited from an enduring support for the Academies, stimulated by local conditions: the existence of the RBSA and an economic and political environment that delayed the emergence of a regional dealer-critic network. A shifting

population and the consolidation of the nation's wealth in the capital contributed to his departure to Iraq and then to London. His activities within the RBSA illustrate his own awareness of the existence of an art world and the need for support of this art world. It has been shown that this art world supported the co-operative production of art. The chapter has also shown that the artist's output was embedded in and reflective of the contemporary social situation, demonstrating the modernity of the work, a concept to be examined further when discussing specific portraits. This chapter has also introduced a discussion of the concept of ideology and artistic output, an issue to be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

BUSINESS AND MODERN PORTRAITURE: FLEETWOOD-WALKER'S PORTRAITS AND INDUSTRY IN BIRMINGHAM

This chapter will locate Fleetwood-Walker's output in the context of portraiture and portrait conventions in England, examine in particular Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's portraits of business people and explore how these demonstrate the artist's application of portrait conventions to depictions of contemporary sitters. It will also reflect on how these works are revealing of ideology as well as of the social production of art and will situate them within the debate on modernity.

Portraiture in Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century is a subject which calls for further investigation. As John Gage was already arguing in 1993, referring to British portraiture in general, 'there is a vast and fascinating subject in British portraiture which is still waiting to be explored'.¹ Interest in twentieth-century portraiture so far has been concentrated on some of the more familiar artists from the period and tends to adopt a formalist approach to study of the work: for example the exhibition *Twentieth-Century Portraits* held at the National Portrait Gallery in 1978, and its accompanying catalogue, included examples of work by Lucian Freud, Stanley Spencer, Gwen John and Augustus John.² Many

¹ John Gage, 'Review of *The British Portrait 1660-1960*', *Art History*, 16:4, 1993, 667.

² Robin Gibson, *Twentieth Century Portraits*, Exhibition Catalogue, London, National Portrait Gallery, London 1978. The paintings shown by these artists were catalogue no 3, Lucien Freud, *Girl with Roses*; catalogue no 12, Stanley Spencer, *Patricia Preece*; catalogue no 24 Gwen John, *Chloë Boughton-Leigh*; catalogue no 61, Augustus John, *Tallulah Bankhead*.

portraitists from the period considered here, for example Meredith Frampton, whose work has been described as ‘hyper-realism’,³ were not represented. Similarly, Elizabeth Cayzer, in her book *Changing Perceptions: Milestones in Twentieth Century British Portraits*,⁴ reviews a selection of works by renowned artists including John Singer Sargent, Gwen John, Mark Gertler, Henry Lamb and Vanessa Bell and favours a formalist approach.

The exhibition *Painting the Century: 101 Portrait Masterpieces 1900-2000* highlighted the use of portraiture by avant-garde artists of the twentieth century, concentrating on how ‘modern painters, who often seem to have lost interest in representational truth, have in fact extended traditional concepts of portraiture’.⁵ In the introduction to the exhibition’s catalogue, Norbert Lynton described the evolution of ‘movements’ in early twentieth-century painting and explains how the recognition of these artistic developments means that ‘we ignore the more tradition-bound art that actually dominated those years as far as the public was concerned’.⁶ In spite of this observation, Lynton himself seems to discount the wide range of portraiture produced in the period, arguing, when discussing the juxtaposition of portraits by Bouguereau and Sargent with works by Boldini, Munch and Laronov, that ‘to see such contradictory works together is to understand better what the Modernists were contending with, and how proper their impatience was. It also helps us to empathise with the traditionalists’ horror at Modernism’.⁷ Again,

³ Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art*, 196.

⁴ Elizabeth Cayzer, *Changing Perceptions: Milestones in Twentieth-Century British Portraiture*, Brighton, 1999.

⁵ Gibson, *Painting the Century: 101 Portrait Masterpieces 1900-2000*, 9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

this approach is based on an interest in evaluating works from their formal aspects.

Gabriel Badea-Păun's book, *The Society Portrait: Painting, Prestige and the Pursuit of Elegance*,⁸ considers portraiture from the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries from an international perspective, as is explained by Richard Ormond in the foreword: 'The rise of an internationally acclaimed group of portrait painters in the later years of the nineteenth century is the chief focus of this book'.⁹ Although Badea-Păun does include the early part of the twentieth century, he concentrates on a formalist survey of portraits of society figures, with biographical details and some social context. The writer remarks on the growth of demand for portraits from the middle classes in post-revolutionary France and the dwindling numbers of commissions for portrait artists throughout Europe after the 1939-45 war but does not investigate the emergence of alternatives to 'society portraits' as sources for commissions. This issue is addressed to a degree by two more recently published works which explore the connections between artistic production and military conflict: *William Orpen: An Onlooker in France* by Angela Weight and Robert Upstone,¹⁰ from 2005, and Jonathan Black's *The Face of Courage: Eric Kennington, Portraiture and the Second World War*, published in 2011.¹¹

⁸ Gabriel Badea-Păun, *The Society Portrait: Painting, Prestige and the Pursuit of Elegance*, London, 2007.

⁹ Richard Ormond, 'Foreword', Gabriel Badea-Păun, *The Society Portrait: Painting, Prestige and the Pursuit of Elegance*, London, 2007.

¹⁰ Angela Weight and Robert Upstone, *William Orpen: An Onlooker in France*, London, 2008.

¹¹ Jonathan Black, *The Face of Courage: Eric Kennington, Portraiture and the Second World War*, London, 2011.

A chapter of Shearer West's *Portraiture*¹² is devoted to the twentieth century. West draws attention to the range of portraits produced, stressing that the 'plurality of functions and stylistic qualities apparent in portraits of this period makes it worth addressing separately the modernist dimension to portraiture'.¹³ Here Clive Bell's dismissal of portraiture because of its concentration on representation rather than formal qualities is highlighted. This assessment was typical of the contemporary privileging of abstraction¹⁴—although in practice many artists at the time used portraiture in the development of their work, some attempting abstract portraits whilst others continued to produce portrait commissions in the traditional style. Richard Brilliant's book *Portraiture*¹⁵ examines the complex relationships between portrait, sitter and viewer, the impact of social forces on these dialogues and the role of artistic intention in this process. He illustrates his ideas with numerous examples of portraits from Western culture; some of these are the work of twentieth-century artists, including photographers, often representative of the European and American avant-garde. Self-portraits of one artist working in Britain in the early-twentieth century—those of Stanley Spencer¹⁶—are included, but this only forms part of a general discussion of portraiture rather than an in-depth analysis of portraits exhibited in Britain during the period. *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, edited by Joanna Woodall, includes a collection of essays on different subjects and methodologies, however the only twentieth-century painters

¹² West, *Portraiture*, 187-203.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 1991.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 148.

discussed are Miro and Picasso,¹⁷ therefore offering limited insights into the works considered here.

Few art historians have used a social approach to consider British portraits from the early-twentieth century. Although Charlotte Townsend-Gault implemented this method in her study of official portraiture from the period, she herself has suggested that deconstructive or iconographic approaches could possibly be more appropriate.¹⁸ Specifically, Townsend-Gault applied Janet Wolff's 'theory of ideology'¹⁹ to these portraits, a hypothesis which has been scrutinised by Wendy Griswold in her review of *The Social Production of Art*.²⁰ Here Griswold describes the 'theory of ideology' as well as what she calls a 'more empirical' approach: Two complementary traditions draw our attention. One, the more theoretically animated, locates artistic creativity in an ideological network and points out how the artist, far from transcending prevalent categories of thought, reproduces them. The other, more empirically oriented, tradition explores the institutional and organizational contexts of artistic production.²¹

The approach used in this thesis, as outlined in the introduction, is to apply both the models described here by Griswold to the study of a British portrait artist of the early-twentieth century. In this chapter the impact of the social context in which the portraitist operated will be considered alongside investigations of specific

¹⁷ David Lomas, 'Inscribing Alterity; Transactions of Self and Other in Miró Self-Portraits', Joanna Woodall (ed), *Portraiture, Facing the Subject*, Manchester, 1997, 180-186; Marcia Pointon, 'Kahnweiler's Picasso; Picasso's Kahnweiler', Joanna Woodall (ed), *Portraiture, Facing the Subject*, Manchester, 1997, 189-201.

¹⁸ Charlotte Townsend-Gault, 'Symbolic Facades: Official Portraits in British Institutions since 1920', *Art History*, II, 1988, 511-526.

¹⁹ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 9.

²⁰ Wendy Griswold, 'The Social Production of Art' (Review), *The American Journal of Sociology*, 89:3, 1983, 730-732.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 731.

portraits by Bernard Fleetwood-Walker in order to assess how individual works reflect their social and ideological context. A critique of the ideological approach, as applied to Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, will also be offered. Such a critique was recorded by Austin Harrington, who traces the limitations of the Marxist approach to its irrevocable presupposition that class structures are to be abolished.²²

Indeed, as Jeremy Tanner has observed, 'relatively few sociologists of art would today identify themselves as Marxists'.²³ Therefore, the chapter will argue that artistic output communicates in a multi-faceted way, rather than being restricted to a depiction or an enactment of ideology. The work of Robert Witkin, stimulated by the possibilities delivered by Michael Baxandall's approach will be used to enrich these investigations: Baxandall's early integration of 'social analysis and visual analysis into a single framework'²⁴ and Witkin's more recent determination to 'read transformations in social structure and relations as they are reflected in artworks',²⁵ as exemplified in his 'Constructing a Sociology for an Icon of Aesthetic Modernity'.²⁶ Therefore, while a formal examination of particular works will be used to analyse the images produced, this is with the aim of understanding the impact of the collective environment on the making of portraits. A consideration of social factors has been used by Marcia Pointon²⁷ and by Kate Retford²⁸ to scrutinise eighteenth-century portraiture but this is the first time that this method of analysis has been applied to a wide range of early twentieth-century realist

²² Harrington, *Art and Social Theory: Sociological Arguments in Aesthetics*, 62.

²³ Jeremy Tanner, *The Sociology of Art: A Reader*, London, 2003, 30.

²⁴ Jeremy Tanner, 'Michael Baxandall and the Sociological Interpretation of Art', 249.

²⁵ Ron Eyerman, and Magnus Ring, 'Towards a New Sociology of Art Worlds: Bringing Meaning Back In', *Acta Sociologica*, 14:3, 282.

²⁶ Witkin, 'Constructing a Sociology for an Icon of Aesthetic Modernity: Olympia Revisited'.

²⁷ Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head, Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England*, New Haven and London, 1993.

²⁸ Kate Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life, Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-century England*, New Haven and London, 2006.

portraits. Although Townsend-Gault's reading of institutional portraits proposes that the portraits reproduce the ideologies of the institutions that commissioned them, her analysis is restricted to works commissioned by public institutions.

The relationship of Fleetwood-Walker's work to modernity, as revealed by the portraits selected for discussion, will be analysed in the light of Clark's view that modernist artistic output reflects contemporary life.²⁹ As noted in the introduction, Witkin's observations concerning modernity are of particular relevance to this chapter, notably his statement that 'the development of modernist art was marked by a density of cultural allusion'³⁰ as is Corbett's conclusion that such depictions can reflect modernity without using modernist formal techniques.³¹ It will therefore be argued here that Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's portraits are modern, when considered in the light of the ideas put forward by Clark, Witkin and Corbett, but that this is a modernism different from the canonical one, as it considers works traditionally considered anti-modernist (such as figurative work) to be modernist.

This chapter will further argue that the types of commissions Fleetwood-Walker received reflect specific social and financial conditions in Birmingham and will illustrate how changes in community and economic structures in Birmingham in the early part of the twentieth century affected portrait commissions. It will be proposed that one of the social elements which contributed to the creation of Fleetwood-Walker's clientele was the structure of Birmingham's population, characterised by an absent aristocracy and a growing and aspirational middle

²⁹ Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*.

³⁰ Witkin, 'Constructing a Sociology for an Icon of Aesthetic Modernity: Olympia Revisited', 111.

³¹ Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art*.

class.³² The effect of market forces on Fleetwood-Walker's output will also be highlighted. No previous attempt has been made to analyse the relationship between these changes in early twentieth-century society and this artist's portrait commissions. It will be argued that as one market for portraiture declined, partially as a result of the limited presence or even complete absence in Birmingham of the aristocracy (that is to say, individuals related to the royal family, often with seats in the House of Lords), a new market for portraits developed amongst industrialists. This was partially a result of changes in political structures: a decline in political power at regional level meant that Birmingham's middle-class politicians, who had been the subject of some portraits, lost political power on the national scene; those that continued to seek political success became London-centric and, as will be discussed in some detail, had their portraits painted by artists well known in London; both these issues led to a reduction in potential sources of portrait commissions. At the same time the market for portraiture was fuelled by the expansion of businesses in Birmingham. Growth was itself driven by outside factors. The need for high-volume production during the two wars that dominated this period is one of the most important of these outside factors.³³ Demand led to the development of new company structures; businesses which had been run on a workshop basis had to expand to increase production and to develop new management systems to control this increasing complexity.³⁴ When considering

³² David Cannadine, *Lords and Landlords: the Aristocracy and the Towns, 1774 -1967*, Leicester 1980, 225.

³³ See for example Sutcliffe and Smith, *History of Birmingham Volume III, Birmingham 1939-1970*, 39-49.

³⁴ For a description of a typical workshop structure at the end of the nineteenth-century see Briggs, *History of Birmingham, Volume II, Borough and City 1865–1938*, 60.

the development of portraiture in the eighteenth century, Marcia Pointon has suggested that:

just as families and civic bodies acquired, reacquired, copied and deployed portraits in the interest of marking continuity in a world of discontinuities, so also charity organizations and private institutions accumulated portraits of founders, benefactors and governors in a continual train of historical objectification at one and the same time archival and commemorative.³⁵

It will be argued that in twentieth-century Birmingham, businesses looked to similar methods to promote a sense of continuity within their organisations, and to record and commemorate those involved with the business. Shearer West has pointed out that portraiture was used to demonstrate political power³⁶ and it will be proposed here that portraiture, already endorsed as a practice that could help promote power, was one of the tools business leaders used to reinforce their status in newly-hierarchical businesses. This chapter will also examine the complexity of motivations behind the portrait commissions, as the portraits simultaneously express the sitters' confidence and a need for recognition.³⁷

Many of the changes in society that took place in early twentieth-century Birmingham are explored in the second and third volumes of *History of Birmingham*, by Asa Briggs and by Anthony Sutcliffe and Roger Smith respectively.³⁸ Gordon Cherry's *Birmingham: a Study in Geography, History and*

³⁵ Pointon, *Hanging the Head, Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England*, 27.

³⁶ West, *Portraiture*, 68.

³⁷ For a full discussion of the complexity of issues which can lead to the production of portraits see Brilliant, *Portraiture*.

³⁸ Briggs, *History of Birmingham, Volume II, Borough and City 1865-1938*, and Sutcliffe and Smith, *History of Birmingham Volume III, Birmingham 1939-1970*.

*Planning*³⁹ demonstrates the link between business growth and increased population in the same period. However, these writers have not considered how such developments affect artists.

Fleetwood-Walker was able to concentrate fully on his career as a portrait painter when, as described in Chapter One, he returned to Birmingham just before his twenty-sixth birthday, having been demobilised at the end of the 1914-18 war. In researching Fleetwood-Walker's output as a portrait artist, exhibition catalogues covering his working life have been consulted, with references to these given in the footnotes and, for the first time, a list of works exhibited has been assembled (see Appendix). The archives of the RA, the RWS, the RBSA, the ROI, the RP and the NEAC have been studied. A collection of around eight hundred sketches remaining in Fleetwood-Walker's studio after his death is held by the family and these have been examined, particularly in relation to the finished works to be discussed in this chapter. The extensive collection of press cuttings in the Walker family private archive (to be discussed in detail in Chapter Four) has revealed the production of other portraits that were not exhibited at the institutions listed. From this research Fleetwood-Walker's portraits have been divided into different categories, depending on their subject matter. However, many of the works have yet to be traced. In some cases subject matter has been assumed simply from the implications of the titles listed. The portraits can be divided into portraits of family and friends; politicians and clergymen; figures from the cultural sphere including ballet, football, the cinema and the theatre; and portraits of industrialists. No

³⁹ Cherry, *Birmingham: A Study in Geography, History and Planning*.

records of portraits of members of the English aristocracy have been discovered and few portraits were of senior figures from institutions such as the University of Birmingham, issues to be discussed at a later stage.

Portrait Subjects in Twentieth-Century Birmingham

Fleetwood-Walker did not paint any portraits of peers of the realm or members of the aristocracy. During his lifetime, this sector of the population continued to retain an interest in portraiture and provided a source of income for the portrait painter. As has been explained by Joanna Woodall, the ruling classes and hereditary aristocracy began to commission portraits from the mid-fifteenth century.⁴⁰ The purpose of these portraits was to record family ancestry and by the sixteenth century this use of portraiture was an essential part of aristocratic iconography used to demonstrate 'the patriarchal principle of genealogy upon which aristocratic ideology was built'.⁴¹ In the twentieth century aristocratic families commissioned portraits from artists such as John Singer Sargent, John Lavery and, later Henry Lamb (1883-1960). It may be that Fleetwood-Walker was not commissioned by the aristocracy—who were not generally represented in Birmingham—in spite of his regular exhibitions at the RA, because of the many London-based portrait artists that would-be sitters could easily approach.

In Birmingham only one aristocratic family, the Calthorpes, owned considerable amounts of land in the city itself at the beginning of the twentieth century. Other

⁴⁰ Joanna Woodall, 'Introduction: Facing the subject', Joanna Woodall (ed), *Portraiture, Facing the Subject*, Manchester 1997, 1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

large areas of the city were owned by local business people.⁴² The Calthorpe estate in Edgbaston, about two miles west of the city centre, included almost 2,100 acres to the south of the Hagley Road⁴³ and by 1910 these estates were owned by Rachel Anstruther-Gough-Calthorpe (who lived until 1951),⁴⁴ the eldest daughter of Augustus, sixth Lord Calthorpe and a descendant of Sir Henry Gough, who had been created Baron Calthorpe in 1796.⁴⁵ Her father, a Conservative, had stood against Joseph Chamberlain in the general election in 1880 and lost; from then on the family withdrew from involvement in Birmingham,⁴⁶ using another of their properties as their home: Elvetham Hall in Hampshire, close to the border with Surrey. Here, much closer to the centre of aristocratic and Conservative power, the Anstruther-Gough-Calthorpes were more able to promote their own careers. These social and political factors meant that the Calthorpe family was not present in Birmingham when Fleetwood-Walker was starting his career as a portrait painter and therefore was not available as a possible source of commissions.

By the early-twentieth century prominent local families in Birmingham included the Cadburys, the Chamberlains, the Kenricks, the Beales, the Lloyds and the Martineaus.⁴⁷ It does not seem that Fleetwood-Walker painted many portraits of members of these families. The Cadburys were closely connected to Joseph Southall, a fellow member of the Society of Friends, and Southall painted several

⁴² For example Joseph Gillott, the pen maker, had bought the estate north of the Hagley Road in 1852, Slater, *Edgbaston A History*, 30.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴⁴ www.calthorpe.co.uk, date accessed 8 August 2008.

⁴⁵ William Brewer Stephens (ed.), *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 7: The City of Birmingham*, London, 1964, 58-72, www.british-history.ac.uk, accessed 26 May 2007.

⁴⁵ www.calthorpe.co.uk/pages/about_us/history, accessed 8 August 2008.

⁴⁶ Cannadine, *Lords and Landlords: the Aristocracy and the Towns, 1774 -1967*, 751.

⁴⁷ Asa Briggs, *History of Birmingham, Volume II, Borough and City 1865 – 1938*, 1-2.

portraits of family members including Barrow Cadbury.⁴⁸ The Chamberlains were moving to London by the time Fleetwood-Walker was active as a portraitist and they patronised London-based artists. Mrs Mary Chamberlain had been painted by John Singer Sargent;⁴⁹ Neville Chamberlain sat for William Orpen (1878-1931),⁵⁰ Oswald Birley (1880-1952)⁵¹ and James Gunn (1893-1964).⁵² Portraits of Austen Chamberlain were painted by John Lavery and William Rothenstein (1872-1945).⁵³ In volume four of the *Dictionary of British Portraiture* a comprehensive list of the subjects of portraits painted in the twentieth century is given. The expansive information detailed includes no mention of portraits of the other leading Birmingham families. In addition, as outlined in Chapter One, the population of Birmingham was changing rapidly during this period, the local authority unable to escape 'the erosion of its freedom of action through the combined effects of statutory limitations, central financial support, and administrative controls'.⁵⁴ As local government became less powerful, individuals and families no longer rose to local prominence as they had done in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries; often the families themselves were moving out of Birmingham and so were less likely to commission a portrait from a Birmingham artist.

⁴⁸ Breeze, *Joseph Southall 1861-1944: Artist-Craftsman*.

⁴⁹ Painted in 1902, this portrait is now at the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., USA.

⁵⁰ John Rothenstein, 'Orpen, William', *Grove Art Online, Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T063956, accessed 25 March 2012 and *Royal Academy Exhibitors 1905 – 1970*, Wakefield 1981, 254.

⁵¹ www.npg.org.uk

⁵² Richard Ormond and Malcolm Rogers (eds), *Dictionary of British Portraiture, Volume 4, The Twentieth Century*, London, 1981, 18 and www.npg.org.uk, accessed 25 March 2012.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 19 and John Rothenstein, 'Rothenstein, William', in *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T074104>, accessed 25 March 2012.

⁵⁴ Sutcliffe and Smith, *History of Birmingham Volume III, Birmingham 1939-1970*, 59.

Local Politics

Developments in local politics affected the clientele for portraiture during Fleetwood-Walker's career. As new urban centres grew a desire for self-governance developed, leading to the emergence of newly-powerful local politicians. Portraits were a means of demonstrating the significance and strength of holders of new political positions, as well as celebrating their creation. Fleetwood-Walker was able to take advantage of this function of portraiture.

Towns around Birmingham sought political recognition and independence and one of the ways in which this could be granted was through the creation of new Lord Mayors. In the 1950s both Coventry⁵⁵ and Solihull⁵⁶ were granted the right to appoint their own Lord Mayor. Fleetwood-Walker's *Alderman H.B.W. Cresswell, J.P., first Lord Mayor of Coventry* was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1954 and 1955 and now hangs in the Council Chamber of Coventry City Council House. At around the same time Fleetwood-Walker also painted *Alderman Douglas Cooper J.P., First Mayor of Solihull*,⁵⁷ a portrait which still hangs in the Civic Suite Reception at Solihull Council. This was described as 'a specially-commissioned portrait by Mr B. Fleetwood-Walker ARA, of the first Mayor of Solihull, Ald. R. Douglas Cooper. The gift is to commemorate Solihull's elevation to borough status'.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ www.coventry.gov.uk, accessed 25 May 2007.

⁵⁶ www.solihull.gov.uk, accessed 25 March 2012.

⁵⁷ Illustrated in *RA Illustrated*, 1955.

⁵⁸ Solihull was incorporated as a Borough in 1954. Anon., 'Portrait of Solihull's First Mayor as Gift. Lord Iliffe's Congratulations in Making Presentation.' *Birmingham Post* (presumed, press cutting damaged), 22 September 1954, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

The link between local politics and the press is highlighted by these two commissions. Both paintings were paid for by Lord Iliffe. An article in the *Coventry Evening Telegraph* of 18 March 1954 explains that the portrait of Creswell was donated to the city of Coventry by the Hon E. Langton Iliffe, on behalf of his father Edward Mauger Iliffe (1877-1960).⁵⁹ The Iliffe family had established the *Coventry Evening Telegraph* and E. M. Iliffe succeeded his father in the business in 1917. He also purchased the *Birmingham Post* and *Birmingham Mail* and became chairman of these organisations in 1943. Keenly interested in politics, he was Conservative M.P. for Tamworth from 1923-1929.⁶⁰ In both portraits the sitters are seen sitting in the carver chair in Fleetwood-Walker's studio, wearing their mayoral robes, pose and clothing emphasising power and status. The seated frontal pose, which has a long tradition (used from the 3rd century),⁶¹ intended to show a link to divine authority and command, would have been particularly well understood in the UK, where it can be seen in numerous paintings and sculptures in churches.⁶² These portraits therefore served not only to reinforce the authority and credibility of their sitters but also to highlight the contribution made by Iliffe as a patron to the local community and perhaps even to promote Conservative politics.⁶³ They express the interests of

⁵⁹ Anon., 'Portrait gift marks Lord Mayoralty', *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 18 March 1954, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁶⁰ Adrian Smith, 'Iliffe, Edward Mauger, first Baron Iliffe (1877-1960)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2007, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34091, accessed 18 February 2008.

⁶¹ West, *Portraiture*, 73.

⁶² For example, as seen in the Norman tympanum at the church of St Peter, Rowstone, Herefordshire. Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Herefordshire*, London, 1963, 2003 reprint, 283.

⁶³ Research into the relationship between Fleetwood-Walker's career, local politics and the political stance of these two newspapers has yet to be carried out. Fleetwood-Walker's enjoyed considerable press coverage in the Birmingham papers throughout his life and his ability to secure this coverage could have been linked to an alignment with the politics of these papers.

those who have newly acquired political power and therefore enact ideology, an interpretation reinforced by the portrait conventions used: the choice of pose, one associated with power, and the depiction of the mayoral robes, as representations of such ceremonial attire are connected with the demonstration of power and status.⁶⁴ These painting also provide an insight into the emulation of practices of power by members of regional business and political communities. Cresswell and Cooper themselves may have wished their elevation into the ruling classes to be recognised; the portraits were paid for by Iliffe, perhaps an indication of the newspaper proprietor's desire to be a part of the dominant classes. This analysis however cannot be developed in detail, as no archive material exists to evidence who chose the narrative content and means of expression of these portraits. Wolff indeed, when considering the practical implementation of a methodology of ideology was emphatic in her assertion that conclusions can only be drawn in the light of detailed empirical research.⁶⁵

As has been discussed in Chapter One, the desire of local politicians to emphasise the prestige and power of local government led to extra commissions for artists and in 1938 Fleetwood-Walker was commissioned to execute one of four wall paintings in the Council Chamber at the then new Essex County Hall at Chelmsford. The design was planned by Vincent Harris, the architect of Manchester City Library and then considered 'the expert on County Halls'.⁶⁶ The murals highlighted events in the history of Essex, and Fleetwood-Walker's work

⁶⁴ West, *Portraiture*, 71.

⁶⁵ Wolff, 'The Problem of Ideology in the Sociology of Art: a Case Study of Manchester in the Nineteenth Century', 63-75.

⁶⁶ Essex County Council, *The Council Chamber of the Essex County Council, an account of the decorations, the gift of Councillor William Julien Courtauld*, 3.

illustrates the peasant rising led by John Ball in 1381. The 'account of the decorations' explains that 'the labourer was not allowed to leave his employment in search of higher-paid work and penalties were severe. John Ball, the priest, preached the rights of man and gained an ever-increasing following'.⁶⁷ Fleetwood-Walker's mural shows John Ball addressing the people, urging them to seek their independence. In this work Fleetwood-Walker's awareness of portrait conventions is shown by his selection of the pose: the central figure is seated on a horse, a pose associated with regal portraiture; however Fleetwood-Walker plays with convention by showing the horse's head bowed almost to the feet of the surrounding peasants, suggesting a people's hero with humility. Fleetwood-Walker's awareness of other murals is also highlighted by the striking similarity between the child in the centre front of his composition and the child in a similar position in the fresco by Andrea Mantegna (1430/31-1506), the *Meeting between Ludovico and Francesco Gonzaga*⁶⁸ and also, to a lesser extent, in the inclusion of faces in profile on the left side of both works.

The decision to portray the uprising suggests that Essex County Council aimed to identify itself with the campaign for freedom and by doing so to reassure the inhabitants of the county that the local council would promote the interests and welfare of the ratepayer. In contrast, if this work were viewed in the light of the Marxist concept of ideology it could be argued that the story had been diverted and turned against the proletariat to support the Council in its aim to reinforce

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 18.

⁶⁸ This work is located at the Camera Picta, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua and described in Gabriele Finaldi, 'Mantegna, Andrea', *Grove Art Online*, *Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T053902, accessed 25 March 2012.

dominant ideology, as the Marxist view of ideology, as clarified by Austin Harrington is that 'visual and narrative contents reflect the interests of the ruling classes in maintaining their position of domination'.⁶⁹ For Fleetwood-Walker however, the commission, as was seen in Chapter One, meant a generous commission and, as will be seen in Chapter Three, more earnings.

The Clergy

By the late-nineteenth century portraits of the clergy in Britain were no longer restricted to portraits of ministers of the established church, and several participants in the Oxford Movement sat for their portraits: that of John Henry Newman was painted by John Everett Millais (1829-1896) in 1881⁷⁰ and George Frederic Watts (1817-1904) painted the portrait of Henry Edward Manning, another Roman Catholic convert, in 1882.⁷¹ Newman, the founder of the Oxford Movement, had established the Oratory in Birmingham in the mid-nineteenth century and by the 1920s Birmingham's Education Committee was providing aid to the Catholic grammar schools attached to the Oratory.⁷² Fleetwood-Walker sent both of his sons to this school and painted a portrait of the Headmaster of the Grammar School, *Father Vincent Reade*, which was shown at the RA in 1948. Reade was a high church Anglican who went to St Clement's, Cambridge. Wishing to convert to Catholicism he moved to the Oratory, where he was ordained, and became a teacher and then headmaster.⁷³ Reade may have been influential in obtaining financial support for the school and this would have

⁶⁹ Harrington, *Art and Social Theory: Sociological Arguments in Aesthetics*, 19.

⁷⁰ NPG 5295, www.npg.org.uk, accessed 25 March 2012.

⁷¹ NPG 1008, www.npg.org.uk, accessed 25 March 2012.

⁷² Briggs, *History of Birmingham, Volume II, Borough and City 1865-1938*, 241.

⁷³ Telephone interview with Father Paul, Birmingham Oratory, 22 January 2007.

contributed to the commissioning of the portrait—making a further connection between economic factors and the creation of art works.

The portrait of Father Vincent Reade⁷⁴ shows the priest dressed in a traditional black cassock with a sash, worn over a white shirt with a dog collar. He is seated on an armless ladder-back chair with a green cushion. The chair has been placed at a right angle to the viewer, so the priest has turned and rested his left arm on the back of the chair, hands clasped in front of him, to face the artist. There is no indication of the room behind the chair, only a plain terracotta background.

Although he faces the artist directly, Vincent Reade's gaze does not confront the viewer; he looks downwards and slightly to his right through a pair of wire-framed spectacles. The portraits of Newman and Manning mentioned above both use the seated pose to show the status of their sitters; however in his portrait Fleetwood-Walker has disrupted the notion of power by distorting the seated pose and by showing a downward glance rather than an assertive stare. This pose seems to emphasise the interior life and spirituality of the sitter, as though the artist wished to indicate the depth of inner reflection which would have led to conversion.

Fleetwood-Walker also painted *The Right Rev. Monsignor L.S. Emery*,⁷⁵ shown at the RA and the RBSA in 1950. Leonard S. Emery was the Rector of Oscott College, the Catholic seminary in north Birmingham, from 1935-1961.⁷⁶ A sketch for this painting shows Emery in a similarly relaxed pose, leaning forward slightly

⁷⁴ The portrait is in the Oratory collection and there is a pastel study in the artist's studio collection, see www.fleetwood-walker.co.uk.

⁷⁵ A preliminary drawing for this portrait is in the artist's studio collection, see www.fleetwood-walker.co.uk.

⁷⁶ Judith F. Champ, (ed.), *Oscott College 1838-1988, A Volume of Commemorative Essays*, no place of publication noted, 1988, 225.

as one arm rests on what might be another piece of furniture or the back of his chair, this time a far more conventional figure of a jovial clergyman. Again this portrait adopted existing portrait conventions: Joanna Woodall has observed that portraits of high-ranking clergy often included 'gorgeously rendered attire and ring of office and a 'three-quarter-length usually three-quarter-view of the sitter enthroned in an upright, rectilinear chair'.⁷⁷ The acceptance of such a portrait by the RA was therefore facilitated by its formal properties; these properties echo a portrait convention practised by artists working in London from as early as the seventeenth century, when Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641) created his portrait of Cardinal Bentivoglio.⁷⁸

Changing socio-economic conditions from the late-nineteenth century onwards could also have contributed to the creation of Fleetwood-Walker's portraits of Roman Catholic clergymen because of the conversion of high-profile theologians from the Anglican to the Roman Catholic faiths. Both Manning and Newman are examples of individuals who experienced religious conversions and were subsequently portrayed as Cardinals. It would appear that once it became acceptable for theologians who had left the Anglican faith to be depicted in portraits, for example the portraits of Cardinal Manning by Watts and Cardinal Newman by Millais, other Catholic clergymen were shown in portraits. Fleetwood-Walker's portrait of Emery therefore became an acceptable portrait to show at the RA in the 1950s. At the same time, the portraits of Roman Catholic clergymen

⁷⁷ Woodall, 'Introduction: Facing the subject', 2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, *Cardinal Guido Bentivoglio*, (1623) is at the Pitti Palace, Florence, Michael Jaffé, 'Dyck, Anthony van', in *Grove Art Online, Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T024345, accessed 25 March 2012.

illustrate the shifting position of faith leaders and how they can be depicted in different social circumstances: members of a faith group which had been seen as threatening the stability of society as recently as 1914⁷⁹ had not only become visible and acceptable; they could be depicted in a convention associated with powerful mainstream figures and these images could even be seen and used as a means of supporting dominant ideology.

Portraits of Business Leaders

Changes to Birmingham's industry in Fleetwood-Walker's lifetime were to have a dramatic effect on the portraits that he produced as company structures became more complex, organised on a hierarchical basis, with responsibility delegated through a managerial system.⁸⁰ It was for organisations like this that Fleetwood-Walker painted a number of portraits from the 1940s onwards.

J. W. Gaunt Esq., painting not yet traced) was exhibited at the RBSA in autumn 1943 and is one of the earliest examples of a formal portrait of a business leader by Fleetwood-Walker. J. W. Gaunt was the governing director of W. & J. Lawley Ltd. in West Bromwich and the portrait was presented to him by his two sons, who were directors of the company.⁸¹ A black-and-white photograph of the finished work and a preparatory sketch for the portrait⁸² are in the artist's studio collection.

The painting is a three-quarter length portrait, with the sitter viewed slightly from

⁷⁹ Michael Foy, 'Ulster Unionist Propaganda Against Home Rule 1912-14', *History Ireland*, 4:1, 1996, 49-53.

⁸⁰ Sutcliffe and Smith, *History of Birmingham Volume III, Birmingham 1939-1970*, 39-49.

⁸¹ Anon., 'Personal notes', *Ironmonger*, London 2 Oct 1943, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁸² The drawings from the artist's studio have been catalogued by Nicola Walker and can be viewed on www.fleetwood-walker.co.uk which she has continued to develop during the research for this thesis.

the side so that only one hand, the sitter's right hand, is visible. The study, in pastel on cream paper, concentrates on the head, in three-quarters view, with indications of a shirt, tie and jacket. In the painting Gaunt is seated in a carver style arm-chair placed against a curtain. The figure is brightly lit from one side with the realistically-painted foreground fading into the lost edges of the left arm and background. This strong light brings out the sitter's features, recording bald head, thin, lined face and a bulbous nose. Gaunt wears a three-piece suit, with the jacket open but the waistcoat tightly buttoned, a winged collar and a striped tie. Richard Brilliant has pointed out how portraits often 'exhibit a formal stillness, a heightened degree of self-composure that responds to the formality of the portrait-making situation'⁸³ and here a comparison of the finished portrait with the study confirms this, as the drawing shows Mr Gaunt in a less formal collar and tie and a jacket with no waistcoat on show. Wearing a wing collar with a suit had been fashionable daywear in the 1920s; a description of a typical suit from the 1920s fits Gaunt's suit almost exactly: 'Three-piece grey wool suit, single-breasted, fitted jacket, two button fastening, breast pocket [...] collarless single breasted waistcoat [...] white shirt with wing collar'.⁸⁴ Archive material discovered so far does not reveal whether it was the artist or the sitter who had decided on this heightened formality, however the overall effect is exactly that suggested by Brilliant: an indication of 'the solemnity of the occasion and the timelessness of the portrait image as a general, often generous statement summing up: "a life."⁸⁵ The realistic treatment of the face contributes to this sense of 'summing up,' as it implies that this lived-in face is the result of a lifetime of hard work. In a society

⁸³ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 10.

⁸⁴ John Peacock, *Men's Fashion: The Complete Sourcebook*, London 1996, 116, and 126.

⁸⁵ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 10.

which saw virtue in commercial success and success as the result of hard work, the depiction of external signs of hard work would have been very appropriate. Gaunt's expression is also central to the issue of how the sitter wanted to be seen. An eyebrow is raised as if a question is about to be asked, suggesting that this man is knowledgeable and alert. This is how the sitter is viewed: as a successful business man, industrious and astute; at the same time, Gaunt's prominent cheek bones and old suit may remind the viewer of conditions in wartime Britain and later, when food and clothes were rationed and a 'best suit' could not be replaced easily.⁸⁶ The painting was presented to Gaunt 'to mark the occasion of his completion of fifty years association with the company',⁸⁷ and when the painting was shown in the RBSA Autumn Exhibition in 1943 it was described as 'perhaps the most evocative picture in the gallery'.⁸⁸ Such approval implies that the artist delivered an image many considered appropriate for that kind of representation.

This appropriateness may be the result of Fleetwood-Walker's adoption of what Shearer West has called the genius portrait, a portrait which through an emphasis on physical idiosyncrasies, suggests that intensity of effort has been devoted to the intellectual demands of work, leaving nothing to spare for outward appearance, so creating a visual representation of genius.⁸⁹ A particularly well-known example of this portrait convention is Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait of Samuel Johnson.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ For example, clothes continued to be rationed until 1949. Callum G Brown, *Religion and Society in Twentieth Century Britain*, Harlow 2006, 180.

⁸⁷ Anon., 'Personal notes', *Ironmonger*, London 2 Oct 1943, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁸⁸ Anon., 'Teacher of Artists', *Birmingham Mail*, 22 September 1943, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁸⁹ West, *Portraiture*, 88.

⁹⁰ Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Samuel Johnson*, c 1756, NPG 1597, www.npg.org.uk, accessed 25 March 2012.

The selection of this pose may have been particularly apt because in 1920 James William Gaunt, of 38, Emily Street Works Manager and W. & J. Lawley Limited, Britannia Foundry, West Bromwich, Staffordshire were awarded a patent for their improvements to gas-fired furnaces and further patents were recorded in later years.⁹¹

A link could also be made between the portrait and a desire to achieve higher status and recognition through portraiture: Emily Street is a row of Victorian terraced houses, rather than the site of an imposing mansion, therefore it seems likely that J. W. Gaunt was a self-made man. Portraying the director of a factory as a genius therefore distanced the individual from what was a familiar and prosaic background. Such difference would emphasise leadership and power. This argument could be extended to suggest that such a depiction reinforced management authority to reduce the risks of workers' insurrection. This could be of practical benefit: for example, a particularly thoughtless management style could result in harsh working conditions and eventually provoke workers' action such as strikes that would be detrimental to the business; however portraying selfishness as distracted genius could be a means of playing down a dictatorial management style, interpreting it as an integral element of an intellectual's eccentricity, and therefore forgivable. In this case, however, lack of documentary evidence means that such an analysis is speculative. Nevertheless, a general point can still be made that according to Marxist theory of ideology, success in business, even when accomplished as a result of individual effort and not birth-right, is still part of capitalist structure and therefore dominant ideology is

⁹¹ See for example patent GB491606 (A) — 1938-09-06, Improvements in Flushing Cisterns, <http://worldwide.espacenet.com>, accessed 25 March 2012.

represented within this art work. At the same time, Gaunt's story highlights the weakness of the Marxist approach: David Craven has emphasised that 'the orthodox interpretation of the base/superstructure model precludes any role for individual agency, since people are assumed to be at the mercy of structural forces over which they have no control.'⁹²

This painting also illustrates how modernity as envisioned by T. J. Clark, when he wrote that 'the form of the new art is inseparable from its content',⁹³ can be depicted in portraiture. One of the later patents filled by Gaunt was for an improvement to flushing cisterns.⁹⁴ The innovations of industry and the celebration of the creativity of individuals, even when those creations related to down to earth improvements in the performance of cisterns, was a part of modern life; the form used to depict this modern life, the genius portrait, was therefore integral to the subject depicted.

J.G. Newey Esq. J.P. was also shown at the RBSA Autumn Exhibition in 1943, in the same exhibition as the portrait of Mr Gaunt. This too is a portrait of a seated figure; although his body turns very slightly away, the sitter looks straight at the viewer. Newey wears a double-breasted suit, buttoned up, with a waistcoat; a shirt and tie with a rounded collar, which, though less formal than Gaunt's, still looks like a starched, detachable collar. This would have been typical business

⁹² David Craven, 'Marxism and Critical Art History', Paul Smith and Carolyn Wilde (eds), *A Companion to Art Theory*, 272.

⁹³ Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*, 5.

⁹⁴ Patent GB491606 (A) — 1938-09-06, Improvements in Flushing Cisterns, worldwide.espacenet.com, accessed 25 March 2012.

attire for the time.⁹⁵ His hands are shown clasped firmly together and directly in the middle of the lowest part of the painting, his head is well above eye level close to the top of the picture and his body fills the picture space. This composition, with a featureless background and no accessories—even the chair is barely visible—concentrates entirely on the sitter and emphasises his physical presence. As with other works by Fleetwood-Walker, it can be connected to a portrait tradition of such works, for example as seen in John Singer Sargent's portrait of Henry James.⁹⁶ Shearer West has drawn attention to the function of portraiture as a means of emphatically reminding the viewer of the individual depicted⁹⁷ and this painting demonstrates the sense of immediacy she describes. James George Newey had been the Chairman of Newey Brothers since 1906.⁹⁸ The Newey Brothers' factories, set up to make needles and hooks and eyes, became munitions factories during the 1939-45 war. Both of James George Newey's sons, who had been working in the company, were on active service⁹⁹ so Newey continued to run the business, producing around 7 million cartridges for anti-aircraft guns.¹⁰⁰ Additionally 40mm cartridge cases were produced, the two-millionth one being produced on 8 July 1942 and presented to James George Newey,¹⁰¹ who celebrated his 70th birthday the following year. Perhaps the success of the business and the birthday together stimulated the commissioning of the portrait. Whatever the precise circumstances surrounding the commission,

⁹⁵ Peacock, *Men's Fashion: The Complete Sourcebook*, 126 and 138.

⁹⁶ John Singer Sargent, *Henry James*, 1913, NPG 1767, www.npg.org.uk, accessed 25 March 2012.

⁹⁷ West, *Portraiture*, 62.

⁹⁸ Jonathan Hunt, *Pinmakers to the World. An Illustrated History of the Newey Group*, London, 1989, 17.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

this work is demonstrably an example of the modernity of Fleetwood-Walker's portraiture. The contribution made by a seventy-year old factory owner to the war effort by the production of munitions was very much a part of contemporary life in Birmingham in the war years; in the 1939-45 war many factories in Birmingham were converted to the production of goods required by the war effort, including parts of the Cadbury chocolate factory, despite the Quaker convictions and associated pacifism of the directors.¹⁰² What Clark has called the 'form' of the painting is an echo of these circumstances, the dark and featureless background, and the ordinariness of Newey's appearance are all reminders of the darkness of war, both metaphorically and literally in view of blackout regulations, and of how this darkness engulfed and transformed ordinary people, so that a needle manufacturer well past retirement age has become a maker of ammunition. This is an example of Fleetwood-Walker's work exemplifying Witkin's view of what constitutes modernist art; as Witkin has emphasized, a defining feature of such art is the attempt 'to portray the absolutely contemporary and particular', an objective Fleetwood-Walker achieved in his portrait of Newey.¹⁰³

Although these portraits were only shown at the RBSA, it was the Royal Academy, as outlined in Chapter One, that was considered the primary showcase for the work of the portrait artist, and therefore many of Fleetwood-Walker's formal portrait commissions were shown exclusively in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibitions, no doubt with the aim of obtaining further commissions. Fleetwood-Walker's

¹⁰² Carol Kennedy, *From Dynasties to Dotcoms: the Rise, Fall and Reinvention of British Business in the past 100 years*, London, 2003, 71-72.

¹⁰³ Witkin, 'Constructing a Sociology for an Icon of Aesthetic Modernity: Olympia Revisited', 113.

portrait entitled *F. Gerald Ratcliff Esq. J.P.* was exhibited at the RA in 1953.¹⁰⁴ As in other portraits of industrialists, Fleetwood-Walker has painted Ratcliff, who was in his sixties, seated in the carver armchair¹⁰⁵ in a three-quarter view with the head slightly above eye level, so that the sitter looks down at the viewer. The posture and position reflect power; he was Managing Director of J. F. Ratcliff (Metals) Ltd., Birmingham and director of Broderick Insulated Structures Ltd., Woking as well as a Justice of the Peace for Warwickshire.¹⁰⁶ He sits in what West has called 'the established position of an authoritative ruler'.¹⁰⁷ The portrait again shows Fleetwood-Walker's knowledge of the portrait tradition as well as his ability to reinterpret this tradition to suit the contemporary environment. It can be compared with the portrait of King Charles II¹⁰⁸ by Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723)¹⁰⁹ which also shows the ruler with a half smile and, although seated, in a pose which suggests that the king is about to rise to his feet and welcome a visitor. However details of Ratcliff's pose differ from portrait conventions: the seated position and direct gaze are used, typical indications of power, but the sitter's body is turned to the side, softening the overall effect. Ratcliff is shown almost smiling, an aspect of this portrait which is also intriguing, as West has noted that a smiling expression is rarely portrayed.¹¹⁰ Altogether the portrait constructs the image of an

¹⁰⁴ Francis Gerald Ratcliff was born on 27 September 1889 at Edgbaston in Birmingham and lived at *The Warren* in Dorridge, *The Birmingham Post Year Book and Who's Who 1953 – 54*, Birmingham, nd 846.

¹⁰⁵ The same chair, for example, as is seen in the portrait *Douglas Gresham*, Dudley Museum and Art Gallery.

¹⁰⁶ *The Birmingham Post Year Book and Who's Who 1953 – 54*, Birmingham, nd, 846.

¹⁰⁷ West, *Portraiture*, 106.

¹⁰⁸ Godfrey Kneller, *King Charles II*, 1685, Walker Art Gallery AWG 3023, Liverpool, www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/collections/17c/kneller.aspx, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁰⁹ J. Douglas Stewart, 'Kneller, Sir Godfrey, baronet (1646–1723)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Sept 2010, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15710, accessed 11 March 2012.

¹¹⁰ West, *Portraiture*, 97.

approachable and humorous individual. However it is still the sitter's gravitas that predominates and therefore, despite its air of relaxation, the portrait can be seen as aligned to the interests of those in power. The portrait also expresses modernity in that it mirrors the evolution in management style of the twentieth century, in particular the development of the concept of a participative management style, an approach which became more prevalent in the 1950s.¹¹¹ The formal qualities of the portrait, the light coloured suit, the disruptions of the rigidity of the conventional pose, the more subtle reinforcement of authority are all reflections of modern life.

Other portraits of industrialists shown exclusively at the RA are *Lord Bennett of Edgbaston* (1955, untraced), *George F. Birtles Esq.* (1957, untraced) and *Frank G. Woollard* (1952). Peter F. B. Bennett (1880–1957), was joint managing director of Joseph Lucas and Son from 1920. Joseph Lucas had started trading in 1860¹¹² and by the mid-twentieth century the company was virtually the only supplier of electrical equipment to vehicle manufacturers in Britain, 'one of the largest and most profitable firms in the entire motor industry'¹¹³ and 'a bastion of the Midland's economy'.¹¹⁴ Bennett also enjoyed a political career—he was Unionist member for Edgbaston—and was awarded a knighthood in 1941 and a life peerage in 1953.¹¹⁵ Much less is known about George F. Birtles, other than that he was director of the

¹¹¹ Daniel A. Wren, *The Evolution of Management Thought*, New York, 1977, 359.

¹¹² Cherry, *Birmingham: A Study in Geography, History and Planning*, 128.

¹¹³ Roy A. Church, "Innovation, Monopoly and the Supply of Vehicle Components in Britain, 1880-1930: The Growth of Joseph Lucas Ltd.", *The Business History Review*, 52:5, 1978, 227.

¹¹⁴ Paul Cheeseright, *The Disappearance of Lucas Industries*, Birmingham, 2004, 1.

¹¹⁵ Richard A. Storey, 'Bennett, Peter Frederick Blaker, Baron Bennett (1880–1957)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30710, accessed 23 February 2008. For a fuller explanation of the connections between Bennett and Lucas see Harold Nockolds, *Lucas: The First Hundred Years, Vol II The Successors*, London, 1978, 29 and Roy A. Church, "Innovation, Monopoly and the Supply of Vehicle Components in Britain, 1880-1930: The Growth of Joseph Lucas Ltd.", 236.

paint manufacturing company, Postans Ltd., and that although he still lived in Birmingham in his eighties, by then his son had moved to Hampton-in-Arden.¹¹⁶

Research into the sitters of these portraits demonstrates the connection between the growth of large manufacturers and the emergence of new markets for portraiture and therefore the impact of increasing wealth on those markets. The association of the sitters with Warwickshire villages like Dorridge and Hampton-in-Arden reflects the growth of the city's industry and the population movements associated with these changes. By the mid-twentieth century businesses were no longer run from a workshop in part of the manager and business owner's house. Successful industrialists who could afford to have their portraits painted were moving away from industrial districts to semi-rural areas on the edge of the city.

The portrait of Frank G. Woollard, shown at the RA in 1952, reveals a different link between portraits and industry. As demand for products grew, efficient production in large volumes became necessary, leading to the development of flow production.¹¹⁷ Frank Woollard's influential research into mass production methods stimulated the introduction of assembly line techniques in motor vehicle manufacture¹¹⁸ and 'he pioneered the automation vital to the spectacular rise in

¹¹⁶ Born in Moseley, Birmingham on 12 February 1876, by 1956 he was living at Flat 3, Viceroy Close a purpose built art-deco mansion style apartment block in Edgbaston. His son Roy Alan Birtles lived at Beech House, Hampton-in-Arden. *The Birmingham Post Year Book and Who's Who 1956-57*, Birmingham, nd, 744, and www.evodehistoryproject.org.uk, accessed 15 October 2011.

¹¹⁷ Briggs, *History of Birmingham, Volume II, Borough and City 1865-1938*, Oxford, 60.

¹¹⁸ Wayne Lewchuk, 'Woollard, Frank George (1883-1957)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37020, accessed 23 February 2008.

the production of Morris engines and cars';¹¹⁹ his *Principles of Mass and Flow Production*, published in 1954, continues to be a significant resource for the study of production methods.¹²⁰ The example of the portrait of Woollard demonstrates how the emergence of new careers in industry, in this case that of a mass production specialist, impacted on the market for portraiture. Woollard is shown seated, the arm of the studio carver chair just visible, wearing a suit with a waistcoat and a spotted bow tie, very similar to that worn by Winston Churchill.¹²¹ Although the bespectacled Woollard's gaze is slightly downcast there is a half smile on his face and he sports a 'soul patch', a small beard grown just below the lower lip; his face is well-lit so his beard is clearly depicted. In the early 1950s the clean shaven look was conventionally accepted; facial hair was associated with alternative culture.¹²² Combined with the far away look, the detailed rendering of Woollard's beard may be intended to suggest an independent intelligence appropriate for an innovative production engineer.

In 1953 Fleetwood-Walker painted *Mrs Florence Owen, Director of Rubery Owen* and archive sources suggest that this is one of the very few female directors whose portrait was painted by Fleetwood-Walker. In 1900 Florence Lucy Beech had married Alfred Ernest Owen, the founder of the Owen Organisation which later became Rubery Owen. After her husband's death in 1929 Mrs Owen continued to

¹¹⁹ Roy A. Church, 'Deconstructing Nuffield: The Evolution of Managerial Culture in the British Motor Industry', *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 49:3, 1996, 570.

¹²⁰ See for example Jonathan Zeitlin 'Reconciling automation and flexibility? Technology and production in the postwar British motor vehicle industry', *Enterprise & Society* 1, March 2000, 9-62. <http://es.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/1/1/9.pdf>, accessed 3 June 2007.

¹²¹ For numerous images, paintings and photographs, of Winston Churchill wearing a bow tie, see the National Portrait Gallery website, www.npg.org.uk, accessed 15 March 2008.

¹²² Anthony Synnott, 'Shame and Glory: A Sociology of Hair', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 38:3, 1987, 397.

involve herself in the company, taking an active interest in social and welfare issues.¹²³ The portrait was presented to the Owen family by the firm's employees as part of the company's diamond jubilee celebrations.¹²⁴ The lack of portraits of female directors in Fleetwood-Walker's oeuvre reflects contemporary levels of participation of women in business. In 1931 only ten percent of married women were working; although this figure was to rise after the 1939-45 war, it still stood at only 23.6% in 1951.¹²⁵ Florence Owen's directorship was a result of her marriage to the owner of the company, rather than the culmination of a career within the business, a development which is consistent with the role of women in business at the time, as has been demonstrated by Dora Costa; even in the 1970s, only 0.2 per cent of director level posts were filled by women.¹²⁶ Florence Owen is shown seated, not in the carver chair used in most of Fleetwood-Walker's portraits of business men, but in an armless upholstered chair of a kind often called a nursing chair: *Eve*, *Joan Woollard*, and *Nude at Mirror* all show a woman in this chair yet no portraits of men seated in this chair have been identified.¹²⁷ Florence Owen's pose however is very like that used in the portraits of industrialists described earlier, with one arm resting on what is presumed to be a table in the shadowy background, so recreating a similar pose to that of Newey. She wears a sober velvet dress with a simple brooch and a double row of pearls. Owen's attire reflects the contemporary approach to women's liberation described by such

¹²³ Anon., 'A Tribute to the Memory of Florence Lucy Beech Owen, 1878-1958', Goodwill, unpublished typescript, Rubery Owen private archive, Darlaston, Wednesbury.

¹²⁴ *Presentation of Portrait to Mrs F. L. Owen on March 10th 1954 by employees of Rubery Owen & Co. Ltd, to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the Firm 1953*, Rubery Owen private archive, Darlaston, Wednesbury.

¹²⁵ Dora L. Costa, 'From Mill Town to Board Room: The Rise of Women's Paid Labor', *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 14:4, 2000, Table 1, 106.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹²⁷ The portrait of the headmistress Flora MacRae Forster M.A. shows the sitter seated in a different, upholstered chair.

influential writers as Simone de Beauvoir, who, in *The Second Sex* (first published in 1949 and translated into English in 1953), articulated the stance then taken by men in the professional world: 'if you wish to be our equals, stop using make-up and nail polish'.¹²⁸ Fleetwood-Walker's portrait of Florence Owen highlights one of the fundamental issues inherent in portraiture, described by Richard Brilliant as the 'fabrication of identity'¹²⁹—how the sitter projects aspects of imagery that the sitter believes is appropriate and how the portrait artist is also implicated in such visual projection. Both pose and costume demonstrate that female directors had to suppress signs of femininity and adopt conventions of male representation in order to be accepted as directors, and suggest that artist, sitter and commissioner were all involved in the endorsement of these attitudes. The portrait also suggests a subtle enactment of ideology. Florence Owen was deeply involved with the welfare work provided by Rubery Owen, to their employees. It could be argued that paternalistic institutions, by providing welfare through the company, create dependency and therefore reinforce their own power. The presentation of a smiling and therefore gentle sitter, dressed in black to convey modesty and respectability, and passive therefore non-threatening, reinforces the value of her role in providing support to those in need—and so promotes an acceptance of existing social structures, rather than stimulating the need to abolish class differences. At the same time the rarity of such a portrait—of a female company director—in Fleetwood-Walker's output demonstrates the importance of economic factors in portraits. It was the prosperity of the business that enabled it to offer some services to its employees, therefore it was financial power that created the

¹²⁸ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, translated and edited by H.M. Parshley, London, 1953, 692.

¹²⁹ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 88.

role of the female director. This portrait is therefore a multi-faceted reflection of modernity: the sitter has become an embodiment of the tensions of change considered central to the modern experience.

This examination of portraits of industrialists by Bernard Fleetwood-Walker has demonstrated how Fleetwood-Walker's portraits can be situated in the context of portraiture in Britain. It has highlighted the social factors motivating the commissioning of portraits in early twentieth-century Birmingham and, in particular, has shown how portraiture was affected by changes in the local economy. The study has underlined how portraits were used to fulfil the desire for commemoration and recognition of the sitters' achievements. It has demonstrated how Fleetwood-Walker exploited portrait conventions initially used to express political power to depict economic success and that all parties engaged in the production of the portrait sanctioned the use of portrait conventions to project a desired imagery. At the same time ideological aspects of depictions of business people have been explored, suggesting that local business leaders, although not necessarily from a privileged background, nor likely to be powerful on an international or even a national scale, became part of what Joanna Woodall calls the 'honorific elite eligible for portrayal' and so concurred with and disseminated ruling class ideology.¹³⁰ A less reductive interpretation can also be applied to these works in that they demonstrate that artistic output is made possible by what Harrington has called 'material and economic structures'.¹³¹ Social mobility and changing perceptions of the roles of individuals in society made these individual

¹³⁰ Woodall, 'Introduction: Facing the subject', 5.

¹³¹ Harrington, *Art and Social Theory: Sociological Arguments in Aesthetics*, 61.

become eligible as subjects of 'genius', 'hero' and 'ruler' portraits. In addition, this analysis of these portrait sitters demonstrates that an evolution of the portrait subject was an integral part of modern experience, revealed by the structure and style of Fleetwood-Walker's portraits.

Group Portraits

As well as portraits of individuals the development of businesses led to a variety of group portraits, each portrait with a particular function. Fleetwood-Walker produced a family portrait showing the chairman of a brewery with his wife and children, illustrating the wealth of the sitter and promoting family values. The changing relationship between management and workers in a family-run business led to another group portrait depicting some of the directors.

Fleetwood-Walker showed an informal family group portrait: *Mr & Mrs Robert H. Butler and their Daughters* at the RA in 1935.¹³² Another aspect of Birmingham's economic growth and consequent increase in population contributed to the commissioning of this painting. The portrait shows Robert Henry Butler,¹³³ seated on the left, with his wife and three daughters. Robert Henry Butler, later the chairman of the brewers Mitchells & Butlers Ltd., was the nephew¹³⁴ of Sir William

¹³² Now at Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Wolverhampton.

¹³³ The son of Henry Alexander Butler; was born on 18 June 1900 at Edgbaston and educated at Oundle. He married Dorothy Beatrice Dare, the daughter of J. H. Dare, in 1922, *The Birmingham Post Year Book 1953*, Birmingham, 728. Birmingham Archives and Heritage Service holds archive material relating to Dare's Brewery which was taken over by Davenport's Brewery and it may be that this marriage was an alliance of two breweries. Birmingham Archives and Heritage Service, MS 1549/3/22-22, 2 vols, private ledgers 1927-1949 and 1949-1960.

¹³⁴ William Waters Butler and Henry Alexander Butler were brothers. Telephone interview with Honor Eades, née Butler, on 15 July 2007.

Waters Butler (1866-1939) who guided Mitchells & Butlers to growth and profits in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.¹³⁵

Migration into Birmingham from other parts of the country was precipitated by the need for wartime production in 1914-18, leading to an increased demand for accommodation which continued after the war. By the end of the inter-war period over 100,000 houses had been built in the city.¹³⁶ This rapid expansion was achieved through a radical approach to town planning and housing design: the creation of large suburbs. The brewing industry aimed to exploit the potential of these markets by building 'improved public houses' in the new estates.¹³⁷

Developed partly in response to temperance groups and reform movements, the new outlets were promoted as the focus of respectable community activity; they were 'architecturally impressive and well appointed, with gardens, bowling greens, meeting rooms and provision for families and cars'.¹³⁸ However, as has been described by Gourvish and Wilson in *The British Brewing Industry 1830-1980*, these developments were also 'part of a necessary response to changing consumption patterns, demographic change and social trends'¹³⁹ and contributed to the continuing profitability of the breweries. In Birmingham, Mitchells & Butlers played a prominent role in the change in the licensed retail trade; their business strategy was to make the most of evolving consumer behaviour by giving up

¹³⁵ Terry Gourvish, 'Butler, Sir William Waters, first baronet (1866 – 1939)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2006, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46798, date accessed 3 December 2007

¹³⁶ Cherry, *Birmingham: A Study in Geography, History and Planning*, 113-116.

¹³⁷ Briggs, *History of Birmingham, Volume II, Borough and City 1865-1938*, 307.

¹³⁸ Terence Richard Gourvish and Richard George Wilson, *The British Brewing Industry 1830-1980*, Cambridge, 1994, 422.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 424.

licenses on small inner-city public houses, in return for licenses for much bigger facilities,¹⁴⁰ William Waters Butler, in particular, championing this policy.

In *Mr & Mrs Robert H. Butler and their Daughters* the family is shown in an outdoor setting, a device which has been traced back to the early-seventeenth century and which was widely used in British portraiture.¹⁴¹ The positioning of Butler and his wife against a clump of trees is typical of this kind of group portrait.¹⁴² A sunny grassed area stretches away behind the family, suggesting a natural landscape or a park. A family group portrait in a parkland setting is a composition that can be linked to earlier family portraits, for example Gainsborough's *Mr & Mrs Andrews*.¹⁴³ Similarly, the connection with enactment of ideology is clear, as has been accentuated by Kate Retford: 'whilst the depiction of a particular landscaped garden or house provided a pictorial memento of a family's private property, commemorating an heirloom or recording a recent acquisition, that property also signified the sitters' membership of the wealthy landed classes'.¹⁴⁴ In the case of the Butler group portrait, the setting contrasts with the city, the origin of the Butler wealth, but is in tune with the values connected to rural and suburban environments. David Matless has pointed out that, in inter-war Britain, a link was made between civilised behaviour and rural life. 'Bad conduct is generally

¹⁴⁰ Alan Crawford, Michael Dunn and Robert Thorne, *Birmingham Pubs 1830-1939*, Gloucester 1986, 99.

¹⁴¹ Mario Praz, *Conversation Pieces, A Survey of the Informal Group Portrait in Europe and America*, London 1971, 111.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁴³ See Thomas Gainsborough, *Mr and Mrs Andrews*, 1750, National Gallery, London, www.nationalgallery.org.uk, accessed 8 April 2012.

¹⁴⁴ Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life, Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-century England*, 206.

presumed to emanate from the interior of the city'.¹⁴⁵ The Butler family is deliberately placed in a location redolent of the countryside and therefore of aspirational values. The link between civilised behaviour and green space was reinforced by the suburban architecture of inter-war Britain. Housing of the period, which aimed to provide improved living conditions away from the inner city, featured 'wide grass verges, low-density and low-rise development with gardens and much public space for sports and recreation'.¹⁴⁶ Green space became linked with social ambitions 'centred on the desire for homeownership, privacy and happy family life'.¹⁴⁷ Simply by selecting a spacious outdoor setting for the family portrait, the virtues associated with a rural or suburban lifestyle are suggested.

The placement of the figures within the painting follows compositional conventions; in this painting, as has been explained by Shearer West when describing another family portrait: 'the father has a position of prominence as both the tallest person in the work and the one positioned first, when looking at the painting from left to right'.¹⁴⁸ Robert Henry Butler, the patriarch, is placed higher up in the picture than the other figures and in what West has called 'the dominant left side'¹⁴⁹ of the painting, underlining the power of the husband and father—as well as perhaps the responsibility of those roles. The pose of Butler himself can be compared with, for example, that of Sir Brooke Boothby, in the portrait of that name by Joseph Wright

¹⁴⁵ David Matless, 'Moral Geographies of English Landscape', *Landscape Research*, 22:2, 143, date accessed 1 March 2008.

¹⁴⁶ Helen Meller 'Housing and Town Planning, 1900-1929', in Chris Wrigley, (ed), *A Companion to Early Twentieth-Century Britain*, Oxford, 2003, 401.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 402.

¹⁴⁸ West, *Portraiture*, 111.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

of Derby (1734-1797),¹⁵⁰ a seated or reclining male against a landscape background, where the figure is seated on a bank with legs gracefully arranged to suggest relaxation,¹⁵¹ a composition that had a strong influence on subsequent portraits.¹⁵² The portrait can also be seen as a means of displaying the family dynasty, particularly in the light of the post-war desire to rebuild family life.¹⁵³ Richard Brilliant has pointed out that this is typical of the family group portrait; these can 'display gentile identity as a matter of pride and as a sign of their confidence in the family's future'¹⁵⁴ and in the Butler family portrait the fair-haired father looks across at his wife and equally fair-haired children as though to display his ownership of the children and to emphasise the continuation of the family line. Dorothy Butler and their three daughters are placed together in a tightly-knit group. It seems plausible that Dorothy was deliberately depicted as a devoted mother, with her children grouped round her in a pose similar to that used in representations of Charity, as this virtue was often depicted as a woman with three children.¹⁵⁵ Allegories of Charity that are likely to have been familiar to Fleetwood-Walker include *Charity* by Anthony Van Dyck, which was well known through engravings of the work.¹⁵⁶ The precedent of using a similar composition in a portrait of a woman and her children had been set by Joshua Reynolds (1723-

¹⁵⁰ Joseph Wright of Derby, *Sir Brooke Boothby*, 1781, Tate Collection, NO4132, London, www.tate.org.uk, accessed 8 August 2011.

¹⁵¹ Robin Simon, *The Portrait in Britain and America*, Oxford, 1987, 69.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ Tammy M. Proctor, "On My Honour: Guides and Scouts in Interwar Britain", *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 92:2, 2002, 108.

¹⁵⁴ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 92.

¹⁵⁵ See Praz, *Conversation Pieces. A survey of the Informal Group Portrait in Europe and America*, 121-152 and Edgar Wind, 'Charity: The Case History of a Pattern', *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, 1:4, 1938, 322-330.

¹⁵⁶ See www.nationalgallery.org.uk date accessed 13 March 2008.

1792)¹⁵⁷ when he painted *Lady Cockburn and her Three Eldest Sons*, a familiar image as it was published as a print entitled *Cordelia* in 1791.¹⁵⁸ It may even be possible that the selection of this pose aimed to reclaim, for the brewer, the imagery of Charity from its association, in Birmingham, with teetotalism, a usage exemplified by the memorial to the philanthropist and temperance campaigner Joseph Sturge, which includes a similar depiction of Charity—particularly as William Waters Butler had reconciled success as a brewer with charitable activities.¹⁵⁹ John Thomas’ memorial to Sturge, as well as including the figure group depicting Charity, includes a fountain and the basin ‘inscribed “Temperance” is a symbol of the act of charity, whilst the fountain dispenses a pure and harmless drink’.¹⁶⁰ The integration of the depiction of Charity with the portrait of the brewer may have been a deliberate attempt to reconcile production of alcohol with virtue.

The eldest daughter is seen with her hands raised, perhaps to amuse the youngest child, although this may simply be a compositional device. The pose of the eldest daughter is remarkably similar to that chosen by Reynolds to depict the Duchess of Devonshire, in his portrait *Georgina, Duchess of Devonshire, and her Daughter, Lady Georgina Cavendish* (1784-1786).¹⁶¹ According to Retford’s analysis, Reynolds’ portrait of the duchess and her daughter was commissioned to

¹⁵⁷ Martin Postle, ‘Reynolds, Sir Joshua (1723–1792)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2009, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23429, accessed 10 March 2012.

¹⁵⁸ Nicholas Penny, (ed.), *Reynolds*, London, 1986, 260.

¹⁵⁹ For example, his support of the University of Birmingham, Gourvish, ‘Butler, Sir William Waters, first baronet (1866-1939)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

¹⁶⁰ George Noszlopy, *Public Sculpture of Birmingham including Sutton Coldfield*, Liverpool, 1998, 70.

¹⁶¹ Joshua Reynolds, *Georgina, Duchess of Devonshire with her infant daughter Lady Georgina Cavendish, 1784-1786*, The Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth House, Chatsworth, Bakewell, Derbyshire, www.chatsworth.org, accessed 16 March 2012.

refute accusations of a lack of maternal care and elicited accolades in the contemporary press particularly praising Reynolds' skill in depicting maternal love.¹⁶² As Kate Retford has explained in her study of family portraits in the eighteenth century, daughters are frequently shown 'engaged in feminine pastimes that anticipate their future roles as mothers'.¹⁶³ It is plausible therefore that the pose was selected to demonstrate the mother's success in raising her children as well as the emerging womanly virtues of the daughter. If so, this arrangement too would be characteristic of the family group portrait.

Other details about this painting reflect the aspirations of Butler and how he wanted to be seen. Butler is very fashionably dressed; he could have posed for Robert Goodman's illustration in the fashion publication *Apparels Arts* in 1937, which suggested 'open front light blue linen beach shirt [...] beach slacks [...] brown canvas espadrilles'¹⁶⁴ as perfect casual wear—exactly what Butler is wearing. Sketches left in the artist's studio also show the care with which this painting was constructed: at one stage Butler was drawn wearing slip-on city shoes, in the final version he wears espadrilles, very similar to those illustrated by Goodman¹⁶⁵ and worn by John F. Kennedy in *American Vogue* in 1938¹⁶⁶—perhaps indicating that he wanted to be seen as fashionable, relaxed and sporty. This possibility is corroborated by other details in the painting: the youngest girl seems to be wearing a bathing costume and this reminds the viewer of the

¹⁶² Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life, Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-century England*, 202.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 128.

¹⁶⁴ Farid Chenoune, translated from the French by Deke Dusinberre, *A History of Men's Fashion*, Paris, 1993, 190.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Christina Probert, *Shoes in Vogue since 1910*, London, 1981, 33.

growing interest in outdoor pursuits, including sunbathing and swimming, which has been described as 'one of the most remarkable social phenomena of the 1930s'.¹⁶⁷ Spending leisure time in healthy outdoor activity was considered an integral part of intellectual, physical and spiritual progress: a 'culture of diet, rational clothing, good posture, sports and holidays, medicine, town planning for air and gardens, and emotional education'¹⁶⁸ would lead to the nation's advancement. Even Mrs Butler's shoes show how this interest in the healthy life was reflected in fashion. Sandals, practical and comfortable footwear, had come into vogue and 'were very popular throughout the decade, for beachwear, for parties and, gradually, for smart wear with daytime clothes'.¹⁶⁹

The figure of Butler himself is placed at some distance from the rest of the group, in a position which seems to hint at a degree of detachment from his family.

Katherine Hoffman suggests that around this time 'there was a growing psychological gap between husbands and wives. Men were preoccupied with earning an income [...] while their wives were responsible for household matters, such as educating and caring for the children'.¹⁷⁰ The separation of Butler from the rest of the group might equally express the somewhat distant relations between fathers and families typical of the first half of the twentieth century, a separation, as described by John R. Gillis, that was considered to be appropriate: 'Too intimate a relationship with one's children had become unmanly, likely to call into

¹⁶⁷ Neil Walker, 'Foreword', Timothy Wilcox, *A Day in the Sun, Outdoor Pursuits in Art in the 1930s*, exhibition catalogue, Nottingham, Djanogly Art Gallery, 18 February–19 April 2006, and Salford, The Lowry, 29 April–22 June 2006, London, 2006, 7.

¹⁶⁸ David Matless, 'Moral Geographies of English Landscape', *Landscape Research*, 22:2, 1997, 149.

¹⁶⁹ Probert, *Shoes in Vogue since 1910*, 28–32.

¹⁷⁰ Katherine Hoffman, *Historical and Contemporary Images and Portraits of Self and Family*, New York, 1996, 104.

question not only a fellow's masculinity but also his maturity'.¹⁷¹ Yet, at the same time, as Gillis goes on to say, 'fathers were trying to find time for family on weekends and holidays'.¹⁷² By using an outdoor setting and portraying Butler in holiday rather than work clothes, and combining this with the sense of distance between the male and female figures, the painting represents perhaps these conflicting demands on the husband and father. West, however, also warns of the danger of fitting emotions to paintings¹⁷³ and indeed Butler's daughter in a recent interview remarked that Butler adored his wife.¹⁷⁴ As West has noted, the representation of a family group has meant engagement 'with contemporary expectations and preconceptions about the family as well as with the experience of family life of their own time', so the painting may simply reflect the lived experience of families in the inter-war period. In this case the split between father and family may also have been a design issue: the layout of the right-hand side of the painting is very similar to that of another work painted in the 1930s, *A Village Madonna*: perhaps this was an earlier picture of Mrs Butler with one of the children and Robert Butler asked for the whole family to be added, so creating the awkward composition.

Shearer West has observed that 'the family portrait originates from some conception of why a family is important, and therefore can reveal a great deal about the perceptions of the family at different points in history'.¹⁷⁵ The Butler

¹⁷¹ John R. Gillis *A World of their Own Making, Myth, Ritual and the Quest for Family Values*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996, 193.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ West, *Portraiture*, 118.

¹⁷⁴ Telephone interview with Honor Eades, née Butler, on 15 July 2007.

¹⁷⁵ West, *Portraiture*, 107.

family portrait contributed to the projection of Butler's image in many ways. He is shown as an idealised husband and father; sporting and fashionable, he provided for the family financially—as illustrated by the inclusion of desirable accessories—and morally, ensuring that the family enjoys the wholesome outdoor life. The new approach to licensed retailing as constructed by Butler was promoted as a respectable leisure activity for all the family. This portrait seems to seek to embody one such respectable, fashionable and contemporary family, suggesting that the patronage of the 'improved public house' would lead any family to acquire these attributes. Although the painting attempts informality, the figures in the painting look very stiff, which could, as with the portrait of Gaunt, be ascribed to the formality of the sitting. The importance of the portrait to Butler could have been one reason for this self-composure. At a time when the promotion of family values was directly related to the prosperity of the brewing industry, the success of this portrait was vital. The result was, however, evidently satisfactory to both artist and patron, as the painting was exhibited several times and was placed in the family home where it was prominently displayed in the dining room so it could be seen by guests and family members alike until the house was sold after Dorothy Butler's death in the 1980s.¹⁷⁶

The depiction of Butler and his family in a composition which echoed aristocratic group portraits implies a desire for assimilation into the aristocracy. No archival material surrounding the work's commissioning and production has been traced, therefore the source of this desire cannot be identified. Was it a carefully

¹⁷⁶ Telephone interview with Honor Eades, née Butler, on 15 July 2007.

articulated element of the brief to the artist? Or was it the artist who, consciously or subconsciously, selected a form for the family portrait that would be imbued with a respectability derived from similarities with renowned aristocratic group portraits and would therefore heighten Butler's social position? Whatever led to the painting's design, the outcome includes reference to ruling class ideology: power formerly embodied in the aristocrat is now depicted as an attribute of the wealthy business leader who shows his interest in retaining that power within a select circle. Similarly, as has been noted above, this group portrait may support Robert Witkin's assessment that art works stimulate social change as well as reflecting such change.¹⁷⁷ The work's promotion of the healthy outdoor life may in turn have influenced the futures of the children depicted, Honor in particular recalling an early connection with a sporting, outdoor life, which was to stay with her, despite her family's urban origins.¹⁷⁸

In 1953 Fleetwood-Walker exhibited the group portrait *Edward Jefferson J.P., T. Jefferson Cottrell and A. Wynn Kenrick J.P.* in the RA Summer Exhibition.¹⁷⁹ This portrait was the direct result of the longevity of a local business.¹⁸⁰ Kenrick and Jefferson Ltd. were printers, stationers and manufacturers of office equipment based at West Bromwich and the commissioning of the portrait was part of the company's seventy-fifth anniversary celebrations.¹⁸¹ The portrait, now in a private

¹⁷⁷ Witkin, 'Constructing a Sociology for an Icon of Aesthetic Modernity: Olympia Revisited', 282.

¹⁷⁸ Honor Eades grew up with a love of hunting and became a breeder of show Beagles; she was the Vice-President of the Beagle Association for twenty years and a judge at Crufts in 1999. Doug Hall, 'Honor Eades – Obituary', www.ourdogs.co.uk, accessed 26 March 2012.

¹⁷⁹ See Appendix.

¹⁸⁰ It was commissioned as part of the firm's 75th anniversary celebrations. See K&J News, 9 October 1953, Sandwell Community History and Archives Service, BS-KJ/6/2/3-7.

¹⁸¹ Illustrated in photograph album and scrap books of the 75th anniversary celebrations. Sandwell Community History and Archives Service, BS-KJ/6/2/3-7.

collection, is of the company's Chairman and the two joint Managing Directors and depicts, from left to right: Thomas Jefferson Cottrell, born 6 August 1901, one of the joint Managing Directors, standing; Edward Jefferson J.P., the Chairman, seated, and Arthur Wynn Kenrick B.A. J.P., the other Joint Managing Director, standing. The common identity of all three is shown by their portrayal in the conventional attire of the mid twentieth-century businessman—they all wear suits and ties. Thomas Jefferson Cottrell was the nephew of Edward Jefferson so all three directors of the firm were members of the two families who owned the company. West has observed that the 'reasons for commissioning and displaying group portraits can include the desire to create or demonstrate a sense of shared identity'¹⁸² and it seems that the intention of this portrait was to fulfil this purpose. Kenrick and Jefferson celebrated the anniversary in 1953 and in June 1952 'representatives of all Departments of Sales, Offices and Factories unanimously approved a suggestion to present our Chairman and Managing Directors with a commemorative portrait'.¹⁸³ The celebrations, which lasted a week, and attempted to involve all parts of the company, culminated with a dinner for the sales team at the Grand Hotel in Birmingham before 'embarking in a fleet of buses for the Tower Cinema'. As the newsletter explains:

At the Tower Cinema all members of the K. & J. family met at 11pm for the Midnight Matinee [...] Opened by the K. & J. Male Voice Choir with a song specially composed for the occasion 'Get hold of K & J.' the show went with a swing [...] In the centre of the stage, flanked by massed banks of flowers stood a

¹⁸² West, *Portraiture*, 105-106.

¹⁸³ See K&J News, 9 Oct 1953, Sandwell Community History and Archives Service, BS-KJ/6/2/3-7.

large, specially designed and painted background on which the Picture to be presented to the Directors was hung.¹⁸⁴

The account of the presentation of this portrait emphasises the intention to promote a sense of shared identity amongst the employees of Kenrick and Jefferson and an illustration of the portrait is captioned:

This picture, painted by Mr Fleetwood Walker, ARA, and exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts Exhibition at Burlington House in 1953, was subscribed for by every member of the K.& J. Family and presented to the Directors as a mark of their affection and esteem on October the second, 1953.

Roy Church has investigated the role of organisational culture in another Midland manufacturing company in the mid-twentieth century and especially its role in facilitating adaptation to change:

One powerful influence on the degree of organisational adaptive capability is seen to be corporate culture, a concept which refers to the collective sharing of patterns or norms and assumptions concerning the organisation (or parts of it) to which members (manager and workers) belong; the importance of corporate culture is seen to lie in its effects on the behaviour of groups and of individuals and therefore on the functioning of organisations.¹⁸⁵

This portrait could then be taken as a means of recognising and celebrating the shared ideals of staff and management. At the same time, the commissioning of a group portrait could indicate an attempt to address a lack of corporate cohesion and in this case it may be speculated that the need to commission the portrait reflected an awareness of divisions within company culture which may be visible in

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Roy A. Church, 'Deconstructing Nuffield: The Evolution of Managerial Culture in the British Motor Industry', 565.

the painting itself. Although they all wear suits—the three-piece, double-breasted suit fashionable at the time¹⁸⁶—Kenrick’s and Jefferson’s are very similar suits, with waistcoats and with a handkerchief in the breast pocket, whereas Cottrell’s suit is lighter and worn without waistcoat or pocket handkerchief. Jefferson is seated, a pose which evokes power and reminds the viewer that it is Jefferson who is the most senior in the company. Kenrick stands close behind Jefferson’s chair, in a position which could be interpreted as indicative of the direct line of command between Jefferson and Kenrick, whereas Cottrell seems slightly distanced, with the fireplace separating him from his colleagues. Joanna Woodall has commented that ‘the full length standing figure *without* physiognomic likeness had previously been associated with genealogical series and universal exemplars: figures whose transcendent qualities or achievements merited emulation. From the mid-fifteenth century, the union of this traditional ‘idealising’ format with ‘realistic’ likeness personalised the articulation of socio-spiritual authority’.¹⁸⁷ Therefore the portrait can be linked to portrait tradition in Britain as it uses a pose and composition that came to symbolise group power and unity and also shows how the succession of power in a family business will be managed. However, an interview with a descendant of Jefferson revealed that perhaps the formal assertion of power was not the whole story, and that the disposition of the sitters had a practical origin—Kenrick was a polio survivor who walked with the aid of two sticks, and it is probable that he was leaning on the back of the chair for support.¹⁸⁸ This insight illustrates the validity of the critique made of the Marxist

¹⁸⁶ Peacock, *Men’s Fashion: The Complete Sourcebook*, 154 and 169.

¹⁸⁷ Woodall, ‘Introduction: Facing the subject’, 2.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Hugh Jefferson, 4 August 2007.

theory of ideology, for example by Raymond Williams,¹⁸⁹ that this theory is reductive, constraining interpretation to follow a single path. Records in the Kenrick and Jefferson archive show that the portrait was painted at Fleetwood-Walker's studio, and the carver chair which is visible in so many of his portraits is again to be seen here. A globe is on the mantelpiece behind Cottrell's left shoulder and in front of him a table is scattered with documents, while behind Kenrick books line up on a shelf. Many of these items can be seen in a photograph of the directors in the archive of Hugh Jefferson, the grandson of Edward Jefferson. Items from the office must have been taken to the studio, as the globe is that to be seen in the photograph of the directors.¹⁹⁰ The relevance to the representation of the company is clear, as descendants of the sitters explain that export sales were crucial to the company and that the directors were determined that this be reflected in the painting.

Roy Church has highlighted the role of management in the creation of company culture:

Founding entrepreneurs are considered to be vital to this process, for they shape not only the structure of the organisation but the character of the relations among those employed, and explicitly or implicitly establish the images, symbols, and ritual associated with the firm's activities.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays*, London, 1980, 11 and 31.

¹⁹⁰ Jefferson family private archive, Ledbury, Herefordshire.

¹⁹¹ Roy A. Church, 'Deconstructing Nuffield: The Evolution of Managerial Culture in the British Motor Industry', 565.

After the ceremony the painting was to be hung 'on the first floor landing on the main staircase adjoining the Directors' corridor',¹⁹² so that the directors could continue to project their cohesion and strength. The portrait, placed in a key position, viewed by all visitors to the directors, would also have been used to support the directors' power, reinforcing their authority and ensuring appropriate respect and even submission amongst visitors. Support for the gift to the directors might not have been as universal as it might appear as there is also a letter in the Kenrick and Jefferson archive which says: 'Subscriptions for the Directors' portrait have now been collected and unfortunately owing to a reduction in the factory pay roll during the year the total amount falls a little short of the sum required'. The letter goes on to say that 'an extra 2/6d¹⁹³ is needed from each male employee and 1/3d¹⁹⁴ from each female employee'. Managers were asked either to collect the money themselves or the money could be deducted from 'salaries due to be paid on 18 September 1953' —whichever option was chosen, all staff in each branch had to adhere to the same arrangement.¹⁹⁵ There is no indication in the Kenrick and Jefferson archive of the response to this letter and the information does not explain why the pay roll was smaller. The request for further contributions must have created some resentment at odds with the 'K. & J. Family' identity proclaimed by the directors. In all probability the funds were successfully collected from the staff who possibly felt that the acceptance of the authority and leadership of the firm's founders was necessary for them to retain their posts and

¹⁹² Scrap book of the Kenrick and Jefferson 75th anniversary celebrations, October 1953, Sandwell Community History and Archives Service, BS-KJ/6/2/8-9.

¹⁹³ Two shillings and six pence.

¹⁹⁴ One shilling and three pence.

¹⁹⁵ Letter from J. Blanchard dated 31 July 1953. Sandwell Community History and Archives Service, BS-KJ/6/2/63-70.

maintain their own living standards. West has emphasised that group and institutional portraits have shown 'solidarity, equality and individuality'.¹⁹⁶ This portrait can therefore be seen not only as an enactment of ideology, in the subject matter depicted, but it also reinforced the power of the owners of the business in the way the portrait was commissioned and funds were raised to pay the artist. This particular example demonstrates that, as Wolff has emphasised, archival material can be most enlightening when considering an art work from the perspective of the Marxist theory of ideology.

Advertising

As well as using portraiture as a means of alerting potential patrons to his skills, Fleetwood-Walker benefited from the use of portraiture in advertising, particularly as a result of his involvement in a series of press advertisements created by I.C.I., featuring portraits of various staff members. The paintings, which formed the basis of the advertisements, were shown in a touring exhibition and all fifty-six portraits were then reproduced in a book, *Portraits of Industry*. In the foreword Lord McGowan, I.C.I.'s Chairman and Managing Director, explained that 'one object of these advertisements was to show one half of the I.C.I. family what the other half looked like, what it did, and how its work affected the life of the community'. Lord McGowan continued: 'The other and parallel object was to show the general public the sort of men and women employed in the laboratories and factories of the British chemical industry, and how the research they were prosecuting or the product they were helping to make benefited the nation in

¹⁹⁶ West, *Portraiture*, 122.

health or wealth, in peace as in war'.¹⁹⁷ Fleetwood-Walker painted *Dr. Marr, John Thomas Hawker*, *George Henry Garner* (also known as *Bargee at Oldbury*), and *E. B. Wright* for this series of advertisements.¹⁹⁸ The motivation for these commissions was commercial, as artists were used to bring out the individual and approachable side of a large corporation and create a positive image. Such usage could also be deemed ideological, as the portraits were intended to support a powerful organisation. Evidently portraiture was deliberately used to confer status; it may also be that these portraits did contribute to social change, as has been proposed by Witkin¹⁹⁹ by creating respect for industrial workers, in view of the complexity of their work and the contribution they made to the country's prosperity.

Leisure

The development of leisure interests was a feature of twentieth-century Birmingham and this interest influenced paintings produced by Fleetwood-Walker in the inter-war period. Birmingham's first cinema was opened in 1909²⁰⁰ and after the 1914-18 war the cinema became very popular,²⁰¹ so that by the 1930s Birmingham's cinemas had a capacity of 115,000 viewers per screening.²⁰² The Theatre Royal had been founded in 1774 and the Prince of Wales Theatre in 1856.²⁰³ The Birmingham Repertory Theatre opened in 1913 and by the time

¹⁹⁷ Imperial Chemical Industries Limited, *Portraits of an Industry*, London, undated, unpaginated.

¹⁹⁸ See for example, Anon., 'Portraits of an Industry', *Liverpool Post*, 4 June 1947, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London. As the exhibition catalogues for these exhibitions have not been traced these portraits are not included on the list of works with exhibition history.

¹⁹⁹ Witkin, 'Constructing a Sociology for an Icon of Aesthetic Modernity: Olympia Revisited', 101-125.

²⁰⁰ Briggs, *History of Birmingham, Volume II, Borough and City 1865-1938*, Oxford, 315.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 315-316.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 315.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 316.

Fleetwood-Walker was working in the 1920s there were also several music halls,²⁰⁴ including the Empire and the Aston Hippodrome.²⁰⁵ Fleetwood-Walker painted at least one music hall performer. A painting entitled *Miss Greta Fayne* appears in the catalogue for the RBSA Spring Exhibition in 1927.²⁰⁶ Neither the painting itself nor a reproduction has yet been traced, so it is not known whether this was a portrait or a representation of a performance such as those painted by Degas and Sickert. Greta Fayne was the star of *Cinderella* at the Theatre Royal pantomime in the 1926-27 season.²⁰⁷ The 1930 edition of *Who's Who in the Theatre* describes her as an 'actress and vocalist' and lists theatres in London at which she performed during the 1920s, including the Criterion, the Adelphi and the Shaftesbury and, in 1927, the London Pavilion, all venues for musicals.²⁰⁸ Fleetwood-Walker's portraits also include another dancer, *Miss Anne Heaton of the Sadler's Wells* (1948). She trained in Birmingham and in 1948 became a principal dancer at the Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden,²⁰⁹ where she was particularly noted for her performance in *Giselle*, described as 'a complete and moving performance'.²¹⁰

The survival of the portrait of Heaton in the artist's family's collection suggests that the painting was not a commission but was a painting of a celebrity done to draw

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 317.

²⁰⁶ See Appendix.

²⁰⁷ Phyliss Philip Rodway and Lois Rodway Slingsby, *Philip Rodway and a Tale of Two Theatres*, Birmingham, 1934, 444.

²⁰⁸ John Parker, (compiled and edited by), *Who's Who in the Theatre, a biographical record of the contemporary stage, 6th edition*, Bath, 1930, unpaginated. The New York Public Library has a cigarette card featuring Greta Fayne in the Humanities and Social Sciences Library / George Arents Collection, shown on their website at digitalgallery.nypl.org, date accessed 17 February 2008.

²⁰⁹ Debra Craine and Judith Mackrell, *The Oxford Dictionary of Dance*, Oxford, 2004, unpaginated.

²¹⁰ Mary Clarke, *The Sadler's Wells Ballet, A History and an Appreciation*, London, 1955, 287.

attention to the artist, particularly at a time when the subject would have been in the news as a Birmingham-trained dancer joining a ballet company in London. This seems a credible motive for the work as West has recorded the enduring presence of portraits of celebrities in Royal Academy exhibitions²¹¹—what Shearer West here describes as ‘star quality’ is hinted at in the portrait of Anne Heaton, with the unusual placement of the dancer’s hands and arms in this composition. This can be compared with photographs of Heaton by Frank Sharman held in the Royal Opera House Collection.²¹² Although at first sight the composition chosen by Fleetwood-Walker seems particularly idiosyncratic, Sharman’s photograph shows the fluid and expressive gestures of the dancer in a performance in 1946, a year before the portrait was produced, suggesting that this was a characteristic of Heaton’s work. As West has commented, such portraits ‘were particularly useful to artists, as they both drew attention to their work by association and enabled them to experiment with different modes of representation, as performers could be shown in different guises without breaching decorum’.²¹³ This consideration helps to make sense of the unusual pose and demonstrates that this painting too fits in to traditions and conventions of portraiture in Britain. West also links the development of celebrity culture, and artists’ involvement in this culture by painting and showing works depicting celebrities, to the growth of newspapers in the twentieth century,²¹⁴ an issue to be considered further in Chapter Four. The year before Fleetwood-Walker’s portrait of the dancer was shown at the Royal Academy, Heaton had taken the role of ‘His Lady’ in the Sadler’s Wells Opera

²¹¹ West, *Portraiture*, 93-94.

²¹² See Frank Sharman Photographic Collection at Royal Opera House Collection Online www.rohcollections.org.uk; date accessed 17 June 2011.

²¹³ West, *Portraiture*, 94.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Ballet of Khadra, choreographed by Celia Franca (1921-2007).²¹⁵ Therefore, this portrait, depicting a dancer who had performed in a new ballet written and choreographed by an emerging female artist, in a new ballet company, was inextricably linked to contemporary dance and can be seen as a depiction of modernity. The portrait again calls to mind the critique made by Robert Witkin of the Marxist theory of ideology as applied to art works, in that Witkin claimed that art works not only reflect existing social structures and therefore enact ideology, they are also capable of stimulating social change.²¹⁶ In the case of the portrait of Heaton, what may have been a relatively minor event in the world of ballet could have been given extra prominence because of the portrait, therefore giving publicity to Franca's work and so promoting this aspect of social change. Franca, born in London, and the founder and artistic director of the National Ballet of Canada, was to go on to have a successful career in dance, and the portrait of Heaton may have contributed to this.²¹⁷ It was not only performers who were portrayed by Fleetwood-Walker—Philip Rodway, the subject of a portrait exhibited in 1927²¹⁸ (painting not yet traced) had managed both the Theatre Royal and the Prince of Wales Theatre in Birmingham.²¹⁹ The city's lively theatre scene therefore also affected the portrait artist's work. If the paintings which have not yet been traced could be located, more research into this aspect of Fleetwood-

²¹⁵ www.rohcollections.org.uk, accessed 17 June 2011 and Penelope Reed Doob, 'Obituary: Celia Franca, Charismatic Dancer, Choreographer and Teacher who Founded the National Ballet of Canada', *The Guardian*, 22 February 2007, on-line edition, www.guardian.co.uk, accessed 17 June 2011.

²¹⁶ Eyerman and Ring, 'Towards a New Sociology of Art Worlds: Bringing Meaning Back In'.

²¹⁷ Library and Archives Canada/Celebrating Women's Achievements/ Celia Franca, www.collectionscanada.gc.ca, accessed 15 October 2011.

²¹⁸ See Appendix.

²¹⁹ Briggs, *History of Birmingham, Volume II, Borough and City 1865-1938*, 317.

Walker's work would help to reveal the relationship between cultural institutions and the artist's output.

During Fleetwood-Walker's lifetime one interest in particular showed remarkable growth. By the late 1930s 'association football was the mass sport of the Midlands'²²⁰ and the local clubs Aston Villa and Birmingham City 'had grown from tiny amateur associations to enormous professional organisations, well established and renowned in English football.'²²¹ Again, Fleetwood-Walker's output as a portrait artist tracked this progress. In 1959 he was asked to paint a portrait of the vice-chairman of Birmingham City Football Club: a press cutting from the *Birmingham Mail* is captioned: 'A toast to 'The Governor'—businessman and Birmingham City vice-chairman Mr David Wiseman—from a small group of friends, who subscribed to commission a portrait in oils by Mr Fleetwood Walker, as a token of esteem.'²²² This particular work resulted from the dramatic growth of football clubs, marking the emergence of celebrity within the football scene and creating the opportunity for a new kind of honorific portrait, this time showing the vice-chair of a football club. In this case prestige and power came from the successful management of a football team—the team had played in the Football Association (F.A.) Cup final at Wembley on 5 May 1956.²²³ The pose, the neat suit and light blue bow tie are all redolent of a board room portrait; Wiseman was born in the year the club turned professional: the portrait is unlikely to have existed before the professionalization of sport.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 314.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 313.

²²² Anon., 'Picture in Tribute', *Birmingham Mail*, 1 October 1957, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²²³ www.bcf.com, accessed 17 June 2011.

Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's portraits were therefore expressive of changes in society. They can be seen as a modernist works, following the interpretation proposed by Clark in *The Painting of Modern Life*. As Clark declares: 'their practice as painters—their claim to be modern—depended on their being bound more closely than ever before to the interests and economic habits of the bourgeoisie they belonged to'.²²⁴ The subject matter of the portrait was integral with the circumstances of modern life.

Unexploited Sources of Portrait Commissions

There were some sources of new patronage that Fleetwood-Walker was not able to exploit. The University of Birmingham commissioned many portraits during the early-twentieth century.²²⁵ The development of that university was a product of particular circumstances: by the late-nineteenth century campaigners in Birmingham wanted a university, but only one that offered practical and vocational courses as well as traditional courses.²²⁶ The university had to be 'open to all without regard to religious belief'²²⁷ and had to offer equal participation for female students. Existing colleges in Birmingham were Queen's College and Mason College. These provided tuition in medicine and engineering, but the teaching of the history of art in the city was felt to be weak—the School of Art, as has been described in Chapter One, concentrated on art practice and the Museum and Art

²²⁴ Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*, 260.

²²⁵ See for example the plates in Eric W. Vincent and Percival Hinton, *The University of Birmingham, Its History and Significance*, Birmingham, 1947.

²²⁶ See Vincent and Hinton, *The University of Birmingham, Its History and Significance*, 1-33 for more details.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

Gallery was devoted to research and display rather than teaching. Although it was not opened until the 1930s, the Barber Institute was designed to remedy this problem. Thomas Bodkin was appointed first director of the Institute²²⁸ and, as has been related in Chapter One, Fleetwood-Walker painted his portrait. However, this was the only portrait Fleetwood-Walker painted for the University. One reason for this would have been that another RBSA artist, John Bernard Munns (1869-1942), known as Bernard Munns, had already become established as the portrait artist for the university, showing for example *The Late Sir David Brooks, G.B.E., J.P.* in the RBSA Autumn Exhibition in 1930.²²⁹ Munns also painted John Henry Poynting, Dean of Faculty of Science²³⁰ and Charles Lapworth, the Professor of Geology.²³¹ Bernard Munns was the son of²³² Henry Turner Munns (1832-1898), who was also a portrait painter. It was Bernard Munns who first proposed Fleetwood-Walker as an Associate of the RBSA (although Fleetwood-Walker was unsuccessful on this occasion).²³³ Other portraits of members of the university were painted by well-known artists such as Sir James Gunn who painted the Principal of the university, Sir Charles Grant Robertson.²³⁴ By the time the portrait of Bodkin was commissioned in 1956,

²²⁸ Kenneth Garlick, 'Bodkin, Thomas Patrick (1887-1961)', rev., *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31943, date accessed 4 August 2008.

²²⁹ Catalogue of *The Autumn Exhibition, 1930*, RBSA Archive, RBSA Gallery, Birmingham.

²³⁰ Vincent and Hinton, *The University of Birmingham, Its History and Significance*. Works held in the University of Birmingham collection, and shown on www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings accessed 8 April 2012.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

²³² Jane Johnson and Anna Greutzner (sic), *British Artists 1880-1940*, Woodbridge, 1990.

²³³ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual Meeting March 23rd 1929, RBSA Minute Book 3 October 1928-3 November 1936, 14, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²³⁴ Vincent and Hinton, *The University of Birmingham, Its History and Significance*, 155.

Bernard Munns had died and Fleetwood-Walker was the best-known portrait artist in Birmingham. The painting is now in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

Self-Portraits and Portraits of Family Members

Fleetwood-Walker painted many portraits of his close family and other family members and also produced two self-portraits where he is shown with his wife and two children, *The Family* and *The Family at Polperro*. Joanna Woodall has commented that

in the late-nineteenth century 'avant-garde' portraiture was markedly confined to un-commissioned images of these categories of sitter. This enhanced the authority of the artist by making worthiness to be portrayed dependent upon one's relationship to him or her. It implied a lived intimacy between painter and sitter, imaginatively reproduced in the viewer's relationship to the painting.²³⁵

However Fleetwood-Walker may simply have used these subjects to demonstrate his skill as a portrait artist and to encourage further patrons to commission such works. The fact that works like *The Family* and *The Family at Polperro* were first shown at the Royal Academy would suggest that these were simply exhibition pieces painted to gain the attention of reviewers and therefore potential patrons.²³⁶

Kate Retford has analysed other, earlier, self-portraits of artists with their families in some detail.²³⁷ Connections can be made between Retford's observations and Fleetwood-Walker's group portraits showing the artist with his family. Retford

²³⁵ Woodall, 'Introduction: Facing the subject', 7.

²³⁶ Fleetwood-Walker did get coverage for his RA exhibits, for example Anon., 'Birmingham Artists', *Birmingham Mail*, 2 May 1936, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family archive, London.

²³⁷ West, *Portraiture* 164-169 and Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life, Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-century England*, 124.

describes two such paintings, one by John Singleton Copley (1738-1815) and one by Benjamin West (1738-1820); in both the artist is placed behind the family, looking onto the scene rather than an integral part of the scene.²³⁸ This composition may have as its origin the difficulty of creating a full-length self-portrait pose, which the artist can record without having to paint his own arm, making a partly hidden pose a practical solution. However the same device, of placing the artist behind the family, is employed by Fleetwood-Walker in both his family portraits. It is very likely that Benjamin West's *The Artist's Family* (1772) would have been known to Fleetwood-Walker due to the connections between Benjamin West and the RBSA, as West was a former President of the RBSA. Therefore it seems probable that Fleetwood-Walker's self-portraits with his family reflect the conventions of portraiture in Britain.

Summary

In this chapter it has been shown that Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's work as a portraitist was closely connected to the existing tradition of portrait painting in Britain. The content of the portraits was simultaneously determined by social, political and financial factors and was reflective of these complex and intertwined issues. Although the enactment of ideology within some of these portraits has been highlighted, the limitations of the ideological interpretation have also been reviewed. At the same time, the portraits have been seen to be reflective of modernity. Fleetwood-Walker's career coincided with a period of change in the composition of society in Birmingham. The families which had dominated the

²³⁸ John Singleton Copley, *The Copley Family*, 1777, National Gallery of Art, Washington, www.nga.gov, accessed 8 April 2012; Benjamin West, *The Artist's Family*, 1772, *Yale Centre for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection*, collections.britishart.yale.edu, accessed 8 April 2012.

nineteenth century were, if not dispersing, at least less visible. Simultaneously small businesses were expanding, creating a new sector of industrialists, often engineers, whose businesses enjoyed prosperity and longevity, helped by war-time production. Growing businesses needed more staff, so more housing was required. As a result Birmingham developed through the city's housing programme, fully committed to the expansion of suburbs—a growth which created new markets for the brewing industry. Owners and managers from this successful business community were starting to move out of Birmingham. Ratcliff moved from Edgbaston to Dorridge, Bennett, educated at Five Ways, moved to Four Oaks, the Birtles went from Moseley to Hampton in Arden, the Neweys who had started out in the centre of Birmingham, lived in Stratford-upon-Avon, the Butlers moved out from Aston to Worcestershire. They wanted to distance themselves from the suburbs and emulate a gentrified life-style. All of these changes contributed to the development of Fleetwood-Walker's output as a portraitist. The portraits themselves provide an insight into ideological issues, reflect changes in society and perhaps even provoked further societal changes.

One social change that has not been considered is the impact of photography on the market for portraits in the first part of the twentieth century, a consideration which is beyond the scope of this study. The prevalence of portraits at Royal Academy exhibitions in this period (see Chapter One) is a testament to continuing interest in the painted portraits and, as Heather McPherson has said: 'The painted portrait did not vanish abruptly in the nineteenth century',²³⁹ in spite of the

²³⁹ Heather McPherson, *The Modern Portrait in Nineteenth-Century France*, Cambridge, 2001, 9.

introduction of photography. The Fleetwood-Walker studio archive includes numerous preliminary sketches.²⁴⁰ This demonstrates that Fleetwood-Walker used drawing as an exploratory tool when working on portraits. Although he used photography to record finished work, no evidence has been found that indicates that he used photography in preparatory stages for portraiture. Photography therefore had limited direct bearing on Fleetwood-Walker's output and the relationship between portrait painting and portrait photography is material for evaluation in a separate study.

²⁴⁰ The majority of these have now been made available online at www.fleetwood-walker.co.uk.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ARTIST-LED GALLERY, EXHIBITION CULTURE

AND THE PORTRAIT ARTIST:

THE ROYAL BIRMINGHAM SOCIETY OF ARTISTS

AND BERNARD FLEETWOOD-WALKER

Anne Helmreich has investigated exhibition culture in London in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, recording the involvement of multiple players, including art societies, dealers, critics and artists—and emphasising that ‘above all exhibition culture was a business’.¹ This chapter will explore exhibition culture in Birmingham in the early-twentieth century, particularly with a view to investigating the role of the RBSA as an institution within an art world. It will be argued that Janet Wolff’s emphatic contention that institutions affect how artists’ work is ‘*made available to a public*’² can be evidenced by an investigation of the display of Fleetwood-Walker’s works, particularly at the RBSA Gallery.

A number of publications have evaluated display in museums and galleries: Giles Waterfield’s exhibition catalogue *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain 1790-1990* includes numerous photographs of gallery displays; Charlotte Klonk’s *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000* is particularly detailed in its descriptions of developments in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth

¹ Anne Helmreich, ‘Victorian Exhibition Culture: The Market Then and the Museum Today’, *Victorian Studies and its Publics*, 55, 2009, www.erudit.org.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk accessed 5 February 2011, 1.

² Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 40. Italics are put in by this author.

century.³ However few historians have considered display in art societies' galleries, where exhibitions were staged by artist-led groups, with management responsibility delegated to a democratically-selected group of artists who also handled selection and hanging decisions. This chapter will therefore consider the particular role of artist-led galleries in some detail. In terms of place and time, most published works considering exhibitions staged by art societies have concentrated on London and the Royal Academy and few consider the twentieth century. David Solkin's *Art on the Line: the Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1839*⁴ provides a depth of background information about exhibition culture, but is limited to the Royal Academy, a century before the period examined here. Holger Hoock's *The King's Artists, The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture 1760-1840*,⁵ although a meticulous study, considers only London and the Royal Academy in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Julie F. Codell's essay 'Artists' Professional Societies: Production, Consumption and Aesthetics' in *Towards a Modern Art World*,⁶ does look at the role of artist-led institutions in the production and consumption of art,

³ See for example, Giles Waterfield, *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain 1790-1990*, exhibition catalogue, Dulwich, Dulwich Picture Gallery, 27 November 1991-1 March 1992, National Gallery of Scotland, 12 March – 3 May, 1992, London, 1991; Kate Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850-1914*, Aldershot and Burlington, 2005; Charlotte Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, New Haven and London, 2009.

⁴ David H. Solkin (ed.), *Art on the Line: the Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1839*, New Haven and London, 2001. Others include Ilaria Bignaminie 'Art Institutions in London 1689-1768: A Study of Clubs and Academies', *Walpole Society Journals*, 54, 1988, 1-148, which is a comprehensive list of art clubs and societies in the period covered but in London only and Julie F Codell 'Artists' Professional Societies: Production, Consumption and Aesthetics'.

⁵ Holger Hoock *The King's Artists, The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture 1760-1840*. Oxford, 2003.

⁶ Julie F. Codell, 'Artists' Professional Societies: Production, Consumption and Aesthetics', Brian Allen (ed.), *Towards a Modern Art World*, New Haven and London, 1995, 169-187.

but again all the art societies that she investigates are London-based.⁷ Other published works study theoretical aspects of institutions and display. These include Marcia Pointon's collection of essays, *Art Apart: Art Institutions and Ideology across England and North America*⁸ which introduces the interplay between institutions and ideology. Carol Duncan's chapter 'Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* assesses the secular ritual aspects of the museum; however, neither work discusses the regional issues which are central to this research. Similarly, although Gordon Fyfe's *Art, Power and Modernity: English Art Institutions, 1750-1950*⁹ relates specifically to the period of interest in this thesis, and is concerned with the effect of institutions on class relationships and artistic output, Birmingham itself is considered only briefly. This shortcoming is addressed to a point by Kate Hill in *Culture and class in English public museums, 1850-1914*,¹⁰ where much material concerning museums beyond the capital is discussed, including some references to Birmingham itself, but the time frame considered is earlier than that of this thesis. No published work examines in any detail the wider development of artist-led exhibitions in the first half of the twentieth century and how this relates to artists, audiences and collectors. This chapter therefore seeks to address this gap in the art historical literature of artistic institutions.

⁷ Others include Ilaria Bignaminie 'Art Institutions in London 1689-1768: A Study of Clubs and Academies', *Walpole Society Journals*, 54, 1988, 1-148, which is a comprehensive list of art clubs and societies in the period covered but in London only.

⁸ Marcia Pointon (ed.), *Art Apart: Art Institutions and Ideology across England and North America*, Manchester and New York, 1994.

⁹ Gordon Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity: English Art Institutions, 1750-1950*, London and New York, 2000.

¹⁰ Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850-1914*, 2005.

This chapter, then, aims to examine the RBSA, an exhibition space which, at the time, closely resembled the RA in its relevance to its particular city, but which has not yet been the subject of a specific study. Its significance lies in providing a broader understanding of exhibition practices in Britain in the twentieth century. In view of the limited published sources available the research is based on archival material, particularly minutes from the RBSA archive and photographic evidence. This chapter will be set in the context of galleries in the UK, as some secondary literature on these galleries has been published. The methodology in this chapter will be to apply the analytical tools proposed by Janet Wolff in *A Social Production of Art*¹¹ to consider the RBSA Gallery as a building and as an institution and to demonstrate that this gallery was an integral part of the production and consumption of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's artistic output. The chapter will explore the RBSA Gallery's architecture, the interior features of the gallery, the furnishing of the gallery, how works were displayed in these spaces, and why and by whom such exhibition strategies were chosen, and the interaction between architecture, interior and artistic output in the first part of the twentieth century, all with the aim of assessing the impact of this gallery space on the artistic output of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker.

The RBSA Gallery and a Social Production of Architecture

The first issue to be addressed is the concept of a social production of architecture and how this theory can be applied to the display of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's work at the RBSA. Few secondary resources on the architecture of the RBSA

¹¹ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*.

Gallery are available. Andy Foster's *Pevsner Architectural Guide to Birmingham*, published in 2005, provides a comprehensive survey of the city and so includes detail on very few individual buildings: the RBSA Gallery is described in only a few sentences.¹² Dating back to 1984, Remo Granelli's chapter 'Architecture: All the World and Time Enough' in *By Hammer and Hand: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Birmingham*¹³ is still an indispensable resource for historians researching the architecture of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century in Birmingham. However, although it does cover the period relevant to this research and refers to some of the architects involved in the building of the RBSA Gallery, it concentrates on architectural output in general and does not consider the connections between architecture, artists and exhibitions. More detail about Crouch, Butler and Savage, the architectural practice responsible for the design of the RBSA Gallery in use from 1913 to 1999, can be found in *Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects*.¹⁴ Here a full chapter is devoted to Crouch, Butler and Savage, but the gallery is only mentioned in the list of works produced by the architects and is not examined in any detail. The book also describes the architectural output of other RBSA Members, also architects, who were closely involved in the development of the 1913 gallery. These chapters provide an insight into the prevailing architectural approaches of the period, drawing upon much previously unpublished archive material, making this book an extremely useful resource. However its contribution to this investigation is limited as it only provides an introduction to the

¹² Andy Foster, *Birmingham*, New Haven and London, 2005.

¹³ Remo Granelli, 'Architecture: All the World and Time Enough', Alan Crawford (ed.), *By Hammer and Hand: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Birmingham*, Birmingham, 1984.

¹⁴ The practice was initially called Crouch and Butler; Rupert Savage (1862-1956) became a partner in 1902. Rudi Herbert and Barbara Shackley, 'Crouch and Butler', in Phillada Ballard, (ed.), *Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects*, Wetherby, 2009, 471.

architecture of the period, without discussing connections between architecture and wider social issues. Some of Crouch, Butler and Savage's buildings are illustrated in Nicola Coxon's *Birmingham Terracotta*,¹⁵ produced by the planning department of Birmingham City Council, as a short walking guide to the city. Stuart Davies' history of the development of Birmingham's public art gallery, *By the Gains of Industry, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery 1885-1985*, details comparable buildings and has useful illustrations and so complements this study. However no in-depth research has been carried out into the architecture of the RBSA Gallery in spite of its significance as a key site for the development of the visual arts in early twentieth-century Birmingham, a gap to be addressed in this chapter.

A study of architectural history can be broadened to include the investigation of connections between the development of buildings themselves and their social and economic environments.¹⁶ Suzanne MacLeod has argued for 'an understanding of the architecture of the museum as a social and cultural product, whose need is created through the social and political exigencies of the day and whose form is influenced through the various government organisations and professional bodies active in setting the boundaries and definitions of the museum at that particular historic moment'.¹⁷ She further emphasises that the impact of architecture is enduring: 'this production does not stop when a new building is

¹⁵ Nicola Coxon, *Birmingham Terracotta*, Birmingham, 2001.

¹⁶ See for example, Anthony D. King (ed.), *Buildings and Society: Essays on the Social Development of the Built Environment*, London, 1980; Deryck W. Holdsworth, 'Geography: Buildings as Settings for Seeing Systems and Networks', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 65:1, March 2006, 18-20; Stephanie Dyer, 'Designing "Community" in the Cherry Hill Mall: The Social Production of a Consumer Space', *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, 9, 2003, 263-275.

¹⁷ MacLeod, 'Rethinking a Site-Specific History of Production and Use', 21.

complete and before the doors of the museum open; rather, production is continual and ongoing through occupation and use.¹⁸ Although MacLeod's investigation considers public galleries only, it has stimulated the application of these concepts to the architecture of the RBSA Gallery and to Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's artistic output. It will be argued here that a sensitivity to the social production of the built environment can be equally revealing when examining the spaces of display of work by living artists in the artist-led environment and the impact of those spaces on artistic output. This chapter therefore addresses further gaps in art historical research: exhibition culture outside public and commercial galleries in the first half of the twentieth century and in particular outside the capital.

Modern Rituality: Crouch, Butler and Savage's 1913 gallery

In 1913 a new exhibition space for the RBSA, by the architectural practice Crouch, Butler and Savage, was constructed.¹⁹ The relevance of this building to Fleetwood-Walker's career is underlined by its continued use during most of the twentieth century,²⁰ the very limited changes made to its appearance during this period and the large proportion of works Fleetwood-Walker exhibited in this space. A detailed study of the minutes of the RBSA from 1910, when the idea of a new gallery was first discussed, to 1919, the year Fleetwood-Walker first participated in an exhibition at the gallery, has shown that there was no recorded debate about

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ The 'first full meeting of the Society in the Society's new gallery' was held on 13 December 1913. Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Plenary Meeting 13 December 1913, Minute Book 5 September 1912–25 July 1928, 55, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁰ The Society continued to use the space until 1999, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists: A Brief History, unpaginated, unpublished typescript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

the layout or decoration of the gallery during this period. The only reference to the interior décor of the gallery is a minute recommending the cleaning of the top lights.²¹ Evidently Members of the Society were not concerned with conceptual or theoretical aspects of gallery design and few, if any, changes were made to the gallery from the time it was built to the time when Fleetwood-Walker started to exhibit. Archival research has also confirmed that the décor of the gallery did not change between 1919 and 1926,²² when a series of photographs of the gallery interior by Harold Baker Ltd, which have been dated to 1926,²³ was produced. The Baker photographs show therefore a gallery that had hardly changed since it was first opened and as it was when Fleetwood-Walker began to exhibit with the RBSA. Indeed, the main features of the gallery's interior architecture were to remain unchanged throughout the rest of the twentieth century. A photograph of the Open Oil exhibition in 1966,²⁴ the year after Fleetwood-Walker died, shows that the space had not been altered. The room is the same simple rectangle and has not been subdivided by screens. The glazed roof has not been concealed by a suspended ceiling. The benches shown in the Baker photographs of 1926 are still in place.²⁵ The only changes to the gallery interior are that the walls have

²¹ Minute 147, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 26 May 1914, Minute Book 5 September 1912–25 July 1928, 82, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²² There are no references to redecorating in this period in the relevant RBSA Minutes book, Minute Book 7 October 1908–2 September 1912, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²³ The photographs are not dated, however study of the RBSA minutes and catalogues has revealed that in October 1926 'it was resolved that Mr Baker be asked to make photographs of the present exhibition for the purpose of record.' Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 28 October 1926, Minute Book 5 September 1912–25 July 1928, 299, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham. One of the photographs shows Fleetwood-Walker's painting *The Schoolboy*, listed in the catalogue of the Autumn 1926 exhibition (see Appendix), providing confirmation that the Baker photographs are of this exhibition.

²⁴ RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁵ *Members and Associates in the Gallery* by Tom Barker, 1990, clearly shows the glazed roof, which has not been blocked by a false ceiling. This work was first exhibited in the RBSA Exhibition

been painted white, a picture hanging system has been installed, and different plinths and tables for the display of three-dimensional work have been introduced. These records demonstrate that during the whole of Fleetwood-Walker's career the design of the gallery did not change. This consistency highlights the relevance of the architecture of the building to Fleetwood-Walker's career. The Crouch, Butler and Savage gallery is also the gallery in which a large number of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's works were displayed. In the course of his career Fleetwood-Walker exhibited 126 works at this gallery and by 1926, when the Baker photographs were taken, he had already exhibited 40 works in that space.²⁶

From 1829 RBSA exhibitions had been staged in a purpose-built neoclassical gallery designed by Thomas Rickman and Henry Hutchinson. By 1910 serious concern was being expressed in RBSA meetings about the Society's inability to earn sufficient funds to cover the running costs of this gallery, and about the fast-approaching end to the 99 year peppercorn-rent lease.²⁷ A reconstruction programme was proposed when a sub-committee of RBSA Members was appointed by the governing body of the Society to investigate how best to deal with these issues.²⁸ The architects (and RBSA Members) Jethro Anstice Cossins

of Portraiture 1890-1990, 10 – 28 April 1990. *RBSA Exhibition of Portraiture 1890-1990*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, RBSA, Birmingham, 1990, RBSA Archive, Birmingham. An image of the work can be viewed at www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings, accessed 29 March 2012.

²⁶ See Appendix.

²⁷ See for example Minute 3498, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Finance Committee 10 March 1909; Hon Secretary's Report 13 March 1909 attached after Minute 3504, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual General Meeting 13 March 1909; Minute 3552, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Committee 16 June 1909, Minute Book 7 October 1908–2 September 1912, unpaginated, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁸ The redevelopment of the site was first suggested in December 2008. Minute 3463, General Committee Adjourned Meeting, 12 December 1908; see also Minute 4672, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Committee 25 May 1910, Minute Book 7 October 1908–2 September 1912, unpaginated, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

(1830-1917)²⁹ and Charles Edward Bateman (1863-1947)³⁰ submitted a sketch plan suggesting how the site could be redeveloped.³¹ As a result the Society entered into an agreement with a group of property developers enabling the site to be redeveloped with exhibition space for the Society provided in the new building.³² In 1912 the Rickman and Hutchinson gallery was demolished³³ and Crouch, Butler and Savage's new office block and gallery was erected.

The building that was demolished in 1912 was based on the temple of Castor and Pollux,³⁴ with a pedimented portico supported on columns. Carol Duncan has highlighted the connection between the temple façade and the art museum and the appropriateness of this kind of space for secular ritual:

The very architecture of museums suggests their character as secular rituals. It was fitting that the temple façade was for two hundred years the most popular signifier for the public art museum. The temple façade had the advantage of calling up both secular and ritual associations. The beginnings of museum

²⁹ Antonia Brodie, *Directory of British Architects 1834-1914*, London and New York, 2001, 441.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 132.

³¹ This plan has not been traced. Minute 4672, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Committee Meeting, 25 May 1910, Minute Book 7 October 1908–2 September 1912, unpaginated, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³² Letter to RBSA members, from the Management Sub-Committee, 26 January 1912, attached after minute 4919, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Special General Meeting 10 February 1912, Minute Book 7 October 1908–2 September 1912, unpaginated, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³³ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting, 11 September 1912, Minute Book 5 September 1912–25 July 1928, 4, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁴ Barbara Fogarty, 'Thomas Rickman and the Society of Arts', in David Hemsoll (ed.), *Building the Future, Birmingham's Architectural Story*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, 5-18 June 2009, Birmingham, 2009, 9.

architecture date from the epoch in which Greek and Roman architectural forms were becoming the normal language for distinctly civic and secular buildings³⁵ Some contemporary artist-led groups in other UK cities in the early-twentieth century continued to exhibit in Greek revival temple-like structures. For example from 1910 the Royal Scottish Academy was based at and exhibited in the former buildings of the Royal Institution in Edinburgh, designed by William Henry Playfair (1790–1857) in 1822³⁶ and the Royal West of England Academy had owned its own venue from 1858, based on the Temple of Erechtheus in Athens.³⁷ The documents in the archive do not reveal RBSA artists' opinions of the Rickman and Hutchinson building. The minutes only note the bare facts of the demolition and that a photographic record of the building had been made prior to this.³⁸ The numerous references in the minutes to maintenance issues suggest that the practical needs of the artists overcame any sentimental or historical interest in the building.³⁹

The gallery that replaced the Rickman and Hutchinson gallery was part of a retail and office block designed by Crouch, Butler and Savage, described by Andy

³⁵ Carol Duncan 'Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship', *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, (eds), Washington and London, 1991, 91.

³⁶ Charles McKean, 'Playfair, William Henry (1790–1857)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22371 accessed 24 April 2011.

³⁷ Donald Milner, *The Royal West of England Academy Bristol, an Essay in Patronage*, Bristol, 1985, 7.

³⁸ Minute 4983, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 2 September 1912, Minute Book 7 October 1908–2 September 1912, unpaginated, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham and Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 11 September 1912, Minute Book 5 September 1912–25 July 1928, 4, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁹ For example, 'It was reported that a piece of stone had fallen from the upper part of the Portico to the path, just missing a man's head.', Minute no 3604, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Finance Committee Meeting, 7 January 1910, Minute Book 7 October 1908–2 September 1912, unpaginated, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

Foster as a 'good faience design, influenced by contemporary London fashion: canted inset bay windows, and slightly projecting end bays rising into built-up dormers.'⁴⁰ At the beginning of the twentieth century architects made extensive use of faience, a glazed terracotta, to clad buildings; it enabled them to deliver a contemporary and streamlined look and, as it was easy to clean, was recommended for use in cities which suffered from air pollution. This treatment therefore reflected practical considerations as well as being fashionable.⁴¹ The street frontage, with its alternating vertical ranges of bay windows and flush windows echoes the use of rising tiers of bay windows by arts and crafts architects such as Edwin Landseer Lutyens (1869-1944),⁴² and as seen on a building that would have been familiar to Birmingham architects, Ruskin Hall (1905), by William Alexander Harvey (1874-1951), also an RBSA Member and one of the earliest architects of the Bournville estate.⁴³ The new block's contemporary interpretation of the use of bay windows in a white painted or white tiled commercial building is reminiscent of Charles Rennie Mackintosh's Daily Record building of 1901.⁴⁴ The building therefore reflected an awareness of architectural innovations across the breadth of the country. Crouch, Butler and Savage were also to develop other sites in the adjacent area, for the same property developers, again using faience.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Foster, *Birmingham*, 111 and 167.

⁴¹ George Alexander Thomas Middleton, *Modern Buildings Their Planning Construction and Equipment*, London, 1906.

⁴² Brian Edwards, *Goddards*, London, 1966 and Gavin Stamp, 'Lutyens, Sir Edwin Landseer (1869–1944)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 201, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34638, accessed 29 March 2012.

⁴³ Foster, *Birmingham*, 258 and Michael Harrison 'William Alexander Harvey' in Ballard (ed.), *Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects*, 528-553.

⁴⁴ See Charles Rennie Mackintosh, *Daily Record building, Glasgow, Perspective from the South East, 1901*, in the Hunterian Art Gallery Mackintosh collections, catalogue number GLAHA 52400, www.huntsearch.gla.ac.uk, accessed 29 March 2012, and illustrated in Charlotte and Peter Fiell, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh 1868-1928*, Köln, 1997, 33.

⁴⁵ Such developments included 71 New Street, adjacent to the RBSA Galleries and 112-113 New Street, on the other side of the street, Coxon, *Birmingham Terracotta*.

Some of these developments, like the block which included the gallery, were built for New Street Estates Ltd, a company in which Joseph Crouch, the founding partner of Crouch, Butler and Savage had an interest.⁴⁶ The architects of the RBSA's new gallery were therefore instrumental in creating a new and attractive business quarter in this part of the city—and they had a long term interest in the success of this investment as a portion of rental income would accrue to them. The connection between the gallery and the redevelopment scheme would therefore have been mutually beneficial: the presence of a long-established and respectable institution would have been attractive to retailers and business owners considering taking space in the new buildings, and the ability of the new business district to attract visitors to the gallery would have been of interest to the Society. Therefore the adoption of a fashionable architectural style was an attractive option for both client and architect. Furthermore, a strongly contemporary statement was made, proclaiming Birmingham's role as a centre for artistic developments and even challenging London's pre-eminence in the provision of exhibition venues. The use of faience was a logical progression for Birmingham architects: a practical and hardwearing cladding, but the pale colour suggesting a forward looking architectural modernism rather than the Victorian flavour of Birmingham's favoured red terracotta.⁴⁷ The re-introduction of a new style of tile-clad building into a city itself renowned for its use of terracotta is proof that such architectural details attempted to draw attention away from the capital.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ For example, 112-113 New Street, *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ See for example Foster, *Birmingham*, 17-18 and the section 'Part Three: The Age of Terracotta' in Ballard (ed.), *Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects*, 195-363.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

All these elements emphasise the connections between cultural factors and gallery space. The clean, bright faience provided a fresh, attractive shopping district where consumers would linger and a polished, efficient looking urban environment from which to run a business. The form of the building was therefore a product of the social and cultural factors that themselves prompted the redevelopment of this district. This in turn was closely related to the pioneering adoption of integrated town planning principles in Birmingham,⁴⁹ an issue especially relevant to the RBSA and to Bernard Fleetwood-Walker in view of the involvement of John Sutton Nettlefold in both the RBSA and in Birmingham's architecture and town planning during this period.⁵⁰ From 1901 Nettlefold, one of the RBSA's subscribers,⁵¹ chaired Birmingham's Housing Committee. He was a high-profile advocate of improving cities by reducing overcrowding and introducing open spaces; as a result of his commitment to these issues Birmingham 'was clearly in the forefront of national town planning'.⁵² Although Nettlefold's energies were concentrated on the development of urban and suburban housing, he was committed to the improvement of the built environment and this would certainly have influenced the way in which the city centre was developed. His beliefs were shared by Neville Chamberlain, who advocated for the design and delivery of a comprehensive town

⁴⁹ Cherry, *Birmingham: A Study in Geography, History and Planning*, 89-109.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁵¹ The Royal Birmingham Society of Artists ran a subscribers scheme; subscribers paid an annual subscription of one guinea and in return were offered free admission to all exhibitions, and were invited to two Private Views, and to events held at the gallery such as Conversazione, Concerts and Lectures and their names were listed in each of the Society's exhibition catalogues, see for example *Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Winter Exhibition of Works by Members and Associates of the Society 1914*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, Birmingham, 1914, RBSA Archive, Birmingham. J. S. Nettlefold is listed as a subscriber in the catalogue *Royal Birmingham Society of Artists The Eighty-Third Autumn Exhibition 1909*, as are both Joseph and Arthur Chamberlain, and William Kenrick was a Hon. Vice President, *Royal Birmingham Society of Artists The Eighty-Third Autumn Exhibition 1909* exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, Birmingham, 1909, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

⁵² Cherry, *Birmingham: A Study in Geography, History and Planning*, 108.

plan that would include the reconstruction of the built-up areas of the city.⁵³ As both Nettlefold and Chamberlain were, at this time, committed to Liberal politics, the specific impact of both political and social pressures on architectural designs can be discerned, so emphasising the validity of applying MacLeod's argument to the development of the RBSA Gallery. This connection also highlights how ideology influences institutions. As has been observed, these concepts find expression in Fleetwood-Walker's portraits, for example in the group portrait of the Butler family: the depiction of an idealised family is established by placing the sitters in an Arcadian setting, such as one that might be created by the implementation of town planning principles. Fleetwood-Walker's own espousal of these beliefs is perhaps reflected in the two group portraits of himself and his family, *The Family* and *Family at Polperro*: he chose to portray himself and his family outdoors, all wearing clothes fashionable at the time and rendered in fresh colours. As *The Family at Polperro* was donated to the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery,⁵⁴ the selection of this particular work to represent the artist in a public institution implies that it was considered significant, portraying the artist as he would wish to be seen. Similarly a connection can be made between the architecture of the gallery as expressive of power, an issue to be considered in detail, and the use of painting as a depiction of power, particularly the portraits of business leaders. The exhibition of such portraits in this architectural space would therefore be particularly appropriate.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁵⁴ Anon., 'Contemporary Artists' Work', *Birmingham Post*, 1 February 1939, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

The new gallery retained the aura of temple ritual. This is signalled by the decorative treatment of the entrance door, which provides access from street level to a staircase leading up to the RBSA Gallery and through which all visitors had to pass. The door was decorated with stylised sunflowers, a significant emblem, setting the scene for the space ahead. This treatment echoes that used on the door of the nearby Eagle Insurance building, designed in 1900 by William Richard Lethaby (1857–1931): both doors feature a pattern of repeating circles, both with underlying meanings.⁵⁵ Lethaby believed in ornamenting buildings with universally-understood symbols derived from nature and from ancient structures. Describing the incorporation of such symbolism into buildings as the ‘temple idea’,⁵⁶ Lethaby’s vision was that these symbols would evoke spiritual concepts.⁵⁷ Lethaby’s work and ideas would have been well known to Birmingham architects including Crouch, Butler and Savage. In addition to the prominent Eagle Insurance building, Lethaby had recently completed a house, *The Hurst*, for Birmingham solicitor and pioneering alpine mountaineer Charles Edward Mathews;⁵⁸ in addition his work was featured in Hermann Muthesius’ *Das*

⁵⁵ Vaughan Hart, ‘William Richard Lethaby and the “Holy Spirit”: a reappraisal of the Eagle Insurance Company building, Birmingham’, *Architectural History*, 36, 1993, 145-158; Fiona MacCarthy, ‘Lethaby, William Richard (1857–1931)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2008, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34503 accessed 16 Sept 2010 and Deborah Van Der Plaats, ‘Seeking a ‘Symbolism Comprehensible to the Great Majority of Spectators’: William Lethaby’s Architecture, Mysticism and Myth and Its Debt to Victorian Mythography’, *Architectural History*, 45, 2002, 363-385.

⁵⁶ William Richard Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, London, 1892, reprinted New York 2005, 5.

⁵⁷ Hart, ‘William Richard Lethaby and the “Holy Spirit”: a reappraisal of the Eagle Insurance Company building, Birmingham’, 147.

⁵⁸ Godfrey Rubens, *William Richard Lethaby, His life and work, 1857-1931*, London, 1986, 122 and A. L. Mumm, ‘Mathews, Charles Edward (1834–1905)’, rev. Julian Lock, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34934, accessed 5 March 2011.

Englische Haus, first published in 1904.⁵⁹ Architectural decoration was used with precision by Lethaby, each element intended to convey a specific message about the purpose of the building.⁶⁰ In *Architecture Mysticism and Myth* Lethaby describes his understanding of the use of sun symbolism in different eras, including in particular a sketch of a circle with a point at its centre,⁶¹ clearly the source of the design used on the door of the Eagle Insurance building. The enduring symbolism of the Christian tradition, using the sun to represent the deity, as well as the concept of upward movement representing the approach to heaven has been detailed by Valerie Shrimplin.⁶² Shrimplin's work relates in particular to sixteenth-century Italy but the sun was also interpreted as a symbol of God by the seventeenth-century English poet and writer George Wither, who in his *A Collection of Emblems Anciente and Moderne* of 1635, compares the soul's longing for God with a sunflower's following of the sun.⁶³ In an echo of Wither's interpretation of the seventeenth century, in the latter part of the nineteenth century the sunflower became known as the emblem of the Aesthetic movement⁶⁴ and was considered to be the emblem of longing.⁶⁵ Longing itself was an essential element of the Aesthetic Movement outlook, as Aesthetes yearned for a

⁵⁹ Herman Muthesius, translated by Janet Seligman, *The English House*, London, 2007, Volume 1, 152, first published as *Das Englische Haus*, Berlin, 1904.

⁶⁰ Rubens, *William Richard Lethaby, His life and work, 1857-1931*, 206.

⁶¹ Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, 190.

⁶² See for example Valerie Shrimplin, *Sun Symbolism and Cosmology in Michelangelo's "Last Judgment"*, Kirksville, MO, 2000, 12 and 106.

⁶³ George Wither, *A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Moderne: Quickened with Metrical Illustrations, both Moral and Divine: and Disposed into Lotteries, that Instruction, and Good Counsell, may bee furthered by an Honest and Pleasant Recreation*, London, 1635, 209.

⁶⁴ Gavin Stamp, 'George Gilbert Scott, Jun and King's College Chapel', *Architectural History*, 37, 1994, 162.

⁶⁵ 'The Sunflower derived its meaning in the Language of Flowers from the tale of Clytie, who was transformed by Apollo into a flower that follows the course of the sun across the sky. Her unrequited love for Apollo was never to be fulfilled, hence the sunflower denoted Longing', Footnote 76, Anne Anderson "Doing As We Like': Grant Allen, Harry Quilter and Aesthetic Dogma', *Journal of Design History*, 18:4, 2005, 354.

self-discovery and belongingness that was unattainable and as a consequence were trapped in a state of permanent longing.⁶⁶ The prolific use of the sunflower as an architectural decoration in the late-nineteenth century has been recorded by Elizabeth Aslin,⁶⁷ who provided numerous examples in her book *The Aesthetic Movement: Prelude to Art Nouveau* including a sunflower strikingly similar to that on the RBSA Gallery's door.⁶⁸ The use of the sunflower on the door to the new RBSA Gallery therefore provided a contemporary link to the temple ideal; not only did the use of the sunflower indicate that the door led to a sanctuary for the arts, it also suggested an opening to a mystic experience and an ascent towards the gods, where perhaps that longing could be resolved through a spiritual experience in a temple of Aestheticism, or through the acquisition of transformatory objects.⁶⁹

The placing of works in a setting which declared its connections with the Aesthetic Movement through its architecture had a direct impact on Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's early paintings. Pamela Gerrish Nunn has highlighted the frequent depiction of fans in paintings and the association of these objects with Aestheticism.⁷⁰ A connection with this Aesthetic movement idiom can be seen in the use of the fan as an accessory in some of Fleetwood-Walker's earliest works, such as *Maudie in Pink* and *Portrait of a Woman with a Feather Fan* both of 1920. *Louba Reubens* of 1927 also portrays the sitter holding a fan. Therefore, the fan served as a reminder of the Aesthetic Movement and indicated to the viewer the

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 347.

⁶⁷ Elizabeth Aslin, *The Aesthetic Movement: Prelude to Art Nouveau*, London, 1981, 46.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, plate 34, facing page 52.

⁶⁹ Anne Anderson "Doing As We Like': Grant Allen, Harry Quilter and Aesthetic Dogma', 347.

⁷⁰ Pamela Gerrish Nunn, 'Fine Art and the Fan', 'Journal of Design History', 17:3, 2004, 251 and 252.

artists' connection to this and potential buyers' cultural tradition. These works, then, evidence the link between the architecture of the building and Fleetwood-Walker's artistic output—and indeed it may be that it was the architecture of the gallery and the influence of the Aesthetic Movement on the gallery, that stimulated the selection of these accessories for use in Fleetwood-Walker's portraits.

During the late-nineteenth century many artists associated with Aestheticism produced figurative works with female subjects, attaching generalised titles to the works. One such work visible to Birmingham audiences was *The Dreamers* by Albert Joseph Moore (1841-1894).⁷¹ A legacy of this approach to figure painting can be discerned in Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's *Repose*, exhibited at the RBSA in 1928.⁷² In the world of the Aesthetic Movement a reclining rather than upright posture whilst seated became integral to sophisticated culture and enjoyment.⁷³ It is exactly this pose that is depicted in Fleetwood-Walker's *Repose*. In exhibiting a painting which showed the subject reclining on a day bed, Fleetwood-Walker was showing a work that would appeal to genteel gallery visitors, direct descendants of the followers of the Aesthetic Movement. However, unlike other paintings on this theme, for example, John White Alexander's *Repose* (1895), described by the Metropolitan Museum of Art as 'provocative',⁷⁴ Fleetwood-Walker's interpretation was lyrical rather than alluring. It could be speculated that a sensual version of such a subject would have alienated prominent RBSA supporters, many of whom

⁷¹ Presented to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery in 1884 by brothers Richard and George Tangye, www.bmagic.org.uk/objects/1885P2467, accessed 5 December 2010.

⁷² See Appendix. Bernard Fleetwood-Walker also exhibited a work entitled *Reverie* (painting untraced) in 1924, see Appendix.

⁷³ Julie Anne Springer, 'Art and the Feminine Muse: Women in Interiors by John White Alexander', *Woman's Art Journal*. 6:2, 1985/1986, 3.

⁷⁴ www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1980.224, accessed 5 December 2010.

were committed to dissenting Protestantism,⁷⁵ and therefore that the wider cultural background of Birmingham and the RBSA impacted on the appearance of the work. Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's rendition of repose would therefore appeal to the descendants of supporters of Aestheticism, whilst focusing on idealism rather than sensuality. This interpretation is reinforced by the inclusion of an open book, used by artists to depict the sense of dream-like longing and the dedication to an artful existence that were both essential attributes of devotees of the Aesthetic Movement.⁷⁶ However Fleetwood-Walker's work refreshes the Aesthetic Movement idiom by placing his subject in a very contemporary setting. Unlike works such as *Mary Constance Wyndham (Lady Elcho)*⁷⁷ by Edward Poynter (1836–1919)⁷⁸, which carefully describes the Aesthetic Movement interior, complete with Japanese screen and blue and white china, Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's *Repose* includes only a white wall and white painted door and architrave, and a simple green and pink tea set. Fleetwood-Walker's painting suggests, perhaps stimulated by the gallery architecture itself, an interest in benefiting from the credibility derived from showing a painting that demonstrated a connection with the Aesthetic Movement tradition. Indeed, its choice of title and pose referenced

⁷⁵ The Nettlefolds and Chamberlains were Unitarians, the Cadburys were Quakers. Michael F. James, 'Nettlefold, John Sutton (1866–1930)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, May 2011; online edn, Sept 2011, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/101218, accessed 25 March 2012, Peter T. Marsh, 'Chamberlain, Joseph (1836–1914)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2011, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32350, accessed 25 March 2012 and I. A. Williams, 'Cadbury, George (1839–1922)', rev. Robert Fitzgerald, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2011, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32232, accessed 25 March 2012.

⁷⁶ Julie Anne Springer, 'Art and the Feminine Muse: Women in Interiors by John White Alexander', *Woman's Art Journal*. 6:2, 1985/1986, 4.

⁷⁷ Illustrated in Charlotte Gere with Lesley Hoskins, *The House Beautiful; Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic Interior*, Aldershot, 2000, plate 32 and caption, 33.

⁷⁸ Alison Inglis, 'Poynter, Sir Edward John, first baronet (1836–1919)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2010, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35600, accessed 24 April 2011.

the Aesthetic Movement in the same way that portraits, as has been observed by Woodall, can be visual quotations of foundational works.⁷⁹ At the same time, the glimpse of the room shown in the painting indicates that he also aimed to produce a work appropriate for the contemporary market. Aesthetic Movement ideas promoted the use of reds and greens for woodwork; it was Arts and Crafts architects of the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, such as Philip Webb (1831-1915) and Edwin Landseer Lutyens (1869-1944),⁸⁰ who suggested much lighter and brighter rooms and the use of white or pale coloured ceilings and woodwork.⁸¹

The, perhaps unconscious, need for a ritual space in the new building can be explored further by considering the position of the gallery within the newly-built block. The new exhibition space for the RBSA was reached by ascending an imposing—some would say daunting—staircase. One of the functions of this design was to impress specially invited guests with the dignity and power of the owner of the space. This strategy was used in comparable buildings. The Royal Academy exhibition space in Burlington House was on the first floor or piano nobile,⁸² a feature of Palladian architecture.⁸³ Closer to home, Birmingham Art

⁷⁹ Woodall, 'Introduction: Facing the subject', 3.

⁸⁰ See for example the work of Philip Webb described by Sheila Kirk, *Philip Webb, Pioneer of Arts and Crafts Architecture*, Chichester, 2005, 141.

⁸¹ See for example Edwin Lutyens' *Folly Farm* of 1906, illustrated in Arthur Stanley George Butler, *The Architecture of Sir Edwin Lutyens, Vol. 1 Country Houses*, London, 1950, 41.

⁸² This is the main storey of a large house, usually on the first floor, containing the principal rooms often with high ceilings and impressive spaces, "Piano nobile." In *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T067272, accessed 26 September 2010.

⁸³ Plate 37 in Sidney C. Hutchison's *The History of the Royal Academy 1768-1968* shows a photograph dating to 1935 of the of the South Front of Burlington House, clearly showing the Palladian style of the building. Sidney C Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy 1768-1968*, London, 1968, plates inserted between pages 128 and 129.

Gallery also had its display spaces on the first floor.⁸⁴ As well as these galleries, the Grosvenor Gallery, one of London's major commercial galleries in the late nineteenth-century, had situated its exhibition space on the first floor. This was also the design adopted by the New Gallery in London, where Joseph Southall, one of the most active of the RBSA artists,⁸⁵ showed his work. The use of such first floor space has been described as a tactic designed to present a 'statement of upper class elegance'.⁸⁶ At the newly built RBSA Gallery access to the main exhibition space was through an initial small room, described as the 'ante room' in a plan of the space from 1923,⁸⁷ perhaps echoing the concept of an *enfilade*, the Palladian design of an impressive series of connecting rooms.⁸⁸ Therefore it is evident that the RBSA believed that a priority for the new gallery was that the building should greet the discerning with an impressive space. Although this had practical disadvantages, which will be discussed in detail below, the Society had no objection to a design which proposed access to the space via a flight of stairs. The concept of a first floor exhibition space not visible from the street followed an expected pattern.

⁸⁴ Stuart Davies, *By the Gains of Industry, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery 1885-1985*, Birmingham, 1985, 26.

⁸⁵ Joseph Edward Southall (1861-1945) showed 232 works at the RBSA between 1881-1943. Sidney Morris and Kathleen Morris, *A Catalogue of Birmingham and West Midlands Painters of the Nineteenth Century*, Pathlow, 1974.

⁸⁶ Colleen Denney, *At the Temple of Art: The Grosvenor Gallery, 1877-1890*, New Jersey and London, 2000, 19.

⁸⁷ Plan of Crouch, Butler and Savage gallery showing first floor, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

⁸⁸ 'Alignment of internal doors in a suite of rooms so that a long, continuous vista is obtained when the doors are all left open', "Enfilade." In *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T02606>, accessed 26 September 2010.

Kate Hill, in *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850-1914*,⁸⁹ has emphasised that the nineteenth-century museum aimed to offer an educational experience to its visitors.⁹⁰ Although Charlotte Klonk proposed that the concept of a gallery visit as a civilizing and elevating experience was very much diminished by the beginning of the twentieth century,⁹¹ Hill has noted that there were regional differences in the evolution of museums in England. This is reflected in the new RBSA Gallery building. The use of a first floor exhibition space, emulating the layout of the local public art gallery, suggests a philanthropic institution designed with civic education at its heart. Similarly, the choice of a first floor space not visible from the street implies a private exhibition space. These decisions infer that there was no wish to throw off the aura of the ritual space and indeed that the Society wanted to align itself with museum culture rather than become more commercial. However archival material demonstrates that this was not such a simple issue. Part of the process of reconstruction involved a review of the Memorandum of Association. The revised Memorandum of Association included a list of the Objects of the Society and the third one clearly sets out the need for sales and the commercial approach of the Society:

To conduct and hold Exhibitions of works of art, and to act as agents for or take other steps to promote the sale of works of art whether exhibited at such exhibitions or not⁹²

Therefore the Society was very much aware of the need to sell works and intended to adopt a more commercial attitude, despite the fact that this was not

⁸⁹ Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850-1914*.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹¹ Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, 50.

⁹² The Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, Memorandum of Association, 1912, clause 3 (c), 1, unpublished typescript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

reflected in the exterior appearance of the building. The Memorandum of Association also shows that the Society was attempting to reconcile different aims, for example the first Object listed, given prominence by its position, is: 'The advancement of Art and in particular the Arts of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture and other allied arts, and the taking of all steps necessary or fitting for that purpose'⁹³ and the fourth Object emphasises the educational remit of the Society.⁹⁴ This research indicates that in the early-twentieth century the RBSA was a site for debate and negotiation about the purposes of gallery visiting and that the inconsistency of certain elements of the gallery design, which will be discussed in greater detail below, are a reflection of this debate. This sense of the RBSA as an institution reflecting cultural changes is echoed in Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's output as an artist. Early career works included figurative compositions as well as portraiture, examples of these are the 1928 *The Village Madonna*, a concept he returned to in 1935 with the production of a new painting with a similar title *A Village Madonna*. Such narrative, Christianity-inspired titles suggest a didactic approach and indeed both are idealising representations of motherhood. These works must have been produced to be shown in a gallery that intended to provide a civilizing and elevating effect. Although he was to carry on painting mothers and children over many years, later works, such as *Children* and *Mother and Child* did not have didactic titles and showed more active poses. Figurative compositions are entirely absent from his later output.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

There are striking similarities between the interior of the new RBSA Gallery and the Royal Academy exhibition space at Burlington House, redeveloped in 1868.⁹⁵ A drawing by the architect of the latter shows a top-lit gallery with a curved cornice and glass sky lights and with a low dado. This space continued to be used and a photograph of an exhibition of 1932 shows that the display space had changed little from the original design.⁹⁶ The RBSA space, recorded in a photograph of the RBSA Centenary Exhibition of 1927,⁹⁷ was a rectangular room with a dado, curved cornice and glazed roof and, as previously noted, it was also reminiscent of the nearby Birmingham Art Gallery, opened in 1885⁹⁸ and described as ‘an extremely impressive and ornate structure’.⁹⁹

One issue that seemed to be of great importance was the lighting of the gallery; it was specifically mentioned in one of the earliest documents about the new building which stated: ‘The new buildings will include a Fire proof and well lighted (sic) Gallery and suite of rooms etc for the use of the Society.’¹⁰⁰ Lighting was a matter of enduring interest for gallery designers. During the eighteenth century and onwards it was felt that top lighting provided the best lighting for viewing pictures,¹⁰¹ and galleries continued to be designed in this way: the Birmingham Art

⁹⁵ The Royal Academy had held its first exhibition at Burlington House in 1869 in exhibition space constructed by the RA to a design by Sydney Smirke of 1866. Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy 1768-1968*, 124.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Plate 52, inserted between pages 160 and 161.

⁹⁷ Plate 46, Hill and Midgley, *The History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists*, facing page 54.

⁹⁸ Illustrated in Davies, *By the Gains of Industry; Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery 1885-1985*, 26.

⁹⁹ Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850-1914*, 97.

¹⁰⁰ Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, Scheme for rebuilding etc of the premises in New Street, inserted after minute 4926, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists’ Special General Meeting 29 February 1912, Minute Book 7 October 1908–2 September 1912, unpaginated, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

¹⁰¹ Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, 36.

Gallery was top lit¹⁰² and the new galleries, built in 1909, for the Victoria and Albert Museum¹⁰³ were again top lit. However, late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Arts and Crafts architects favoured the use of high windows to fill interiors with natural light.¹⁰⁴ Yet despite the fact that, as will be described in detail, the RBSA Members and architects who were involved with the reconstruction adopted an Arts and Crafts approach to their practice,¹⁰⁵ the new gallery was windowless and top lit.

This is particularly relevant considering that Crouch, Butler and Savage had already proven their ability to design a building to a brief which emphasised the need for good lighting, in a local and therefore easily viewable building. Their Wednesbury Library of 1908 combined the Arts and Crafts use of high windows with the use of skylights to provide a light well; its design showed that provision of good lighting, both daylight and electrical, was of crucial interest to contemporary architectural considerations.¹⁰⁶ The RBSA's reliance on top lighting for natural light despite more recent thinking in architecture proposing the use of high

¹⁰² Davies, *By the Gains of Industry; Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery 1885-1985*, 36-37.

¹⁰³ Malcolm Baker, 'Bode and Museum Display: The Arrangement of the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum and the South Kensington Response', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen, Kolloquium zum 150sten Geburtstag von Wilhelm von Bode*, 1996, 143-153.

¹⁰⁴ Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, 64.

¹⁰⁵ Architects involved with the reconstruction included Charles Edward Bateman (1863-1947), Jethro Anstice Cossins (1830-1917) and William Henry Bidlake (1861-1938). Minute no 4672, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Committee Meeting 25 May 1910, Minute no 4920, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Adjourned General Committee Meeting 13 February 1912, Minute Book 7 October 1908-2 September 1912, unpaginated, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham. For further information about these architects see Ballard (ed.), *Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects*.

¹⁰⁶ Oriël Prizeman, 'Paper no 319 Influences on lighting performance: the case of the 1908 Carnegie Public Library at Wednesbury, Birmingham, UK', A paper presented at the PLEA 2008 25th Conference on Passive and Low Energy Architecture, Dublin, 22-24 October 2008, unpaginated, http://architecture.ucd.ie/Paul/PLEA2008/content/papers/oral/PLEA_FinalPaper_ref_319.pdf, accessed 24 November 2010.

windows alongside top lighting is particularly intriguing in view of the *Burlington Magazine*'s criticism of the new top-lit exhibition spaces at the National Gallery in 1911.¹⁰⁷ As the *Burlington Magazine* was a publication that was explicitly aimed at connoisseurs, collectors who might purchase artworks, these comments were of urgent relevance to the RBSA.

Artificial lighting was also of great importance to the RBSA as exhibitions were held in winter, when natural daylight would be limited by short day length and limited hours of sunlight.¹⁰⁸ It was also critical because of the long opening hours of exhibitions—exhibitions stayed open until 9 pm at least once per week.¹⁰⁹ In London, the Royal Academy had installed electric lighting in the late-nineteenth century¹¹⁰ so the use of such lighting in exhibitions of contemporary work was accepted. A further consideration could have been concern about possible damage caused by natural light. These issues had been raised in Birmingham as early as 1867, when the art gallery first opened¹¹¹ and local interest in the issue was emphasised by the Nettlefold bequest of paintings by David Cox in 1882. The works were given to the city on condition that electric lighting was used to illuminate them, forcing the installation of such lighting in order to meet this

¹⁰⁷ Anon., 'Recent Extensions at the National Gallery and the British Museum', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 19:99, 1911, 122.

¹⁰⁸ For example, in late December the sun rises at 08.17 and sets at 15.57 GMT, www.metcheck.com accessed 26 December 2010.

¹⁰⁹ For example in 1939 exhibitions were open until 9.00pm on Monday evenings, *Royal Birmingham Society of Artists The Spring Exhibition 1939*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, 1939.

¹¹⁰ Michael Compton, 'The Architecture of Daylight', in Giles Waterfield, *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain 1790-1990*, exhibition catalogue, Dulwich, Dulwich Picture Gallery, 27 November 1991-1 March 1992, National Gallery of Scotland, 12 March – 3 May, 1992, London, 1991, 42.

¹¹¹ 'Following the opening of the Corporation Free Art Gallery in 1867, concern was expressed of the effect on the exhibitions of air pollution, sunlight and fumes from the coal-gas lighting', Davies, *By the Gains of Industry; Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery 1885-1985*, 100.

condition.¹¹² However the issue of the damaging effects of different kinds of lighting were not discussed at RBSA meetings, probably because the works were contemporary and were only hung for a short time. In summary, therefore, some of the decisions that the RBSA made in Birmingham as early as 1912 indicate that commercial considerations played a role in the development of the architecture of their new gallery, demonstrating that the Society was negotiating a distinct position more closely linked to the RA and similar spaces than to the museum sector, whilst still seeking to avoid a visible commitment to retail sales tactics. In this case, the choice of top lighting indicates that there was a preference amongst RBSA Members to align themselves with established public institutions, rather than adopting a more innovative lighting solution.

The issue of the negotiation of a path through the complex issue of the function of the gallery is further underlined by the lack of exploitation of street-level display space, which could have offered large windows and highly visible displays. The Rickman and Hutchinson gallery of 1829 had included a ground floor space,¹¹³ but by the early-twentieth century these spaces were no longer used by the RBSA, having been sublet to a range of tenants,¹¹⁴ therefore in the period immediately prior to the demolition of the older building, the RBSA did not make use of street-level display space. This is despite the existence in Birmingham of a range of impressive retail premises that did enjoy street frontages and shop windows,

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 101.

¹¹³ A photograph of the building shows windows either side of the portico.

¹¹⁴ Minute 4656, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Finance Committee meeting 13 April 1910, Minute Book 7 October 1908–2 September 1912, unpaginated, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham and Minute 4655, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Finance Committee meeting 13 April 1910, Minute Book 7 October 1908-2 September 1912, unpaginated, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

buildings that could have prompted interest in the use of similar tactics to stimulate sales of works through the gallery. Hyam and Co., in New Street, traded from a prominent purpose-built retail store designed by John Jones Bateman in 1859, with full height windows to the street and a top-lit interior.¹¹⁵ The drapers and haberdashers store known as *The Louvre*,¹¹⁶ another landmark store in Birmingham, designed by Essex, Nicol & Goodman and constructed in 1895,¹¹⁷ also had large windows at street level.¹¹⁸ Several examples, therefore, of shops constructed relatively recently, with goods prominently displayed in street level windows, existed in the close vicinity of the gallery. Yet the RBSA moved to a first floor gallery in a rear block, in spite of the fact that plans for the Crouch, Butler and Savage development show that there were to be four shops on the ground floor of the new building.¹¹⁹ This however, was not an entirely new concept for an artist-led group as the Royal Glasgow Institute was exhibiting during this period at the McLellan Galleries, with shops at street level but owned by Glasgow City Council.¹²⁰ The difference is that the McLellan Galleries had been built in the mid-nineteenth century to house a private collection, rather than as an artist-led

¹¹⁵ Toni Demidowicz, 'John Jones Bateman' in Ballard (ed.), *Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects*, 73 and illustration page 72.

¹¹⁶ The use of the name 'Louvre', taken from the Parisian department store Les Grands Magazins du Louvre, was common throughout Europe by 1914, as the concept and practices of the department store spread. Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain, 'The World of the Department Store: Distribution, Culture and Social Change', in Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain. *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store 1850-1939*, Aldershot, 1999.

¹¹⁷ Art had been sold in bazars from early in the nineteenth century and department stores from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards; Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, 26. It may be that stores in Birmingham sold art but no archival evidence to support this has been discovered.

¹¹⁸ Illustrated in Ballard (ed.), *Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects*, 202.

¹¹⁹ Crouch, Butler and Savage development, Ground Floor Plan, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

¹²⁰ The block had initially built as a commercial development by Archibald McLellan, with space to house his private collection on the first floor. George Fairfull Smith, 'McLellan, Archibald (1795/1797–1854)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17663, accessed 24 April 2011 and www.royalglasgowinstitute.org/history2.html accessed 28 January 2012.

space.¹²¹ Holger Hoock has emphasised the level of commitment and resources required to manage artist-led spaces away from the capital city, describing this as 'a formidable task',¹²² making the selection of a first-floor space even more unexpected, as such difficulties imply that good sales would have been considered essential. In contrast, the London art dealers Colnaghi's, still in business today,¹²³ commissioned a new purpose-built gallery in 1913, with large shop windows, described when it opened as 'a truly modern picture gallery, illustrating the latest and most effective methods of pictorial display'.¹²⁴ It is however most likely to be exactly this difference between the art society and the art dealer that led to the RBSA's decision to limit street-level advertisement to the esoteric appeal of the doors with the sunflower decoration. Julia Scalzo has investigated display in shop windows in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century.¹²⁵ Her findings emphasise that in the early-twentieth century discretion and understatement were the hallmarks of exclusive retailers.¹²⁶ Scalzo also explains that in the Edwardian period this attitude impacted on architectural design as well as on architects themselves: architects were to be 'polished, urbane and cultured',¹²⁷ by extension, their designs, even for commercial architecture, should remain restrained.¹²⁸ The outward appearance of the new RBSA Gallery therefore embodied the prevailing attitudes of the architectural profession, demonstrating the relevance of MacLeod's

¹²¹ Smith, 'McLellan, Archibald (1795/1797–1854)'.

¹²² Hoock, *The King's Artists, The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture*, 83.

¹²³ www.colnaghi.co.uk, accessed 14 November 2010.

¹²⁴ Waterfield, (ed.), *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain 1790-1990*, caption to illustration G17, 167.

¹²⁵ Julia Scalzo, 'All a Matter of Taste: The Problem of Victorian and Edwardian Shop Fronts', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historian*, 68:1, 2009, 52-73.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

view that the seemingly intangible attitudes of professional bodies have a direct impact on the construction of museums and galleries.¹²⁹

Penny Sparke in *The Modern Interior* made the link between modernity and industrialisation. She connected interior design in the early-twentieth century with these two issues, noting that ‘one of the key transformations brought about by the advent of modernity’s main driver— industrialization— related to people’s private and public experiences that affected the formation of both their self and their collective identities’.¹³⁰ Sparke’s observations can be applied to the RBSA. Industrialisation had impacted on the existence of the Society’s gallery: the development of Birmingham as a city meant that the land was attractive to investors who could see the potential benefits of a commercial development which included a cultural attraction. The use of the first floor space, the lack of a shop window and the reliance on a simple door to mark the entrance to the gallery all signalled a desire to restrict communication to a dialogue with established customers only, or those that could easily join this set. This would sit with an analysis of the connection between social acceptability and aesthetic codes identified by Francesca Berry. Berry has scrutinized magazine articles appearing in early-twentieth century France and the emphasis given to the display of personal taste through selection of interior décor, particularly articles published in *Femina* in 1907-8, just before the construction of the Crouch, Butler and Savage gallery. Berry concludes ‘the series implies that personal taste only has meaning

¹²⁹ MacLeod, ‘Rethinking a Site-Specific History of Production and Use’, 21.

¹³⁰ Penny Sparke, *The Modern Interior*, London, 2008, 9.

in reference to a preordained set of socially determined aesthetic codes to which the individual subject must adapt'.¹³¹

The discreet presence of the gallery must have had an impact on Fleetwood-Walker's career as an exhibiting artist, limiting contact with new buyers for portraiture. It has been noted in earlier chapters that political and demographic changes meant that established customers tended to move away from Birmingham in the first part of the twentieth century. Political power became centralised in the capital and suburban and semi-rural living, rather than urban living, became the fashion for the wealthiest sections of the population. The removal of the RBSA's established clientele from Birmingham brought with it a need for artists like Fleetwood-Walker to make connections with new visitors and clients, such as the emerging small industrialists who were to become Fleetwood-Walker's customers. Yet the exterior architecture of the gallery did little to entice them to enter the building; new populations moving to the city, or individuals from the region whose interest in the arts was as yet undeveloped, could therefore remain unaware of the existence of the gallery. This may have contributed to Fleetwood-Walker's enduring commitment to a teaching career, as revenue from portraiture alone was limited. In all probability the lack of revenue from portraiture in the region contributed to Fleetwood-Walker's decision to reduce his involvement with Birmingham from 1951 onwards, concentrating on exhibiting his work in higher profile London venues.

¹³¹ Francesca Berry, 'Designing the Reader's Interior; Subjectivity and the Woman's Magazine in Early Twentieth-Century France', *Journal of Design History*, 18:1, 2005, 71.

Blurring the Boundaries of the Gallery Interior

An analysis of the interior layout, decoration and furnishing of the Crouch, Butler and Savage gallery is vital to an exploration of the impact of exhibition culture on Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's career. This is because the RBSA Gallery was the space where a considerable proportion of Fleetwood-Walker's work was consumed, and therefore, as he was a portrait artist, also, produced, because an encounter with a portrait in an exhibition is often the stimulus for a new commission. Many of Fleetwood-Walker's works would have been created with this setting in mind. As has been noted by Klonk, gallery experience 'is created by people with particular needs, interests and beliefs rather than being somehow passively and unwittingly reproduced by them'.¹³² Artists and clients are amongst those individuals who collectively influence the setting in which works are shown. These considerations are revealing when reflecting on the interior treatment of the RBSA's new gallery. What will be argued here is that, like the exterior appearance of the gallery, which demonstrates both the acceptance of some of the latest architectural ideas and the rejection of progressive approaches to retail sales, the interior was a contested space in terms of its function. This is particularly the case when comparing the RBSA Gallery with the nearby public art gallery which treated the art object, and with it the gallery space, as autonomous. As will be seen, this is evidenced by the compromise between some very fashionable aspects of the new gallery, particularly the contemporary décor and furnishings, and the traditional hanging scheme adopted by the artists, who were determined to show a large number of works by as many artists as possible, even though this hanging

¹³² Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, 11.

style was already out of favour with both interior decorators and museum professionals.

A compelling introduction to the study of the interior of the Crouch, Butler and Savage gallery and an insight into how works by Fleetwood-Walker were displayed in his lifetime is provided by a series of photographs in the RBSA archive. As has been noted above, three undated photographs by Harold Baker Ltd show, according to the RBSA minutes,¹³³ the 1926 Autumn Exhibition.¹³⁴ As well as an overall view of the gallery, two photographs show works by Bernard Fleetwood-Walker hanging in that space: *Portrait of a Young Man* and *The Schoolboy*. *The Schoolboy*,¹³⁵ is listed in the catalogue of the Autumn 1926 exhibition, providing confirmation that the Baker photographs are of this exhibition. These two paintings express the different but co-existing ambitions of the gallery and of Bernard Fleetwood Walker's work as shown within that gallery. *The Schoolboy* shows a conventional young man with a tidy side parting who, laden with a heavy bag, presumably of books, exudes an air of studious seriousness. This image seems to be a representation of an exhortation to hard study and discipline as the route to success. Although *Portrait of a Young Man* is not listed in this catalogue there is an entry for a painting by Fleetwood-Walker entitled *Coppertop*—and as the sitter portrayed has red hair this may well be the same

¹³³ Minutes of the RBSA General Meeting 28 October 1926, Minute Book 5 September 1912–25 July 1928, 299, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

¹³⁴ The date of the Baker photographs is confirmed because, as well as works by Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, shown in the 1926 Autumn Exhibition, works by Arthur Charles Shorthouse (1879-1953) also shown in that exhibition can be identified in these photographs: *The Old Guard* and *Nature Study* illustrated respectively plates 119 and 120, Hill and Midgley, *The History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists*, illustration pages unpaginated; *Autumn Exhibition, 1926*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, 1926, RBSA Archive, Birmingham and Grant M. Waters, *Dictionary of British Artists Working 1900-1950*, Calne, 1975.

¹³⁵ The work has actually been dated 1924 by Nicola Walker, the artist's grand-daughter, see www.fleetwood-walker.co.uk, accessed 26 December 2010.

work. If this is the case, it demonstrates that Fleetwood Walker changed the titles of his works. In contrast to *The Schoolboy* the 'young man' who is very likely to be *Coppertop*, has windswept hair, and is apparently seated on the edge of a golf bunker, holding a golf club. This sitter is the essence of the fashionable: dressed in casual 'sports wear' and participating in an exclusive outdoor sport. Although a seated pose, there is an air of latent energy about this portrait. Again a portrait conveying aspirations, but this time a different ideal: fashionable, casual and sportsmanlike; this would surely have been a portrait to which viewers as clients would have responded, perhaps with a commission of their own.

The structural layout of the Crouch, Butler and Savage space as seen in the Baker photographs can be compared to that of other art galleries and museums in the UK. It can also be compared with similar spaces in Germany in the early-twentieth century. The room layout is particularly reminiscent of some of the galleries in Germany described by Charlotte Klonk in *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*.¹³⁶ A museum space designed by Ludwig Justi in 1905,¹³⁷ incorporates a low dado but also includes a partially-curtained but door-less square arch into the gallery space. A comparable architectural feature can be seen in one of the Baker photographs of the RBSA Gallery. A room displayed by Hugo von Tschudi in 1908, shows a low dado, a picture rail with hanging rods, a generally light and bright room and a glazed ceiling.¹³⁸ Konrad Lange's exhibition of work by contemporary German artists was also displayed in a room with a low

¹³⁶ Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, 49-85.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, plate 38, 81.

dado.¹³⁹ It is very possible that artists and architects in Birmingham were familiar with these architectural developments in Germany relating to gallery design. Architects would have been aware of Birmingham City Council's Housing Committee's visit to Germany in 1905 to examine German strategies for town planning and subsequent adoption of some of the policies already in use in Germany¹⁴⁰ and therefore of architectural issues in that country. *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* included a regular review of exhibitions in Germany in the early part of the twentieth century¹⁴¹ and indeed one of these articles pays tribute to the work that Lange did in Stuttgart.¹⁴² Nikolaus Pevsner has suggested that many of the concepts implemented in Germany originated in Britain because of the significant influence of *Das Englische Haus* published by Hermann Muthesius (1861-1927) in 1904, on pioneers of German architectural modernism and eventually on the Bauhaus. Muthesius' research into the design of houses in Britain, at the time when there was considerable interest in the application of Arts and Crafts ideas to the domestic environment, led him to believe that simplicity and usefulness were essential to architectural design. Returning to Germany he became the champion of 'sachlich'; which, as Pevsner has explained, means 'at the same time, pertinent, matter-of-fact, and objective'¹⁴³ and became the motto of the growing Modern Movement.¹⁴⁴ Muthesius' writings also stimulated further visits by German architects, landscape architects and artists to Britain, therefore

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, plate 29, 65.

¹⁴⁰ Birmingham City Council, *Developing Birmingham*, Birmingham, 1989, 39.

¹⁴¹ See for example, H. W. S. 'Art in Germany', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 11: 54, 1907, 404 and 407- 410.

¹⁴² H. W. S., 'Art in Germany', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 12: 58, 1908, 264.

¹⁴³ Nikolaus Pevsner *Pioneers of Modern Design*, Harmondsworth, revised/rewritten edition, 1960, 32.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.* See also Francesco Passanti, 'The Vernacular, Modernism, and Le Corbusier', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 56:4, 1997, 438-451 and Charles Rice in *The Emergence of the Interior: Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity*, Oxford, 2007, 87.

extending the sharing of architectural ideas between the different countries.¹⁴⁵

Although Charles Rice has challenged the concept of a chronological and diffusionist history of architecture, in favour of a story of multiple modernities,¹⁴⁶ this suggestion only serves to emphasise the shared determination amongst architects and town planners in the Britain and other parts of Europe to create comfortable and practical homes set in an attractive built and landscaped environment, although this objective found expression in different architectural styles in different regions. Birmingham and the RBSA played a part in the development of these ideas as *The Garth*, a house built in Birmingham by RBSA Member William Henry Bidlake (1861-1938), whose work received international recognition,¹⁴⁷ and who, as will be shown, was involved in the redevelopment of the new RBSA Gallery, was illustrated in this influential work.¹⁴⁸

It can be argued that there was a direct interaction between space and artistic output in the case of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker when considering the effect the size of exhibition space has on the size of works produced for display in a specific venue. The principal exhibition space at the RBSA Gallery was a large rectangular gallery undivided by screens; all exhibits were immediately visible on entering the gallery and therefore all competing for the viewer's attention. In this kind of display smaller works such as delicate wood engravings are more likely to be overlooked; artists who are determined to promote themselves to visitors may

¹⁴⁵ Uwe Schneider, 'Hermann Muthesius and the Introduction of the English Arts & Crafts Garden to Germany', *Garden History*, 28:1, 2000, 57 and 66 and John V. Maciuika, 'Art in the Age of Government Intervention: Hermann Muthesius, Sachlichkeit, and the State, 1897-1907', *German Studies Review*, 21:2, 1998, 291.

¹⁴⁶ Rice, *The Emergence of the Interior: Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity*, 91.

¹⁴⁷ Trevor Mitchell, 'W. H. Bidlake', Phillada Ballard (ed.), *Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects*, Wetherby, 2009, 367.

¹⁴⁸ Foster, *Birmingham*, 251.

address this issue by producing large pieces and using imposing frames, in order to draw attention to their work. Throughout his career Fleetwood-Walker exhibited many large-scale works in the RBSA Gallery, demonstrating that the size and layout of the space had indeed an impact on his output. One of the works he first exhibited here, *Maudie in Pink*, shown at the Spring Exhibition in 1920,¹⁴⁹ measured 36 x 34 inches, *Children at Vernonnet* of 1931 was 50 x 40 inches, and *Margaret*, shown in 1954, was substantially taller at 64 x 35 inches.¹⁵⁰ Even in the war years when materials would have been in short supply, a work shown in 1941, *Children from the Town* was a 33-inch-square canvas. One of the paintings that, as has been noted above, the artist himself considered to be one of his most important works, his self-portrait with his wife and two children, *Family at Polperro* measures 50 x 40 inches. The effect of the production of works at this scale can be seen in a newspaper cutting showing *A Village Madonna* of 1935. This painting, with an image size of 53 x 40 inches, seen amongst other works at a local group art show, looks almost disproportionately large.¹⁵¹ The production of works of this size has many implications for artistic production; financial considerations would include the quantity of materials required to create work on this scale, the need for a commensurately large studio space, framing costs and transport issues; other considerations would include the physical strength required to move such large canvases and the stamina and time needed to produce the work, and of course size could have economic implications if a larger work could achieve a higher selling price. The example of the size of work produced

¹⁴⁹ See Appendix

¹⁵⁰ Measurements given in inches as this was the unit of measurement in use during Fleetwood-Walker's career and is used in the archival records which provide this information.

¹⁵¹ Anon., 'Coventry Art Exhibition', *Coventry Herald*, 24 September 1938, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

illustrates the relevance of the concept that output and space influence one another. In Fleetwood-Walker's case, gallery architecture had a distinct role in determining artistic output; the need to show work on a suitably large scale was met in works shown during all the time that Fleetwood-Walker exhibited at the RBSA Gallery.¹⁵² It could also be argued that the generous size of the gallery was itself determined by the large scale of works produced by artists in the period immediately preceding the building of the gallery,¹⁵³ emphasising that these were mutually influencing elements. In addition, size also influenced the art market: large paintings required a higher sale price and a larger space to display them, both suggesting patrons with considerable means.

Few references to the interior decoration of the gallery or to the display of work in the early-twentieth century in the Rickman and Hutchinson building exist in the minutes of the RBSA's meetings. Despite this there is some evidence that the RBSA was aware of changing ideas about gallery décor. In 1911 repairs to the walls were required and it was suggested that a grey canvas be ordered.¹⁵⁴ Although controlling expenditure affected this decision, the use of this material and its colour is of interest¹⁵⁵ as it suggests that by 1911 there was a move away from luxurious fabrics like silk, velvet or brocade and from the deep rich reds and

¹⁵² As noted in previous chapters, Fleetwood-Walker first exhibited his work at the RBSA Gallery in 1919; from then until the early 1950s he exhibited with the Society each year; from 1951 he was an occasional exhibitor. See Appendix for full details.

¹⁵³ For example Walter Langley's *Never Morning Wore to Evening but Some Heart did Break* of 1894 measures 1524mm x 1220mm (60 inches x 48 inches), www.bmagic.org.uk/objects/1980P18, accessed 7 December 2010.

¹⁵⁴ Minute 4810, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Finance Committee, March 1911 (full date omitted), Minute Book 7 October 1908–2 September 1912, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

¹⁵⁵ The earliest use of hessian as a wall covering material in a gallery has been traced to the Berlin Secession exhibitions of 1898. Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, 78.

greens typical of the nineteenth century¹⁵⁶ to a simpler and more neutral background. Indeed, the National Gallery in London also used canvas as wall covering in 1911.¹⁵⁷ This demonstrates that the RBSA was aware of trends in display theory and practice even before the rebuilding project was envisaged and underlines the pertinence of MacLeod's assessment that the design of museums and galleries is informed by a diversity of professional opinions.¹⁵⁸ The move, as seen in the RBSA Gallery, towards a more minimalistic style, with plainer walls and use of softer colours can be seen in Fleetwood-Walker's portraits. It can be discerned in portraits painted at different periods: *Petronilla*, first exhibited in 1928, shows the sitter wearing patterned clothing and seated on a chair with patterned fabric; *Elizabeth*, exhibited in 1959, shows a woman in a plain blue dress, the chair is not visible and the background colours are neutral.

The Baker photographs illustrate how the RBSA decided to decorate and furnish the new Crouch, Butler and Savage gallery. A light ceiling and wooden floor contrast with a low, dark, wooden wainscot and a similarly dark picture rail, with walls a shade lighter than the panelling and picture rail. The space between the picture-rail moulding and the cornice is light coloured and possibly white; above this the coffered ceiling with inset glass panels is also light or perhaps even white. This, like the use of the sunflower design on the entrance door, indicates the impact of the Aesthetic Movement, which had a considerable influence on

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 32-36.

¹⁵⁷ Giles Waterfield, 'Picture Hanging and Gallery Decoration', in Giles Waterfield, (ed.), *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain 1790-1990*, exhibition catalogue, Dulwich, Dulwich Picture Gallery, 27 November 1991-1 March 1992, National Gallery of Scotland, 12 March – 3 May, 1992, London, 1991, 61.

¹⁵⁸ MacLeod, 'Rethinking a Site-Specific History of Production and Use', 21.

domestic interior decoration,¹⁵⁹ on the interior treatment of the gallery. Late-nineteenth century advice on domestic interior design, originating from the principles of the Aesthetic movement, opposed ostentatious display, instead advocating the introduction of art into the home.¹⁶⁰ This style of interior decorating recommended that floors and walls should be of contrasting tones, with a wainscot or dado of about a metre in height, finished with a wooden moulding; the dado should be darker in tone than any other part of the wall, providing the transition between floor and wall; the topmost section of the wall should be covered with a frieze.¹⁶¹ As will be shown below, the RBSA Gallery adopted an approach to interior design that made the gallery the model of such a home.

In 1900 Joseph Crouch and Edmund Butler, the architects who were to design the 1913 RBSA Gallery, published their own book on domestic interiors: *The Apartments of the House, Their Arrangement, Furnishing and Decoration*,¹⁶² a publication of similar ambition to other works of interior decoration advice written in the late-nineteenth century.¹⁶³ Crouch and Butler's book echoed Arts and Crafts ideals, which, as Penny Sparke has indicated, made 'the home, and the arts associated with domesticity, a primary arena of engagement'.¹⁶⁴ Prefaced by a quotation from Ruskin in praise of an integrated approach to exterior and interior

¹⁵⁹ Aslin, *The Aesthetic Movement: Prelude to Art Nouveau*, 52.

¹⁶⁰ Martha Crabill McClaugherty, 'Household Art: Creating the Artistic Home, 1868-1893', *Winterthur Portfolio*, 18:1, 1983, 2.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁶² Joseph Crouch and Edmund Butler, *The Apartments of the House, Their Arrangement, Furnishing and Decoration*, London, 1900.

¹⁶³ Examples of these are reviewed in McClaugherty, 'Household Art: Creating the Artistic Home, 1868-1893'.

¹⁶⁴ Sparke, *The Modern Interior*, 86.

domestic architecture,¹⁶⁵ the dominant theme is a dedication to the creation of a 'cosy'¹⁶⁶ home, focusing on 'Simplicity and Appropriateness'¹⁶⁷ and drawing inspiration from Elizabethan buildings.¹⁶⁸ As will be described, connections can be made between the treatment of the gallery interior and Crouch and Butler's proposal for a comfortable and visually pleasing home. It may even be that the publication, with its emphasis on 'Simplicity and Appropriateness' had a far wider influence, possibly contributing to Muthesius' ideas and the eventual evolution of 'sachlich' as Muthesius' book was only published four years after *The Apartments of the House, their Arrangement, Furnishing and Decoration*.

Although, as has been noted above, wall colour in galleries in the twentieth century was much debated and selection of wall treatment was felt to have a considerable influence on the appearance of galleries, debates about the wall colour to be used in the newly built Crouch, Butler and Savage gallery are not recorded in the RBSA minutes. The colour used can only be deduced from the black and white Baker photographs of the RBSA exhibition. Here the wall colour is very dark: it appears considerably darker than the mounts of the glazed works on display. During Fleetwood-Walker's career mention is made in the Society minutes of the redecoration of the space, but only expressed as a maintenance

¹⁶⁵ Crouch and Butler, *The Apartments of the House, Their Arrangement, Furnishing and Decoration*, ix.

¹⁶⁶ The adjective 'cosy' is used numerous times by the authors, for example their proposal for the hall of a house is 'well supplied with cosy nooks for chilly evenings' and the description of the drawing room seating includes the phrase: 'a more cosy arrangement of a confidential chat cannot well be imagined', Crouch and Butler, *The Apartments of the House, Their Arrangement, Furnishing and Decoration*, 98.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁶⁸ For example Plas Mawr, Conwy, Wales, now in the care of Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments. Crouch and Butler, *The Apartments of the House, Their Arrangement, Furnishing and Decoration*, 25 and 98, plates 40 and 63.

issue,¹⁶⁹ the aesthetic implications of such issues are not discussed. It is only in 1950 that the colour of the walls was specifically raised but 'it was decided that this should be settled by the President and Vice Presidents in consultation with Hon Curators'.¹⁷⁰ Again, no further detail can be found about the colour selected. In contrast, when the Royal Scottish Academy galleries were redecorated in 1926 'in tones of grey, black and ivory' the RSA Council 'took a close interest in this and the frequency of the Minute Book references to samples, trial panels and meetings of inspection, suggests unresolved difficulties some of which led to subsequent adverse criticism'.¹⁷¹ The simple reporting in the RBSA minutes suggests that at the RBSA, both at the design stage and until the post-war period, there was agreement as to what would be appropriate. The lack of debate also implies that the RBSA Council concurred with Crouch and Butler's approach to interior decoration, indicating that there was no need to debate these issues as all were familiar with *The Apartments of the House* and agreed with the principles and execution described. The Baker photographs certainly indicate that an Aesthetic or Arts and Crafts approach was preferred to other modes of decoration of gallery spaces, as will be described in detail below, and that ideas expressed in *The Apartments of the House* are put into practice in the gallery. The gallery ceiling and wall are reminiscent of Crouch and Butler's proposal for what they call a

¹⁶⁹ See for example Claude Pratt, Hon Curator's Report, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual General Meeting 22 March 1930, Minute Book 3 October 1928–3 November 1936, report inserted after page 37, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham; Hon Treasurer's Report, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual General Meeting 19 March 1932, Minute Book 3 October 1928–3 November 1936, report inserted after page 61, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

¹⁷⁰ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Adjoined Annual Meeting 20 June 1950, Minute Book 7 November 1947–14 October 1955, 70, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

¹⁷¹ Esme Gordon, *The Royal Scottish Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture 1826-1976*, Edinburgh, 1976, 200.

‘Homely Dining Room’: ‘a plaster ceiling panelled out in simple forms, with a strong band of modelled plaster breaking the line of frieze and ceiling. The space between the oak dado and the frieze is of plain plaster distempered a warm brick red. The frieze and ceiling are treated in ivory white’.¹⁷² This description fits the tonal values and the features shown in the Butler photographs.

The Baker photographs also show how the gallery was furnished. Upholstered benches, as well as upright chairs have been provided. There is a table with a vase of flowers, some books—and a newspaper which seems to have been placed deliberately, as though to encourage the visitor to sit and linger. These photographs suggest that the furnishings of the gallery, as well as the interior decoration, have their source in the Aesthetic movement which advocated ‘fewer, carefully chosen and related objects shown in harmoniously decorated rooms’.¹⁷³ The bench seating provided for visitors, low-backed upholstered settles, was in a style much favoured by Arts and Crafts designers¹⁷⁴ and Crouch and Butler had

¹⁷² Crouch and Butler, *The Apartments of the House, Their Arrangement, Furnishing and Decoration*, 49.

¹⁷³ Denney, *At the Temple of Art: The Grosvenor Gallery, 1877-1890*, 56.

¹⁷⁴ ‘A long wooden bench, usually with arms and a high back (often extending to the ground), and having a locker or box under the seat’, Oxford English Dictionary, www.oed.com, accessed 24 January 2012. Described by Charles Locke Eastlake, as ‘The common wooden settle which forms so comfortable and snug-looking a seat by rustic hearths.’, Charles Locke Eastlake, *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery and Other Details*, London, 1869, 2005 facsimile edition, 186 and F. W. Gibson, ‘Eastlake, Charles Locke (1833–1906)’, rev. Charlotte L. Brunskill, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32959, accessed 24 January 2012. See for example, illustration of a ‘mahogany settle [...] designed by A. H. Mackmurdo’ 1886 and ‘Painted oak settle with two drawers’, 1910, Isabelle Anscombe, *Arts and Crafts Style*, London, 1996, 55 and 67 and the upholstered bench in the photograph captioned ‘C. A. Ionsides’ (sic) House, Addison Gdns: an important ‘Aesthetic’ Interior’, Waterfield, ‘Picture Hanging and Gallery Decoration’, 61.

praised these simple and traditional pieces of furniture in *The Apartments of the House*.¹⁷⁵

The style of interior decoration used at the RBSA Gallery is similar to that adopted by one of the most innovative commercial galleries in London: the Grosvenor Gallery, established in 1877. Inspired by the Aesthetic Movement and with the aim of creating a relaxing experience for the visitor, this gallery was thoughtfully furnished with wall hangings, rugs and plants. The lavish interior treatment championed by the Grosvenor had a lasting influence on commercial galleries.¹⁷⁶

Public galleries, however, remained austere until much later in the twentieth century. For example, the Whitechapel Art Gallery,¹⁷⁷ built in east London in 1901, was a simple utilitarian space, deemed appropriate for a gallery which aimed 'to de-brutalise the poor through exposure to moral perfection'.¹⁷⁸ The new galleries built at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1909 incorporated classical architectural features such as arches and columns and contained no furniture.¹⁷⁹ It was only many years later that the Grosvenor's approach was used in an art museum. In 1931, when work was done at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, furniture and ceramics as well as plants were included to create a relaxing atmosphere. The

¹⁷⁵ Crouch and Butler, *The Apartments of the House, Their Arrangement, Furnishing and Decoration*, 148.

¹⁷⁶ Waterfield, 'Picture Hanging and Gallery Decoration', 60.

¹⁷⁷ Illustration B22 in Waterfield, *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain 1790-1990*, exhibition catalogue, Dulwich, Dulwich Picture Gallery, 27 November 1991-1 March 1992, National Gallery of Scotland, 12 March – 3 May, 1992, London, 1991, 96.

¹⁷⁸ Giles Waterfield, (ed.), *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain 1790-1990*, exhibition catalogue, Dulwich, Dulwich Picture Gallery, 27 November 1991-1 March 1992, National Gallery of Scotland, 12 March – 3 May, 1992, London, 1991, 96.

¹⁷⁹ Baker, 'Bode and Museum Display: The Arrangement of the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum and the South Kensington Response', Fig. 5, 151.

result was very similar to the interior of the Crouch, Butler and Savage gallery.¹⁸⁰ The RBSA Gallery's décor is therefore an early example in the UK of the move away from the severe and classical style used to decorate an exhibition space, which aimed to impress, to the welcoming and comfortable interior space, a policy which was also observed in Germany in the early-twentieth century.¹⁸¹ Colleen Denney has proposed that the décor pioneered by the Grosvenor Gallery—and adopted by the Crouch, Butler and Savage gallery—encouraged a contemplative approach to the viewing of art works, transforming such consumption into a secular spirituality.¹⁸² At the RBSA Gallery this concept was first suggested by the sunflower pattern on the entrance door. It was then reinforced by the interior decoration and furnishings, emphasising that the visitor had gained the sanctuary of the temple of art.

One of the reasons for the RBSA's espousal of these interior design concepts was the prevalence in Birmingham of the Arts and Crafts idiom in contemporary domestic architecture, itself connected to the Aesthetic Movement. Some elements of the Aesthetic Movement approach, such as a move towards simplicity and space compared to the well-filled interiors of the high Victorian period, and a concern for the integration of decorative and structural elements within domestic buildings, can be observed in the work of nineteenth-century architects¹⁸³ such as

¹⁸⁰ Waterfield, 'Picture Hanging and Gallery Decoration', Waterfield, (ed.), *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain 1790-1990*, 63.

¹⁸¹ Klonek, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, 50.

¹⁸² Denney, *At the Temple of Art. The Grosvenor Gallery, 1877-1890*, 2000, 48-49.

¹⁸³ Sparke, *The Modern Interior*, 8.

Edward William Godwin (1833-1886).¹⁸⁴ These ideas were espoused and developed by Arts and Crafts architects such as Charles Francis Annesley Voysey (1857-1941)¹⁸⁵ as well as by Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868-1928). Mackintosh's all-encompassing architectural and decorative creations such as *Hill House* (1902-1903), further refined these concepts and included comprehensive and consistent treatment of every element of the building down to the details of wall covering, flooring, furniture and light fittings.¹⁸⁶ Early twentieth-century architects, such as Crouch and Bulter themselves, articulated a desire for decorative treatment of domestic spaces to be integral with architecture, suggesting for example the incorporation of stained glass windows and plaster friezes into architect designed spaces.¹⁸⁷ This integrated approach to interior decoration would have been very familiar to RBSA artists because, for example, Philip Webb's innovative and influential house 'Standen', had been designed and built for a member of Birmingham's prominent Beale family, James Samuel Beale (1840-1912).¹⁸⁸ Here again the architect's own designs for fireplaces, panelling and light fittings were incorporated throughout the building to create what his clients found to be an eminently liveable home.¹⁸⁹ In Birmingham itself Bidlake was very much involved with domestic building projects in this period. The

¹⁸⁴ See for example 44 Tite Street of 1879, built for James (Abbott) McNeil Whistler (1834-1903), Aslin, *The Aesthetic Movement: Prelude to Art Nouveau*, 84.

¹⁸⁵ M. S. Briggs, 'Voysey, Charles Francis Annesley (1857-1941)', rev. Wendy Hitchmough, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2007, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36668, accessed 27 December 2010 and McClagherty, 'Household Art: Creating the Artistic Home, 1868-1893', 22.

¹⁸⁶ Charlotte and Peter Fiell, *Charles Rennie Mackintosh 1868-1928*, Köln, 1997, 102 and illustrations 103-111.

¹⁸⁷ For example, 'it is better to make the House beautiful in itself than to make it ugly and set about hiding its defects by expensive pictures and hangings.', Crouch and Butler, *The Apartments of the House, their arrangement furnishing and decoration*, xii.

¹⁸⁸ Kirk, *Philip Webb, Pioneer of Arts and Crafts Architecture*, 150 and 159.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 150-160.

treatment he advocated demonstrates a synergy with the ideas expressed in *The Apartments of the House*. A gate-leg gable is featured and illustrated in *The Apartments of the House*¹⁹⁰ and can be seen in one of the photographs of the gallery. A photograph of an interior by Bidlake and shown in *The Studio* in 1902,¹⁹¹ shows a table and vase like those shown in the photograph of the RBSA Gallery. A similar treatment was also used in Bidlake's *The Garth*.¹⁹² These trends were not confined to Birmingham or the very first years of the twentieth century. In 1912, the year that the former gallery was demolished, several illustrations of similar interiors in private homes appeared in *The Studio*.¹⁹³

Although, as has been seen, a familiarity with the work of Mackintosh can be deduced from the similarities of the exterior treatment of the Crouch, Butler and Savage building and Mackintosh's *Daily Record* building, the RBSA's architects espoused a subtly different approach to interior design, in that they aimed to encourage users of domestic spaces to have their own input into the appearance of their homes. They state that the 'furniture is only suggested, but here as elsewhere the idea aimed at is not eccentricity but individuality. Every home should in some way express the personality of the owner.'¹⁹⁴ The interior of the

¹⁹⁰ Crouch and Butler, *The Apartments of the House, Their Arrangement, Furnishing and Decoration*, 49 and 50.

¹⁹¹ The photograph was of *Woodgate*, 37 Hartropp Road, in Four Oaks, a few miles from Birmingham. Trevor Mitchell, 'W. H. Bidlake' in Ballard (ed.), *Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects*, Wetherby, 378.

¹⁹² Commissioned by Ralph Heaton, the director of the Birmingham Mint, and built in Edgbaston Park Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, *Ibid.*, 379.

¹⁹³ See for example a new interior for Claverdon Hall, Warwickshire, by Arthur McKewan ARIBA, which shows a round gate-leg table, a vase of flowers, upholstered armchairs and picture on walls. Anon., 'Recent Designs in Domestic Architecture', *The Studio*, 55:227, 1912, 300; a similar interior with a round gate-leg table and vase of flowers is illustrated in Anon., 'Domestic Architecture', *The Studio*, 57:235, 1912, 123.

¹⁹⁴ Crouch and Butler, *The Apartments of the House, Their Arrangement Furnishing and Decoration*, 77.

new RBSA Gallery therefore recreated a fashionable domestic space likely to appeal to the RBSA's potential customers. Indeed, it is argued here that the domesticated gallery interior helped evoke the possible appearance of the paintings in the purchasers' homes and so give visitors the confidence to buy, knowing that the work would be appropriate for the domestic environment. This choice reflects an awareness of twentieth-century department store design and display techniques, where, increasingly, merchandise was displayed in room sets, intended to help the consumer visualise the product for sale in use.¹⁹⁵ By selecting this style of interior decoration the RBSA demonstrated its alignment with leading commercial art galleries and an awareness of retail display techniques; in this way it distanced itself from both utilitarian and classical schemes of gallery decoration and emphasised the limitations of the Society's commitment to educational and civic remits.

In *The Modern Interior* Sparke has revealed an even closer connection between the domestic and other interiors at the beginning of the twentieth century, placing interior design at the centre of the search for the fashionable, noting that 'not only was it important to be seen to be wearing fashionable clothes, it was equally important to live in, and to be seen in, fashionable interiors, both inside and outside the home.'¹⁹⁶ Sparke has emphasised that this did have a direct impact on consumer behaviour, as viewing the latest recreations of quasi domestic spaces promoted an interest in developing fashionable interiors in the home.¹⁹⁷ The connection between *The Apartments of the House* and the decoration and

¹⁹⁵ Sparke, *The Modern Interior*, 64.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

furniture of the gallery is a conspicuous example of the blurring of the distinction between the private and public sphere as described by Penny Sparke and provides further evidence to support Sparke's belief that 'the modern interior was the result of the two-way movement between the private and the public spheres'.¹⁹⁸

Prevailing taste in interior design could also have determined Fleetwood-Walker's selection of portraiture as his speciality. This connection has been stimulated by McClaugherty's comment that interiors should 'express hospitality in a family setting' therefore 'it was deemed correct to display family portraits'.¹⁹⁹ Many of Fleetwood-Walker's early works were family portraits, such as *Mrs G. Mitchell White* (also known as *Peggy White*) exhibited in 1922, and *Betty* from 1927, a portrait of the daughter of Peggy and George Mitchell White. The evolution of trends in interior design can also be traced in Fleetwood-Walker's works. A very early work, *Maudie in Pink* of 1920 includes a chair very similar to one illustrated in *The Apartments of the House*,²⁰⁰ described in the text as being one from Haddon Hall. Later, *Repose*, dated 1925, shows a fashionable day bed and the walls and woodwork are painted white. The significance of the fashionable interior for the art milieu of early twentieth-century Birmingham is also reflected in items depicted in Fleetwood-Walker's portraiture, for example in the choice of chic clothing worn by his portrait models. *Greensleeves* shows a woman in a green dress—a colour

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁹⁹ McClaugherty, 'Household Art: Creating the Artistic Home, 1868-1893', 18. See for example a photograph from Philip Webb's collection showing portraits displayed in the west drawing room at 'Clouds', compared to photographs of the living hall, east drawing room and dining room of the same house and from the same collection, showing that no paintings were on display. Sheila Kirk, *Philip Webb, Pioneer of Arts and Crafts Architecture*, 137 and 142.

²⁰⁰ Crouch and Butler, *The Apartments of the House, Their arrangement furnishing and decoration*, Fig. 84, 136.

associated with the Aesthetic movement.²⁰¹ The sleeves, fitted over the upper arm and opening into what was called kimono style, would have been the height of fashion.²⁰² Perhaps to be utterly fashionable, the elegant woman should also have her portrait painted by Fleetwood-Walker.

While domestic architecture and interior design continued to develop in the twentieth century elsewhere, Andy Foster has recorded that in Birmingham ‘the early Modern Movement [...] had little direct impact on Birmingham’.²⁰³ This too was to have an effect on interiors. Sparke has observed that modern architects were particularly committed to breaking down the barriers between interiors of the public and the private sphere, abandoning domesticity—seen as bourgeois—in favour of an un-embellished and class free architecture.²⁰⁴ However, there is little evidence of the implementation of these ideas in Birmingham’s domestic architecture during Fleetwood-Walker’s career. Housing constructed between the wars uses ‘an essentially Arts and Crafts and Tudor Revival vocabulary’²⁰⁵ as is shown for example in the inter-war developments at Bournville²⁰⁶ and very few International Style houses were built.²⁰⁷ As Louise Ward has noted, it was the Country House style that became widespread in the 1920s and 1930s, promoting

²⁰¹ Mary W. Blanchard, ‘Boundaries and the Victorian Body: Aesthetic Fashion in Gilded Age America’, *The American Historical Review*, 100:1, 1995, 26.

²⁰² Jack Cassin-Scott, *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Costume and Fashion 1550-1920*, London, 1986, 158, plate 150.

²⁰³ Foster, *Birmingham*, 30.

²⁰⁴ Sparke, *The Modern Interior*, 16.

²⁰⁵ Foster, *Birmingham*, 29.

²⁰⁶ See for example Michael Harrison, *Bournville: Model Village to Garden Suburb*, Chichester, 1999.

²⁰⁷ The Twentieth Century Society’s publication, *The Modern House Revisited*, in its gazetteer, lists only five individual houses and a further ten speculatively built houses built in this style in Birmingham, compared to over 120 such properties in London. Neil R Bingham (ed), *The Modern House Revisited*, London, 1996.

a more relaxed and informal look whilst still retaining antiques and heirlooms: ‘it was not a matter so much of emptying the grand formal rooms, but of making them comfortable as domestic spaces’.²⁰⁸ Much of Fleetwood-Walker’s output would therefore have been seen in a ‘Country House’ setting albeit within the urban boundary.²⁰⁹

Most of Fleetwood-Walker’s portraits, other than *Repose* and *Auntie* depict little background detail. It may be that this was a deliberate decision on the part of the artist, as to show a background would risk making the picture look inappropriate in the domestic setting. This issue has been highlighted by Christopher Reed in *Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture*. Reed has emphasised what he describes as ‘the growing divergence of domesticity and modernism despite—or because of—their intertwined roots in turn-of-the-century culture’.²¹⁰ Reed has suggested that the domestic setting was ‘seen as simultaneously popular and old-fashioned’²¹¹. Many of the earlier portraits of industrialists, such as that of Mr Gaunt (1943) have curtained backgrounds which are still generally plain. As Shearer West has noted, such backgrounds props were frequently seen in portraits from the eighteenth century and onwards;²¹² in the case of Fleetwood-Walker such backgrounds may also have had a practical, observed origin, due to the blackout enforced during the 1939-45 war. Many portraits simply render the background as a plane of colour, for example *Louba*

²⁰⁸ Louise Ward, *Chintz, Swags and Bows: The Myth of English Country-house Style, 1930-1990*, Sparke, *The Modern Interior*, 100.

²⁰⁹ Such as The Porchway, 72 Woodbourne Road, Edgbaston, built by Joseph Cohen, whose son was to marry Betty, www.jncohen.net/album/07/it090001.htm, accessed 20 March 2012.

²¹⁰ Christopher Reed, (ed.), *Not at Home: the Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture*, New York, 1996, 7.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

²¹² West, *Portraiture*, 25.

Reubens, often enlivened with vigorous brush strokes and tonal variation, as seen in *Christine*. This neutral treatment of the background in a portrait was preferred by other early twentieth-century portrait artists, such as Oskar Kokoschka, as a means of emphasising that the portrait concentrated on the 'essential human being that became the expressionist concern'²¹³ rather than seeking to depict the sitters status through the narrative of the environment. It may be speculated that Fleetwood-Walker's use of outdoor settings was prompted by a similar desire to avoid any categorisation associated with specific interiors. This could particularly be the case for the two self-portraits with his family. Here perhaps, the choice of a more neutral setting permitted the production of an aspirational self-portrait, enabling the artist and his family to be identified with the wealth and success of the family depicted in the Butler family portrait group. Accurate depiction of the true detail of individual backgrounds may have impeded such aspirations.

This research emphasises the importance of relating a regional history as the national and international story does not necessarily reflect lived experience. As has been suggested by Rice in the context of international architecture: 'This understanding also works to critique the reductive trajectories of historical progression and influence in architecture and design.'²¹⁴ The architecture of the new gallery, like painterly output as described by Clark,²¹⁵ was a response to fundamental aspects of modern life, itself subject to change and interrogation. The fluidity of modern life was reflected in the compromises of gallery design and Fleetwood-Walker's output as a portraitist.

²¹³ Carl E Schorske, *Fin-de-Siecle Vienna, Politics and Culture*, Cambridge, 1981, 240.

²¹⁴ Rice, *The Emergence of the Interior: Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity*, 90-91.

²¹⁵ Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*.

Display Methods

The Baker photographs offer a further insight into some of the requirements underlying the architecture of the gallery. They indicate that the location of the gallery on the first floor, its position at the top of a rear extension and the choice of a glazed roof may have all been connected—and suggest that such decisions were directly related to issues of display. The photographs show a symmetrical, close-hung and tiered display: one which required ample wall space. The best illumination for works displayed in this way was considered to be that provided by roof lights, with the advantage that space available for display was maximised.²¹⁶ Furthermore roof lights could only be provided when an exhibition space was on the topmost floor of a building.

A number of hanging schemes were in use at the beginning of the twentieth century, each with specific associations. An analysis of these options and of the display methods chosen by the RBSA demonstrates how the Society negotiated a route through these choices. It also indicates the effect of these decisions on artistic output and on Fleetwood-Walker and his work. Wall-filling displays of paintings had been prevalent since the eighteenth century and were intended to show that all art expressed shared ideals; here individual works on different subjects could be compared to one another, but this diversity did not undermine universal principles.²¹⁷ Use of this mode of display stimulated the emergence of a distinct sense of place associated with the art gallery. Such galleries were perceived as an intellectual oasis for the visitor, offering protection from

²¹⁶ Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, 36.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

commercial pressures and promoting reflection as well as contemplation of the works on show.²¹⁸ The earliest public galleries used this display method and photographs showing display in Birmingham's public art gallery reveal closely hung paintings.²¹⁹

As the provision of public galleries as spaces for viewing collections, rather than purchasing works, became widespread, a less cluttered hang emerged, enabling the viewer to see individual works more clearly. In 1910 the new Turner gallery at the Tate opened with works displayed in a single-line hang.²²⁰ When the Dulwich Picture Gallery was extended between 1910 and 1912, a single line hang, with space between each work, was adopted in some of the new spaces.²²¹

A third option for display was that espoused by some of London's commercial galleries, particularly the Grosvenor Gallery and the New Gallery, itself established by former staff of the Grosvenor Gallery. Like the style of furnishing adopted by the Grosvenor, this was closely connected to the Aesthetic Movement²²² and based on a desire to 'enshrine works of art and invest them with spiritual authority'.²²³ Paintings by the same artists were hung together, or in a small number of separate groups, with more space around them²²⁴ so as to give prominence to individual works.²²⁵ This kind of display was related to the emergence of the dealer-critic model. Selection of the work of one maker for the

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 15-20.

²¹⁹ Davies, *By the Gains of Industry; Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery 1885-1985*, 36-37.

²²⁰ Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, 58.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

²²² Waterfield, 'Picture Hanging and Gallery Decoration', 58.

²²³ Denney, *At the Temple of Art: The Grosvenor Gallery, 1877-1890*, 50-58.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

highest praise from the critic and hanging the work of that particular artist in a conspicuous display were the component parts of this selling process.

Despite the different display options available, the Crouch, Butler and Savage gallery, as has been described above, incorporated roof lights and enabled a crowded display. This could suggest that the RBSA believed that its mission was similar to that of a nineteenth-century public art gallery or museum: its purpose was to make a contribution to the education of Birmingham's citizens and the promotion of the civic ideal.²²⁶ However there was another reason for this kind of display, very relevant for the RBSA: it was considered by some to be appropriate for the sale of works—essential for professional artists.²²⁷ The Royal Academy, concerned with the sale of works by living artists, was still using the eighteenth-century style of display when the RBSA's reconstruction scheme was under discussion.²²⁸ Charlotte Klonk's detailed description of a Royal Academy exhibition in the late-eighteenth century could easily be of the RBSA exhibition shown in the Baker photographs of 1926: 'a roughly symmetrical order was followed, with big paintings in the middle, usually flanked by two full length portraits, the surrounding space was entirely filled in with smaller pictures, mainly landscapes and genre scenes'.²²⁹ In the Baker photographs one wall shows a crowded display, with the works hung frame to frame. In another photograph a symmetrical hang is evident: on the far wall a large painting is centrally placed with

²²⁶ Amy Woodson-Boulton, 'Industry without Art is Brutality': Aesthetic Ideology and Social Practice in Victorian Art Museums', *Journal of British Studies*, 46, 2007, 53-55.

²²⁷ Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, 19.

²²⁸ See for example F. Emanuel's sketch of 1907 showing a frenetic Royal Academy varnishing day with pictures hung frame to frame. Waterfield, 'Picture Hanging and Gallery Decoration', 55.

²²⁹ Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, 24 and plate 2, 3.

two small pictures and one large picture hung either side, taking approximately the same amount of space; beyond these, on both sides, two paintings are arranged one above the other, with the uppermost works presented in similar ornate frames; on the wall to the right a large portrait is prominently positioned, the surrounding space filled by portraits of similar sizes, all evenly spaced. Almost every available part of the wall space has been devoted to hanging pictures. This evidence shows that even as late as 1926, the RBSA was using the hanging scheme employed by the RA since the late-eighteenth century. Archival material proves that this dense hanging scheme continued to be used at the RBSA throughout Fleetwood-Walker's career. A photograph taken in 1966 of the RBSA 'Open' oil exhibition shows that the hang is still cluttered, with works tiered one above the other. These images indicate that over an extended period, and certainly during Fleetwood-Walker's entire exhibiting career, there was some consensus about appropriate modes of display in the artist-led space.

Evidence of such agreement can be found in the Minutes of the RBSA Council. When the Crouch, Butler and Savage gallery was being built there was no discussion about the need to have enough space to accommodate the Society's large exhibitions in comfort, despite contemporary debates surrounding exhibition display in the press.²³⁰ This parallels the experience of the RA, where opportunities to provide more space for Royal Academy exhibitions had not been pursued, suggesting that there was no interest in achieving a well-spaced display

²³⁰ Baker, 'Bode and Museum Display: The Arrangement of the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum and the South Kensington Response', 146.

and that the choice of close hung displays was deliberate.²³¹ This consistency between the display strategies of these institutions would have been especially pertinent for visitors used to moving between different exhibition spaces. Display policies were linked to specific types of consumption. For the educators of the early-twentieth century, a progressive view of history meant that a single line hang was appropriate. The Aesthetic Movement inspired hang was increasingly suitable for London-based dealers, particularly as the dealer-critic model developed. Viewers would associate a crowded hang with works for sale. Although the artists and architects involved in the new RBSA Gallery were eager to recreate the fashionable and comfortable atmosphere of the Aesthetic interior, this did not extend to an adoption of the sparse Aesthetic hang. A selling exhibition which was devoted to the promotion of a multiplicity of media, styles and genres, demanded a closely packed display. Furthermore, this was a hanging scheme that succeeded in combining exclusivity with the need to sell. It reflected the perceived tradition and prestige of the RA where works were sold rather than only studied yet maintained some distance between the art society and 'trade'. The display issues confronted at the RBSA are indicative of the contested role of art society exhibitions, negotiating a position between the commercial art gallery and the emerging museums which had only contemplative and educational functions.

As has been emphasised by Helmreich and Holt, a consideration of modes of display of the artists' work reveals the values of the exhibiting venue and its

²³¹ Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, 24.

positioning in the market place and shows how institutions themselves contribute to the reception of art works.²³² In the case of the RBSA the dense hang generated a specific association between the venue and its function as a gallery with works for sale. This in turn is reflected in the works that Fleetwood-Walker exhibited in this gallery, as many of the works he showed were clearly for sale and at a considerable price. This particularly applied to the few large figure compositions he produced: *Repose* was priced at £157.10.0²³³ in 1928, and a later work, *At the Mirror*, was priced at £250 in 1946, a substantial sum in view of the artist's annual salary of around £504.²³⁴ Similarly, although Fleetwood-Walker was capable of producing landscapes and narrative or history paintings,²³⁵ by concentrating on portraiture he was producing the kind of work that was the most appropriate for the venue and therefore the market: as has been discussed in Chapter One, in the years after the 1914-18 war portraiture was the dominant genre in both the Royal Academy exhibitions and the Chantrey Bequest purchases. Although many of the portraits shown by Fleetwood-Walker were exhibited as not for sale, they would still have served to advertise the technique and approach used by the artist when undertaking a portrait commission—as well as promoting aspects concerned with the sitters themselves, such as their beauty, their wealth, their inventiveness, their commitment to the war effort or the benefits

²³² Anne Helmreich and Ysanne Holt 'Marketing Bohemia: The Chenil Gallery in Chelsea 1905-1926', 45.

²³³ This means 157 pounds, 10 shillings or 150 guineas. Prior to decimalisation in 1971, a UK pound was divided into 20 shillings with twelve pence to the shilling. Prices were shown in pounds, shillings and pence. www.royalmint.com/discover/decimalisation/the-story-of-decimalisation accessed 22 February 2012.

²³⁴ See Chapter One.

²³⁵ See for example *French Garden*, pencil and watercolour, 1927, private collection, shown on www.fleetwood-walker.co.uk accessed 27 December 2010 and *John Ball and the Peasants Rising of 1381*, mural, 1938, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex County Council, shown on www.fleetwood-walker.co.uk accessed 27 December 2010.

of a school or a company. As explored in detail in Chapter Two, Fleetwood-Walker exhibited portraits commissioned by local patrons and public figures; in doing so he suggested to visitors that they too might take inspiration from these examples and commission family or presentation portraits.

Despite the predominance of the cluttered hang, there are nevertheless some indications of debate about display during Fleetwood-Walker's career. In a short article about the first exhibition in the new RBSA Gallery *The Studio* commented on the hanging of the exhibition, recording the separate presentation of what it describes as 'Decorative' and 'Pre-Raphaelite' groups of works:

By hanging the works of these two sections on separate walls or screens, each has derived advantage from the classification, while the interest of the exhibition has been much advanced. If this method can be carried still further, so as to secure separate grouping for the individual artists, there can be little doubt that a still greater advance will be made²³⁶

The writer evidently preferred a structured display method, with works grouped by artist. However as has been seen, this hanging scheme was not adopted long term by the RBSA.

In the 1920s the crowding of pictures and the effect that this has on the appearance and presentation of work was discussed in Council: as a result 'it was resolved that it be a recommendation to the hanging committee, that the

²³⁶ A. McK., 'Studio Talk-Birmingham', *The Studio*, 61:251,1914, 235.

exhibitions be much less crowded'.²³⁷ Evidently it was felt that crowded displays could deter sales. Similarly, the positioning of works, regardless of subject matter or style of execution was raised by Joseph Southall on several occasions. In 1925 he suggested that 'the heterogeneous nature of the exhibitions was a reason for public neglect and urged the grouping of pictures'²³⁸ and in 1926 he proposed that 'selection should be more severe and the standard kept higher – further that the works of individual artists should be grouped together and in all cases harmony of style should govern grouping'.²³⁹ These comments provide an insight into the differing values and ambitions of participants in RBSA exhibitions and into the RBSA Gallery as a contested space. Joseph Southall was one of the very few Members devoted exclusively to his career as an artist, partly because he had a private income.²⁴⁰ Other artists supplemented their income by teaching, such as Fleetwood-Walker himself, or worked in professions such as architecture. The RBSA as a venue for sales would have been important for Southall, so he was particularly motivated to challenge the mode of display and to propose a more commercial approach like that adopted by the Grosvenor and the New galleries. It was only at the very end of Fleetwood-Walker's career, when he was no longer exhibiting at the gallery, that an indication of a definite change to exhibition culture emerges. In 1962 the gallery was repainted; the colour 'Silver Birch' was

²³⁷ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 18 February 1925, Minute Book 5 September 1912–25 July 1928, 276, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²³⁸ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 27 March 1925, Minute Book 5 September 1912–25 July 1928, 283, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²³⁹ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 28 July 1925, Minute Book 5 September 1912–25 July 1928, 283, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁴⁰ From 1882, when he was 21, Southall had an income of around £200 per year, inherited from his father and an uncle, and was able to relinquish his training as an architect and devote himself to his artistic career. Breeze, *Joseph Southall 1861-1944: Artist-Craftsman*, 6.

selected.²⁴¹ Although there are no records explaining exactly what this colour was, it must have been a broken white similar to the colour of the bark of the silver birch tree. This indicates that in the early 1960s the Society wished to adopt the white walls that had become, thanks to the pioneering work of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the prevailing background on which to display artworks.²⁴²

It is clear therefore that it was only towards the very end of Fleetwood-Walker's career that strong disagreement about the display of works emerged. As will be seen later in this chapter, this was closely tied to a debate about whether the Society should be a professional body or a community resource. It is also evident from the minutes²⁴³ that during much of Fleetwood-Walker's exhibiting career at the RBSA, the galleries looked dilapidated. There was no planned programme of regular maintenance, or of fundraising to pay for maintenance. Members did not feel the need to discuss the décor of the gallery or the colour of the walls in the greatest detail. Perhaps at the design stage of the new gallery the artists felt that such matters should be left to the architects; it may be that the crowded hang encouraged indifference to the wall colour, a suggestion made by Charlotte Klonk when considering the wall colour at the National Gallery.²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ This decision was made by The Wall Colour Selection Group, comprising of Joe Carter, Anthony Sawbridge, Tom Barker, Douglas Perry and James Priddey. Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Council Meeting 2 February 1962, Minute Book 11 November 1955–1 September 1964, 174, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁴² Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*.

²⁴³ Minute no 3604, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Finance Committee, January 7 1910, Minute Book October 21st 1903 - September 9th 1908, unpaginated, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁴⁴ Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, 31.

It is also clear from the minutes of the RBSA meetings relating to the design of the new building that architects were to be entrusted with resolving design issues, showing how these professionals played a dominant role in cultures of display. In the General meeting of 15 December 1911, the following minute was noted: Mr Jelley then raised the question of re-building scheme – especially the heating apparatus and Mr Joseph E. Southall the interior decorations and architectural decorations of the new gallery, and the Hon Curator was instructed to write to Mr C. Bateman²⁴⁵ asking him to bring these matters before the architects Messrs Crouch & Butler, when next he met them.²⁴⁶

References are tantalisingly brief: no further detail emerges in response to these issues and further information about Charles Bateman's correspondence with the architects has not been traced.²⁴⁷ This lack of detail in the minutes reflects the Society's confidence in the decisions made by their architects. The practice had embraced Arts and Crafts theories in the creation of numerous homes in the Birmingham area.²⁴⁸ A commitment to the involvement of artists in architectural projects was a key feature of the work produced by Crouch, Butler and Savage as seen for example in *The Anchorage*.²⁴⁹ They had also worked closely with Henry

²⁴⁵ The architect Charles Edward Bateman (1863-1947); see David Davidson, 'Charles Edward Bateman', Ballard (ed.), *Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects*, 423.

²⁴⁶ Minute 4910, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 15 December 1911, Minute Book 5 September 1912–25 July 1928, 82, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁴⁷ No archives of personal papers relating to Charles Edward Bateman have been traced. The only other reference to the wall covering is a comment relating to the finishing of the walls using matchboard: Minute 32, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General meeting. April 9th 1913, Minute Book September 5th 1912 – July 25th 1928, 31, unpublished manuscript. RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁴⁸ Remo Granelli, 'Architecture: All the World and Time Enough', 43.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, illustrated facing page 44.

Payne and Benjamin Creswick, both Members of the Society²⁵⁰ and with Mary Newill, an Associate of the Society.²⁵¹ This history of collaboration between the architects of the new gallery and artists from the Society must have contributed to the creation of trust between architect and client, which itself adds weight to the argument that the robust links between the artists and professional bodies impacted on the appearance of exhibition space. Perhaps even more revealing of the importance of this connection is the confidence that the Society placed in the ability of their representative, Charles Bateman, to convey their ideas. He too had integrated the work of artists into his domestic architecture.²⁵² It seems clear that the Society believed Bateman to be a competent professional who was also attuned to the needs of artists and therefore capable of expressing the Society's aspirations. This integrated approach to architectural practice, linking the architects of the new block with many of the architects involved with the Society itself, underscores the effect of the influence of professional bodies on exhibitions and therefore on the artist. As has been observed earlier in this chapter, this influence affected the extent to which the new gallery reflected the desire of the architects to create a building that would be supportive of their own professional reputation and image, rather than one designed to address the problem of the RBSA's finances. It also reflects the broader cultural phenomenon, that from the late-nineteenth century and into the early-twentieth century, architects had

²⁵⁰ Henry Payne was elected Associate 1907 and Member 1909, Benjamin Creswick was elected Associate 1891 and Member 1914. Alphabetical list of Members and Associates of the RBSA, unpublished typescript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁵¹ Mary Newill was elected Associate in 1909. Alphabetical list of Members and Associates of the RBSA, unpublished typescript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁵² For example including decoration by the St George's Guild of Handicrafts in Birmingham in his recently completed *Bryn Teg* (1904) at 14 Bracebridge Road, Four Oaks, Birmingham. David Davidson, 'Charles Edward Bateman', Ballard (ed.), *Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects*, 433-434.

increasing control over decisions regarding the interior design of the buildings they constructed.²⁵³ For Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, as a portrait artist this too could have caused debate: where architects suggested that decorative treatments produced by artists should be an integral part of domestic architecture, this could imply that interior design should be left exactly as envisioned by the architect, with no additions, such as paintings on the wall, to dilute this vision. Such an approach could have been perceived as a threat to the easel painter, limiting artistic output to works deemed appropriate for use in contemporary architect-designed spaces. This made it essential for the artist's output to be capable of integration with fashionable architecture.

One of the benefits of entrusting the project entirely to the architects was that the final result was a coherent whole, rather than one diluted by disparate influences. In addition the involvement of architects who were prominent in the cultural and civic life in the city meant that the gallery was immediately linked to very appropriate networks of customers. Crouch, Butler and Savage's many clients for domestic projects would certainly have wanted to see what the architect of their own house had created in Birmingham's civic centre and these patrons would have been potential buyers of portraiture. As the century progressed, the prevalence of houses in a similar style meant that the gallery space as designed remained relevant for visitors at least up to the 1939-45 war, as a large proportion of Birmingham's middle-class population would have lived in just such homes, and many of these residents were also subscribers of the RBSA. For example, RBSA

²⁵³ McClaugherty, 'Household Art: Creating the Artistic Home, 1868-1893', 22.

subscribers Dr Priestly Smith and Sir James Sawyer lived in Cornwall Street in houses designed by Newton and Cheate.²⁵⁴ The dominance of this architectural style extended beyond the large detached homes that were built in areas like Edgbaston, the city's most prestigious suburb, to the areas which saw extensive building of smaller homes, such as those in Moseley built by William de Lacy Aherne²⁵⁵ and by Crouch, Butler and Savage themselves in other districts.²⁵⁶ This underlines the pertinence of MacLeod's argument that gallery architecture is affected by social and political determinants and by professional bodies.²⁵⁷

Fleetwood-Walker and Exhibiting in the Artist-Led Space

This section will consider the role of the RBSA as an institution in the formation of Fleetwood-Walker as an artist, how this institution impacted on the display and reception of his work, and what impact it might have had on the appearance of his portraits. It will concentrate on the RBSA because of the central role it played in the distribution of art in Birmingham in general and that of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker in particular. Issues specific to exhibitions in artist-led spaces will be considered here because Fleetwood-Walker's works were usually displayed and consumed in artist-led environments;²⁵⁸ most of his works were shown in the RBSA and the RA galleries or at other art society exhibitions such as those of the

²⁵⁴ Niky Rathbone and John Bassindale, 'Newton and Cheate', Ballard (ed.), *Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects*, 497 and *Royal Birmingham Society of Artists The Centenary Opening Exhibition 1913*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, 1913, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁵⁵ Christine Wood, 'William de Lacy Aherne', in Ballard (ed.), *Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects*, 567-583.

²⁵⁶ The practice designed numerous houses which were constructed in Birmingham and beyond. Rudi Herbert and Barbara Shackley, 'Crouch and Butler', in Ballard (ed.), *Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects*, 475.

²⁵⁷ MacLeod, 'Rethinking a Site-Specific History of Production and Use', 21.

²⁵⁸ See Appendix.

RP. In view of the relevance of the RBSA to the formation of Fleetwood-Walker as a portrait artist, the RBSA will be considered in detail and, where possible, placed in the context of other artists' exhibiting societies. However, a detailed scholarly analysis of art societies in the UK regions during the first half of the twentieth century is a project yet to be undertaken: secondary sources considering regional art societies are limited. Few published works explore the subject of artists' exhibiting groups from an academic viewpoint; those that consider this and allied subjects are rarely directly relevant to the issues under consideration here, for example, Julie F. Codell's chapter 'Artists' Professional Societies: Production, Consumption and Aesthetics' in Brian Allen's book, *Towards a Modern Art World*, covers only the art societies operating in London.²⁵⁹ Similarly Marcia Pointon's *Art Apart: Art Institutions and Ideology across England and North America* is primarily concerned with museum studies and does not include detail about artist-led exhibition societies.

Alongside this, there is a close connection between the development of art societies, the evolution of further education in art practice and the foundation of civic museums and galleries, which makes the history of regional art groups difficult to trace. This is particularly the case during the first half of the twentieth century, the period under consideration here. The two cities in England that most readily suggest themselves as appropriate for comparison to Birmingham are Manchester and Liverpool; both, like Birmingham large industrial cities and regional centres. However in both these cities the involvement of art societies in

²⁵⁹ Julie F. Codell, 'Artists' Professional Societies: Production, Consumption and Aesthetics'.

the running of art exhibitions in their own venues had faded by the twentieth century. In Manchester the Royal Manchester Institution, initiated by the city's Society of Artists in 1823²⁶⁰ became the municipal art gallery run by the local council in 1881,²⁶¹ rather than a gallery run by artists seeking to exhibit their own work. The Manchester Academy of Fine Arts, which had been founded later, in 1859, and was also based at the Royal Manchester Institution building, continued to stage exhibitions of its Members' works but no longer in its own venue: exhibitions were held at the Manchester City Art Gallery until 1978.²⁶² Nineteenth-century Liverpool saw the founding of two art societies, the Liverpool Academy and the Liverpool Society of Fine Arts.²⁶³ The activities of these groups were curtailed when, from 1871, the local council, rather than artists' groups, began to stage open exhibitions of contemporary art in the city museum.²⁶⁴ The Liverpool Academy of Arts continued to exist but had no exhibiting venue between the mid-nineteenth century and 1974²⁶⁵ and the Academy's consequent loss of profile means that its activities are rarely recorded in published literature. During the twentieth century artists in Liverpool formed other groups, for example the Sandon Studios Society and the Bluecoat Society of Arts, two succeeding organisations whose campaigning led to the creation of the Bluecoat.²⁶⁶ In this case, the relative

²⁶⁰ R. F. Bud, 'The Royal Manchester Institution', in Donald Stephen Lowell Cardwell (ed.), *Artisan to Graduate: Essays to Commemorate the Foundation in 1824 of the Manchester Mechanics' Institution*, Manchester, 1974, 120.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 131.

²⁶² Sheila Dewsbury, *The Story so Far*, Manchester, 2003, 69.

²⁶³ Henry Currie Marillier, *The Liverpool School of Painters. An Account of the Liverpool Academy, from 1810 to 1867, with Memoirs of the Principal Artists*, London, 1904, 9 and 22.

²⁶⁴ Edward Morris and Emma Roberts, *The Liverpool Academy and Other Exhibitions of Contemporary Art in Liverpool 1771-1867*, Liverpool, 1998, 15.

²⁶⁵ Adrian Henri (introduction by), *The Liverpool Academy Celebrates the Walker's 100th Birthday 18 March – 24 April 1977*, exhibition catalogue, Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery, 18 March – 24 April 1977, Liverpool, 1977, unpaginated.

²⁶⁶ See William Sellar MacCunn, *Bluecoat Chambers. The Origins and Development of an Art Centre*, Liverpool, 1956 for a detailed description of these groups' activities.

newness of the group and its diverse interests, which ultimately created a venue including studio and administrative spaces, exhibition galleries and a concert hall, means that it does not offer a like for like comparison with the RBSA. In Bristol a long established art society with its own exhibition gallery continues to exist: the Royal West of England Academy (RWA), originally founded by artists in the 1830s and becoming a Royal Society in 1913.²⁶⁷ Comparisons will be made with this art society but as their building was commandeered for war service in 1939 and not returned until 1950,²⁶⁸ and the society's method of governance was and is very different from that of the RBSA as it is not artist-led,²⁶⁹ the relevance of comparisons to the RBSA during Fleetwood-Walker's career is reduced.

Cities in other neighbouring countries which were part of the UK during this period, including Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin, Belfast and Conwy, also had major exhibiting societies. In Scotland, Edinburgh saw the founding of the Scottish Academy in 1826²⁷⁰ and the Society of Scottish Artists in 1891.²⁷¹ The Royal Scottish Academy held its annual exhibitions in its own building, shared with the National Gallery of Scotland from 1855,²⁷² moving in 1911 to the premises of the former Royal Institution, both located at The Mound in Edinburgh.²⁷³ Like the RBSA, the Royal Scottish Academy seems to have derived its structure from that of the Royal Academy.²⁷⁴ Edinburgh also had another prominent art society, the

²⁶⁷ Miller, *The Royal West of England Academy, Bristol: An Essay in Patronage*, 1 and 25.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 20, 32, 34.

²⁷⁰ Gordon, *The Royal Scottish Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture 1826-1976*, 1.

²⁷¹ Cordelia Oliver, Anne Wishart (ed.), *The Society of Scottish Artists, The First 100 Years*, Edinburgh, 1991, 9.

²⁷² www.royal.scottishacademy.org accessed 14 April 2011.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ Gordon, *The Royal Scottish Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture 1826-1976*.

Society of Scottish Artists, founded in 1891, but this group did not own its own exhibition venue.²⁷⁵ However as Edinburgh was a capital city, it cannot be compared directly to Birmingham. A closer comparison could be made with Glasgow, where the Royal Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts was formed in 1861.²⁷⁶ However due to the financial and organisational pressures of running its own gallery, the Royal Glasgow Institute sold its premises in 1902.²⁷⁷ According to Roger Billcliffe in his short history of the Institute on the organisation's website, artists outside Edinburgh found it difficult to win exhibition space at the Royal Scottish Academy.²⁷⁸ The relationship between Edinburgh and Glasgow could therefore be compared to that between London and Birmingham and this will be examined in greater detail below.

Ireland too has institutions similar to the RBSA, but again these organisations' governance and history impede direct comparisons. In Dublin, the Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts traces its origins to 1823. Its tradition of holding annual exhibitions in its own premises was suspended at Easter 1916 when the Academy building and its contents including the annual exhibition and most of its archive material, was burnt down.²⁷⁹ In 1939, with Dublin now the capital of the Republic of Ireland, the Academy purchased a house and garden in the city,²⁸⁰ still its administrative headquarters and its exhibition venue from 1984.²⁸¹ In Belfast

²⁷⁵ Oliver, Wishart (ed.), *The Society of Scottish Artists, The First 100 Years*, 9-11.

²⁷⁶ www.royalglasgowinstitute.org accessed 29 January 2011.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ Ann M. Stewart, and Catherine de Courcy, *Royal Hibernian Academy of Arts, Index of Exhibitors and Their Works, 1826-1979 compiled by Ann M Stewart with a Summary History of the RHA by C. de Courcy*, Dublin, 1986, xvi.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, xvii.

²⁸¹ www.royalhibernianacademy.ie accessed 23 April 2011.

the Royal Ulster Academy developed from the Ramblers Sketching Club, initially founded in 1879, becoming the Belfast Art Society in 1890 and the Ulster Academy of Arts in 1930. As in Dublin in 1916, the turbulence of the city in the twentieth century had an impact on the development of the Ulster Academy. However, between 1932 and 1972, the period most relevant to Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, exhibitions of Members' work were held at the Old Museum.²⁸² Artists living and working in Wales founded an academy based at Conwy in North Wales in the late-nineteenth century, known as the Royal Cambrian Academy from 1882.²⁸³ Further international comparisons, investigating for example cultural centres across Europe such as Paris or Vienna, or cities in Britain's former colonies including the USA, are likely to be of additional interest, but such research is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The close similarity between the RBSA and the RA means that a comparison with the RA is relevant to this research. Several books have been published about the Royal Academy but few of these works contained detailed analysis of exhibition practice.²⁸⁴ However there are comparable elements between the two institutions, for example the procedure by which artists were elected to the Society and how works were chosen for exhibition. These subjects will be investigated, and the relationship between these procedures and Fleetwood-Walker's artistic production will be examined.

²⁸² www.royalulsteracademy.org accessed 23 April 2011.

²⁸³ The Royal Cambrian Academy of Art, Second Summer Exhibition, 1883, exhibition catalogue, Rhyl, Arcade Galleries, Rhyl, 1883, 4.

²⁸⁴ For example George Dunlop Leslie, *The Inner Life of the Royal Academy*, London, 1914; Walter Rangeley Maitland Lamb, *The Royal Academy: a Short History of its Foundation and Development to the Present Day*, London, 1935; Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy 1768-1986* and James Fenton, *School of Genius: A History of the Royal Academy of Arts*, London, 2006.

Throughout Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's career (and beyond) the RBSA's structure was that of a self-governing group of artists. Managerial responsibilities, such as control of finances, and curatorial roles were delivered by artists,²⁸⁵ often themselves exhibitors. The stakeholders were primarily the artists in the Society. Artists joined the Society, through an election process. The first step was to be elected as an Associate.²⁸⁶ To achieve this, an artist had to be proposed and seconded by existing Members; at the Annual General Meeting all Members present were asked to vote in support of or against the artist's candidature. In the early part of Fleetwood-Walker's career Associates were not entitled to attend management meetings, to participate in selection of works, nor to propose or vote for artists wishing to join the Society. As has been seen in a previous chapter it was Fleetwood-Walker himself who argued for greater involvement of Associates. This meant that artists wishing to influence the management of the Society had to participate in a second, identically structured, election process. This demonstrates that the RBSA was part of what Becker has called a 'distribution system',²⁸⁷ and self-consciously so, knowing that it was a self-support system for artists.²⁸⁸ Election to the RBSA enabled artists to enjoy the benefits of exhibition space and participation in the Society's activities, so enabling the continuing production and distribution of the artist's work as well as the support of an artistic community.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵ Hill and Midgley, *The History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists*.

²⁸⁶ Associates had been introduced in 1881, *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁸⁷ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 97.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 153.

Day-to-day business was conducted through regular 'General Meetings'²⁹⁰ open to all Members. Decisions were made in this forum by the group of artists. The value placed by the Society on the artists' commitment to the management of the Society is underlined by the announcement of attendance statistics each year.²⁹¹ Few insights into the reasons for nominations or why artists were successful in elections are revealed by the minutes; only the bare facts are noted. However it is clear that, early in the twentieth century, there was a consensus amongst active Members. For example, when Fleetwood-Walker was elected as an Associate in 1923, the Society consisted of 33 Members and 46 Associates,²⁹² as 19 Members attended the Annual General Meeting and a further two sent proxy votes, it was a high turnout. The three artists who were elected as Members were supported by a large proportion of the votes, and even the candidate with the least support won over 75% of the votes available.²⁹³ Similarly the four candidates for Associate Membership were elected with considerable backing; the artist receiving the fewest votes being Fleetwood-Walker himself, who received 14 affirmative votes compared to the other three artists who all won 18 affirmative votes.²⁹⁴ Therefore,

²⁹⁰ See for example, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meetings of 18 January 1924, 19 November 1934 and 9 June 1925, Minute Book 5 September 1912–2 May 1928, 264, 273 and 283, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁹¹ See for example, the Annual General Meeting on 19 March 1932, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual General Meeting 19 March 1932, Minute Book 3 October 1928–3 November 1936, 58 -59, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁹² *Walter Langley Memorial Exhibition*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, RBSA Gallery, January 1923, Birmingham, 1923.

²⁹³ In the elections to full Membership, Bernard Munns received 16 affirmative votes, 3 negative and 2 neutral; Joseph Lancaster Ball received 21 affirmative, and no negative or neutral votes, Edwin Francis Reynolds received 19 affirmative and 2 neutral votes. All three were elected. Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual General Meeting 24 March 1923, Minute Book 5 September 1912–25 July 1928, 255, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁹⁴ Bernard Fleetwood Walker received 14 affirmative, five negative and two neutral votes. The other artists elected were Bernard Sleigh (1872-1954), William Thomas Blackband (1885-1949) and George Robert Rushton (1869-1947). Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists'

although some artists voted against some of the candidates, the overall mood of the meeting was supportive and inclusive. What is unusual about this particular meeting is a minute recording one Member's complaint about the number of artists nominated: 'A letter from Mr V. de Ville was read taking exception to the number of candidates for election'. Although not specifically stated, presumably de Ville felt that there were too many candidates: when he had been elected in 1906 only one other artist was elected in the same year.²⁹⁵ At this stage Joseph Vickers de Ville did not play an active part in the Society: he had not exhibited for several years²⁹⁶ and did not attend meetings.²⁹⁷ It seems that this was noted as a factual complaint but not given serious consideration nor taken any further.²⁹⁸ Although only the essential statistics of the vote are noted, one conclusion can be drawn: participants were in accord when considering the kinds of artists and the type of work that they produced as appropriate for the Society. This system of proposal, nomination and vote by existing Members maintained the prestige of the artists who were already involved, by investing Membership with exclusivity. It seems that Vickers de Ville feared that this exclusivity was under threat because a comparatively large number of artists had been proposed for election. Yet the artists on the management committee felt that the election of new Associates

Annual General Meeting 24 March 1923, Minute Book 5 September 1912–25 July 1928, 255, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁹⁵ Hill and Midgley, *The History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists*, 51.

²⁹⁶ Joseph Vickers de Ville (1856-1925) was elected an Associate of the RBSA in 1906 and Member in 1917; he showed 68 works at the RBSA between 1876 and 1920. Morris and Morris, *A catalogue of Birmingham and West Midlands Painters of the Nineteenth Century*, unpaginated.

²⁹⁷ See for example Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual Meeting 27 March 1920 and Annual General Meeting Held 19 March 1921, Minute Book 5 September 1912–25 July 1928, 220, 227 and 241, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

²⁹⁸ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 22 March 1923, Minute Book 5 September 1912–25 July 1928, 252, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

would be beneficial. As Becker has observed 'art world officials have the power to legitimate work as art, but that power is often disputed.'²⁹⁹

For Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, the achievement of Associate Membership meant that he had unrestricted access to exhibition space, an opportunity he exploited to its fullest potential, as can be seen by the large number of works he showed in the space and the regularity with which he participated in the Society's exhibitions.³⁰⁰ Although additional insight would be provided by a comparison of election procedures across art societies, these details are rarely available in secondary sources. It is known that in Bristol the election procedure was controlled by the management committee, which was itself dominated by lay Members rather than artists and that, exceptionally, in 1903 the President was authorised simply to recommend potential new Members from the artist community.³⁰¹ This indicates that in Bristol there was a desire to restrict Membership, in this case to a chosen, rather than elected, few. At the RBSA the process of election for Membership also affected the selection and display of works at exhibition as works entered for open submission exhibitions were chosen by a vote from the Members and, later, regular exhibitions devoted exclusively to the works of Members and Associates were held, making the influence of the Membership on the appearance of exhibitions even more direct, an issue to be considered in greater detail below.³⁰²

Becker's view of the art world's power can be observed in this Membership

²⁹⁹ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 164.

³⁰⁰ See Appendix.

³⁰¹ Miller, *The Royal West of England Academy, Bristol: An Essay in Patronage*, 18.

³⁰² Hill and Midgley, *The History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists*, 47 and *Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Winter Exhibition of Works by Members and Associates of the Society 1914*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, Birmingham, 1914.

process: the art world 'defines the boundaries of acceptable art, recognizing those who produce the work it can assimilate as artists entitled to full membership, and denying membership and its benefits to those whose work it cannot assimilate'.³⁰³

By the mid-1930s some of the Members of the RBSA had become more anxious to protect their own art world and to retain what Helmreich and Holt have called "symbolic capital" (conferring status and a particular form of prestige),³⁰⁴ within a limited number of artists. The openness of individual Members to new artistic input varied. In 1934, at a meeting attended by Fleetwood-Walker, Michael Fletcher suggested adaptations of the election process. Fletcher, it seems, felt that proposers and seconders were not given enough time to advocate for their candidates as the minutes reveal that 'no remarks on the Candidate be permitted by the Chair from any Member until the Proposer and Secunder have said all that they wish to say'.³⁰⁵ This indicates that, at this time, when new artists were proposed for election, their chances of success were diminished by comments from other Members. However, by 1938 the minutes show that the Society had become proactive in seeking out artists for election as Associates.³⁰⁶ The Society, at the General Meeting in September 1938, agreed to review works submitted to the Spring and Autumn Exhibitions and to advertise this intention 'with a view to the possible future election (as Associates of the Society) of the artists responsible

³⁰³ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 227.

³⁰⁴ Anne Helmreich and Ysanne Holt 'Marketing Bohemia: The Chenil Gallery in Chelsea 1905-1926', 46.

³⁰⁵ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' meeting, (name of meeting not given) 5 February 1934, Minute Book 3 October 1928-3 November 1936, 110, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham and Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual General Meeting 25 March 25 1933, Minute Book 3 October 1928-3 November 1936, 88, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁰⁶ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 3 May 1938, Minute Book 20 March 1936-25 March 1939, 129, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

for those works that were considered of sufficient merit'.³⁰⁷ The reviewing committee met and ten artists were suggested as possible candidates for Associateship. In spite of this initiative only four Associates were elected at the 1939 A.G.M..³⁰⁸ The small proportion of artists elected on this occasion, less than half of those proposed, proves that the wider Membership was more interested in maintaining exclusivity and prestige than were the active Members who had been involved in the reviewing committee, a change from the position in previous years. For Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, this suggests that his application to join the Society was judiciously timed. As Becker has emphasised, the regular and sustained support of the art world apparatus is crucial to the artist's career.³⁰⁹ Although Fleetwood-Walker was not elected when first proposed, his candidature did go through when he was proposed a second time, when he was still, relatively, at the beginning of his career. This election may well have been of direct benefit to his teaching career, as he was appointed as Head of Painting at the School of Art in 1929. The relationship between the two institutions continued to be mutually supportive, as the appointment to this post was soon followed by a promotion to full Member of the Society. Had Fleetwood-Walker waited until the late 1930s to seek Membership, his application may have been unsuccessful as a result of the changing attitudes of the Society's Membership.

³⁰⁷ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 5 September 1938, Minute Book 20 March 1936-25 March 1939, 135, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁰⁸ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual General Meeting 25 March 1939, Minutes book 39-48, 25 March 1939– 6 December 1948, 6, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁰⁹ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 300.

One way of assessing the extent to which the Members used the Society to establish and protect the status of a limited number of artists is to consider sexual inequality within the RBSA. As Gordon Fyfe has highlighted, artists' careers were 'partly produced through the aesthetic subordination of women who were excluded from or had only a partial access to the opportunities of metropolitan exhibiting societies'.³¹⁰ Fyfe concluded that academies and other institutions 'presupposed the exclusion of women from art's public spaces'.³¹¹ In London, although in the inter-war period around a quarter of the works exhibited at the Royal Academy were by female artists,³¹² it was not until 1922 that a female artist was elected an Associate of the RA.³¹³ The existence of the London based Society of Women Artists (SWA), which has held annual exhibitions with only rare interruptions, reinforces the relevance of this issue.³¹⁴

In Birmingham, although female artists had been eligible for election as Associates of the RBSA since 1881³¹⁵ when Associate Membership had first been introduced, they were unable to become 'responsible Members'. They were therefore excluded from participation in decision making and from holding office. In contrast, Edinburgh's Society of Scottish Artists had amended its Constitution so that 'ladies be admitted as professional Members on the same footing as

³¹⁰ Fyfe, *Art, Power and Modernity: English Art Institutions, 1750-1950*, 86.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

³¹² Katy Deepwell, 'A History of the Society of Women Artists', Charles Baile de Laperrière (ed.), *The Society of Women Artists' Exhibitors 1855-1996, A Dictionary of Artists and Their Works in the Annual Exhibitions of the Society of Women Artists*, Calne, 1996, xxvii.

³¹³ Apart from the two female artists involved at the founding of the RA, Annie Swynerton was the first female artist to be elected an Associate of the RA, in 1922, Fenton, *School of Genius: A History of the Royal Academy of Arts*, 252.

³¹⁴ Katy Deepwell, 'A History of the Society of Women Artists'.

³¹⁵ Hill and Midgley, *The History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists*, 50.

gentlemen' in 1891.³¹⁶ However, this can be seen as a reflection of specific interests: the Society of Scottish Artists had been founded to encourage emerging artists because it was felt that the Royal Scottish Academy was disproportionately supportive of its own long-established Members.³¹⁷ In February 1943 at a General Meeting of the RBSA, at which Fleetwood-Walker was one of the seven Members present, the decision was taken to allow female Associates to seek election as Members and Edith Jelley, Kate Eadie, Hilda Harvey and Mabel Spurrier were proposed as Members.³¹⁸ However this resolution was subsequently questioned: the next month it was decided that the issue should be raised at the Annual General Meeting,³¹⁹ where the decision was confirmed.³²⁰ Despite this the next year 'The Hon Sec proposed 'that the election of lady Associates to full Membership which had been agreed to at the last annual meeting be postponed for one year'. This was seconded and carried'.³²¹ This is an intriguing point as the Hon Secretary was Sidney Meteyard and his wife Kate Eadie was one of the Associates suggested for Membership (proposed by Fleetwood-Walker) in the meeting of the preceding year.³²² She was to die two years later and research so far does not show whether Meteyard was threatened by this intrusion into his

³¹⁶ Oliver, Wishart (ed.), *The Society of Scottish Artists, the First 100 Years*, 10.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 24 February 1943, Minute Book 25 March 1939–16 December 1948, 136-139, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³¹⁹ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting General Meeting 2 March 1943, Minute Book 25 March 1939–16 December 1948, 142, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³²⁰ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual General Meeting 17 April 1943, Minute Book 25 March 1939–16 December 1948, 156, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³²¹ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 23 March 1944, Minute Book 25 March 1939–16 December 1948, 176, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³²² Eadie had shown five works at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition between 1905 and 1915, *Royal Academy Exhibitors 1905-1970* and had also exhibited 'handicrafts' at the Society of Women Artists in 1912 and 1913, Deepwell, 'A History of the Society of Women Artists', 1.

territory and so vetoed the suggestion or whether Eadie was too ill to work and would not be able to create the exhibits required for candidature, so asking for the election to be delayed.³²³ Whatever these personal circumstances were, this decision also held back the promotion of the other three artists as neither Harvey nor Spurrier were ever elected Members and it was not until 1953 that Jelley became a Member.³²⁴ The minutes of the annual meeting the following year, 1945, record that the issue of female Members was not raised that year. After 1945, no females became Members, demonstrating that the divide carried on after the 1939-45 war, when arguably male Associates were involved in the war and therefore absent, so that the involvement of female Associates was temporarily increased.

The issues of female artists were closely linked with those of Associates in general because Associates could not be elected to the Council, the Society's governing body, and did not have a vote at the A.G.M. Eventually in 1951 Associates were given more opportunities for involvement when it was decided that any Associate, male or female, could be elected to the Council, outcomes which Fleetwood-Walker himself described as 'revolutionary changes in the structure of the Society.'³²⁵ If Fleetwood-Walker's underlying aim had been to obtain voting rights

³²³ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 23 March 1944, Minute Book 25 March 1939–16 December 1948, 176, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³²⁴ Alphabetical list of Members and Associates of the RBSA, unpublished typescript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³²⁵ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Plenary Meeting 10 November 1951, Minute Book 7 November 1947-14 October 1955, 104, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

for women, this was achieved. Olwen Tookey was elected onto the Council.³²⁶ Effectively female artists had gained some power. The following spring, on 8 March 1952 and during Fleetwood Walker's presidency, Theresa Clarke was elected as the Society's first female Member.³²⁷ Clarke had been proposed for Associate Membership by Fleetwood-Walker himself in 1937,³²⁸ reflecting both his open mindedness towards sexual equality and the changes in society which now made it possible to have female Associates in the RBSA.

Although secondary sources which consider the histories of regional art societies rarely give any detail about female artists in the twentieth century, the position of female artists at the RBSA seems to have echoed that of London-based artists' exhibition societies.³²⁹ It differed from that at the RWA in Bristol where female artists were first elected as Members in the opening years of the twentieth century³³⁰ and female Presidents were appointed in 1911 and 1932.³³¹ However the RWA was governed by a board of lay Members and the two female Presidents were the nieces and adopted daughters of deceased former President William Henry Wills, first Baron Winterstoke (1830-1911), a wealthy manufacturer of

³²⁶ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Plenary Meeting 10 November 1951, Minute Book 7 November 1947-14 October 1955, 106, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³²⁷ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual General Meeting 8 March 1952, Minute Book 7 November 1947-14 October 1955, 116, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³²⁸ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 1 February 1937, Minute Book 25 March 1939-16 December 1948, 176, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham, 52.

³²⁹ An analysis of the inclusion of female artists in London art societies in the nineteenth century is given in Deepwell, 'A History of the Society of Women Artists', xvii.

³³⁰ Milner, *The Royal West of England Academy Bristol, an Essay in Patronage*, 21.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

tobacco and a prominent local philanthropist.³³² In addition, the RWA owed its existence in part to a substantial legacy received in 1849 from Mrs Ellen Sharples, the mother of the portrait artist Rolinda Sharples, a connection which may well have led to the acceptance of female artists.³³³

The experience of female artists and their struggle to gain recognition as individual professionals in post-war Birmingham may have been due to the continuing influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Although women artists were included, their roles were often restricted to those crafts considered to be feminine, and the Movement, as identified by Anthea Callen 'insidiously perpetuated [...] class, sexual, and labour divisions'.³³⁴ The experience of women in mid-twentieth century Birmingham paralleled that of female artists in New York in the same period, as recounted by Miriam Shapiro,³³⁵ which suggests that the Birmingham experience was typical of contemporary society. The lack of involvement of women in the management of art organisations in the USA during this period is emphasised by an article published in 1973, which emphasises that, only some twenty years after the events described here, there were still very few females in post as museum directors, or in full-time roles as studio artists or academic art historians.

³³² *Ibid.*, 21, Charles Welch, 'Wills, William Henry, first Baron Winterstoke (1830–1911)', rev. Robert Brown, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2009, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36940, accessed 31 March 2012.

³³³ Milner, *The Royal West of England Academy Bristol, an Essay in Patronage*, 2.

³³⁴ Anthea Callen, 'Sexual Division of Labor in the Arts and Crafts Movement', *Woman's Art Journal*, 5:2, 1984/1985, 3.

³³⁵ See for example, Thalia Gouma-Peterson, 'Miriam Schapiro: An Art of Becoming', *American Art*, 11:1, 1997, 10-45.

The development of recognition for female artists in Birmingham can be compared with the situation for female artists in Glasgow, an industrial city with a similar relationship to a capital city. In Glasgow exhibitions of contemporary artists' work had been organised by the Royal Glasgow Institute and its predecessors since 1861.³³⁶ Glasgow was also the home of the Glasgow Art Club which female artists were not allowed to join; seeking opportunities to network with fellow artists as well as to study art and exhibit their work they established the Glasgow Society of Lady Artists.³³⁷ Research so far has not revealed the existence of a Birmingham Society of Women Artists, indicating that female artists in Birmingham did not perceive the creation of their own artists' collective as an imperative outside the main domain, as they had opportunities, although limited, for networking, study and exhibition, with the RBSA, and arguably were also more interested to press for changes within the Society structure. Although this could have been because the easy transport links between Birmingham and London enabled access to the SWA, this does not seem to have been the case as most of the Members of the SWA were from London and the Home Counties.³³⁸ As discussed in Chapter One, the dealer-critic system did appear in Glasgow, but did not develop in Birmingham and these issues may be linked: lack of development of the regional art market in Birmingham meant that, in an art world dominated by artists based in London, male as well as female artists lacked recognition for their profession as artists. However in Glasgow, the dealer-critic system engendered competition between artists; prevailing social conditions enabled male artists to exclude female artists

³³⁶ www.royalglasgowinstitute.org/history, accessed 9 April 2011.

³³⁷ Jude Burkhauser (ed.), *Glasgow Girls: Women in Art and Design 1880-1920*, Edinburgh, 1990, 47-48 and www.gswa.org.uk/history.htm, accessed 8 January 2011.

³³⁸ Deepwell, 'A History of the Society of Women Artists', xxvii.

and maintain their own dominance in the art market, as is underlined by the failure of the Glasgow Art Club to change their 'men only' rule during Fleetwood-Walker's lifetime.³³⁹ This argument can be supported by the circumstances surrounding the election of Teresa Clarke as the first female Member of the RBSA: in 1945 she made a donation of £25 to the Society, to make up for commission lost due to her refusal to sell work.³⁴⁰ Clarke was therefore not a threat to those portraitists seeking commissions and it was perhaps for this reason that she was the first female artist to be elected as full Member. The exclusion of female artists from the RBSA is therefore an indication of how artists used the Society to protect their own art world. This research shows how the content of the art works produced by Fleetwood-Walker enacted the ideologies of his environment. The RBSA (following on from Fyfe's argument above) presupposed the exclusion of female artists from decision making and leadership, echoing wider attitudes, and this is reflected in the prevalence of men in the portraits of business leaders. One of the exceptions to this is the portrait of the female newspaper magnate, Mrs Forman Hardy. This was painted in 1951, the same year that Associates were permitted to join the Council, suggesting perhaps that, whether consciously or not, the gradual recognition of women's participation, meant that a female business leader could now be portrayed in a powerful role, leading to Fleetwood-Walker's commission to paint Mrs Forman Hardy and his acceptance of that commission.

³³⁹ Women were only admitted to membership of the Glasgow Art Club in 1987, Burkhauser (ed.), *Glasgow Girls: Women in Art and Design 1880-1920*, 48.

³⁴⁰ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual Meeting 2 June 1945, Minute Book 25 March 1939-16 December 1948, 220, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

Fleetwood-Walker's participation in the meeting of 1943 when it was proposed that female artists could be elected as Members suggests that he was not opposed to them becoming more involved with the management of the Society. This may simply have been because he already knew the individuals concerned: Hilda Harvey was a colleague on the teaching staff at the School of Art, Olwen Tookey was a regular exhibitor at the RBSA.³⁴¹ Bernard Fleetwood-Walker did paint a number of portraits of women who had enjoyed success in their careers, including Dr Ethel Poulton (Mrs. Humphret Watts – *sic.*) in 1935 and Flora MacRae Forster, MA, the head teacher at Solihull High School for Girls in 1952. However the compositions and poses of these portraits are very similar to those employed in the portraits of male business leaders and teachers or academics painted by Fleetwood-Walker. Dr Ethel Poulton is seated in the same carver chair as that used in many portrait sittings and Flora MacRae Forster, MA wears her scholarly gown, as does Dr Edward Bramley, suggesting that Fleetwood-Walker followed mainstream portraiture in these depictions of professional women.

The RBSA minutes confirm that the Society's willingness to show the work of artists outside the Membership varied over the years. In 1937 the Society took action to ensure that work by non-Members was well represented in the Spring Exhibition.³⁴² This suggests that even if there was unanimity about acceptable work, in the 1930s the Members still aimed to offer opportunities to artists outside

³⁴¹ 'Miss H. Harvey' is listed as a teacher in the School of Arts and Crafts Programmes 1939-1940, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham and Tookey had shown work at the Royal Academy and the Birmingham Open, Anon., 'Artist's "Hat Trick"', *Birmingham Mail*, 26 April 19?? (date unreadable, may be 1939), unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

³⁴² Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 3 May 1937, Minute Book 20 March 1936-25 March 1939, 77-78, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

the Membership. However in 1955 Fleetwood-Walker launched 'an appeal by the President for more tolerance from the Members at the annual election of Associates, in favour of the younger and more adventurous painters and sculptors. He said the Society wanted new blood'.³⁴³ These exhortations to welcome emerging artists suggest that Fleetwood-Walker felt the Society was under threat as a result of its insularity. The behaviour of the wider Membership at this time could have been an attempt to protect the limited number of sales opportunities available to artists in Birmingham during this period. The hardship caused by unemployment in the late 1920s and 1930s, the 1939-45 war and post-war austerity may all have had an impact on sales of artworks.³⁴⁴ Other issues that may have had a negative effect on sales potential in the city were the outward migration of former customers and their families together with the centralisation of the UK in the post-war period, discussed in Chapter One.

It is also evident, for example, from Fleetwood-Walker's interest in exhibiting his work with the Birmingham Group in 1937, alongside Birmingham surrealists John Melville and Conroy Maddox, that he favoured exhibiting with artists with a different approach. Fleetwood-Walker himself continued to develop his painterly techniques although staying within the genre of portraiture, as can be seen when comparing two portraits of head teachers *Mr Floyd* of 1930 and *Flora MacRae*

³⁴³ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Bi-Monthly Meeting 8 January 1952, Minute Book 7 November 1947-14 October 1955, 108, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁴⁴ See for example, John Stevenson and Chris Cook, *Britain in the Depression: Society and Politics 1929-1939*, Harlow, 1994, 16; Malcolm Smith, *Democracy in a Depression: Britain in the 1920s and 1930s*, Cardiff, 1998, 21; Hall *A Review of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists 1821-1999*, 3.1; Secretary's Report July 2nd 1949 to the Annual General Meeting July 2nd 1949, RBSA Minute Book 7 November 1947-14 October 1955, report inserted after page 47, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

Forster MA of 1951. The long term effect of a failure to embrace a range of art practitioners may have resulted in a uniformity of exhibits and exhibitions and could also therefore have affected visitors and patrons. This may have been another factor leading to Fleetwood-Walker's withdrawal from RBSA exhibitions after 1951. As noted by Roger Billcliffe, a similar situation existed at the Royal Glasgow Institute in the post war period³⁴⁵ and the continued existence of the Glasgow Society of Lady Artists, which thrived in this period,³⁴⁶ suggests that the same may have been the case for the works of female artists. Fleetwood-Walker, who had already resigned from his post at the School of Art,³⁴⁷ may therefore have feared that the art world of Birmingham was stagnating and that London offered more opportunity for the portrait painter.

The Role of the Curator

This section seeks to consider the position of the curator at the RBSA, a role which, early in the twentieth century, had not been professionalised. The functions of the Hon. Curator were those of a custodian,³⁴⁸ a different meaning to the word 'curator' to that in use in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries, when the role began to encompass the research, selection, display and interpretation of exhibitions. This could imply, because no officer of the Society was responsible for these tasks, that there was no debate surrounding the display of works.

Although the 1912 Articles of Association, in force during the whole of Fleetwood-Walker's exhibiting career, explain that the Society can elect a number of officers

³⁴⁵ www.royalglasgowinstitute.org/history2.html, accessed 3 November 2011.

³⁴⁶ www.gswa.org.uk/history.htm, accessed 3 November 2011.

³⁴⁷ Bernard Fleetwood-Walker resigned from the School of Art in 1951—see Chapter One.

³⁴⁸ Definition II 4b in the Oxford English Dictionary, www.oed.com, accessed 31 March 2012.

including the Hon. Curator,³⁴⁹ a thorough reading of the minutes of the RBSA from 1912 to 1965 has revealed that the term 'Hon. Curator' is in itself problematic. The Hon. Curator's reports during this period focus on the maintenance of the galleries and they rarely, if ever, report on the exhibitions. As Hans Ulrich Obrist has observed, it was only once the twentieth century was well underway that curatorship emerged as a profession, often, Obrist concludes, connected with the development of museums devoted to contemporary art.³⁵⁰

The RBSA's approach to the selection and display of exhibitions may have had an impact on Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's artistic output. During his career the Society held an exhibition each spring that was open to all artists, works chosen for exhibition by the selection committee. As has been seen, this is how Fleetwood-Walker first came to exhibit at the RBSA, when *Gabrielle* was shown in the 1919 exhibition.³⁵¹ Although no images of *Gabrielle* have been traced,³⁵² a photograph exists of *Maudie in Pink*, selected for the Spring Exhibition the next year, 1920.³⁵³ It is a charming but straightforward portrait. Ten years later three works by Fleetwood-Walker were selected for the Spring Exhibition: *James Arundel*, *Mary*, and *Kenneth*.³⁵⁴ Although neither of the latter works have been traced, a portrait exhibited only a few months later, *Miss Betty Rigal*, an expressive but still conventional portrait, is likely to be representative of his work in this period.

³⁴⁹ The Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Memorandum of Association 24 May 1912, unpublished typescript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁵⁰ Hans Ulrich Obrist, *A Brief History of Curating*, Zurich, 2008, 7.

³⁵¹ See Appendix.

³⁵² A portrait described as 'The Artist's Sister' has tentatively been identified as Gabrielle, see www.fleetwood-walker.co.uk, accessed 27 March 2012.

³⁵³ *Maudie in Pink* and *The Paper Fan: Portrait* were both shown in the Spring Exhibition in 1920. See Appendix.

³⁵⁴ See Appendix.

Works submitted for the Spring Exhibition in 1920 were selected by the Membership at the General Meeting on 20 March;³⁵⁵ eight RBSA Members attended, including William John Wainwright (1855-1931) and James Valentine Jelley (1857-1950).³⁵⁶ A decade later, in 1930, Wainwright and Jelley were again present for the General Meeting when submissions for the Spring Exhibition were reviewed.³⁵⁷ The continued participation of Wainwright and Jelley may have contributed to a consistency in the kinds of works accepted. Both were elder statesmen of the Society, known for their nineteenth-century approach to painting, as exemplified in such works as Jelley's *The Lily Garden* and Wainwright's *His Favourite Author*, both now at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. Had Fleetwood-Walker not won approval by creating works that Wainwright and Jelley would select, he could have found that this crucial exhibition space was closed to him. Fleetwood-Walker's artistic output was therefore linked to issues of reception, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four; acceptance by influential Members of the RBSA was central to the success of a Birmingham artist's career.

It seems that Members of the RBSA were aware of the power of the selection process, and the effect of selection decisions on artists, as this was occasionally reviewed with the aim of making it more consistent. In 1929 the professional portraitist Bernard Munns (1869-1942) clarified the procedure; the selection

³⁵⁵ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 20 March 1920, Minute 5 September 1912–2 May 1928, 216, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁵⁶ Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland 1851-1951, University of Glasgow History of Art and HATII, online database 2011, sculpture.gla.ac.uk, accessed 4 March 2012. Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 20 March 1920, Minute Book 5 September 1912–2 May 1928, 216, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁵⁷ Minutes of General Meeting held March 3rd 1930, Minute Book 3 October 1928-3 November 1936, 29, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

committee should consist of seven Members who would be present for the whole of the selection meeting and should include artists who worked in craft media; works not accepted by the committee in a first round of voting, and classified as doubtful or deferred, should be reviewed at the end of the meeting for a final decision to be made.³⁵⁸ This would make the process very similar to that employed by the RA.³⁵⁹ The guidance also provides an insight into some of the difficulties that could have been created by actual selection practices. The implications are that Members did not stay for the whole of the judging process and perhaps that painters did not feel confident about selecting craft—or that craft makers felt that their work was unfairly treated by painters. It seems that at least some of these clauses were implemented because the panel in 1930 did include seven Members. Selection decisions also had an influence beyond the gallery space. The large number of works on display was the result of the high number of submissions to open exhibitions. For example, in 1938 'Mr Chadwick reported that 644 works had been received for the Spring Exhibition, 328 had been rejected and 316 passed of which 316 were hung'.³⁶⁰ Rejecting pictures would have been problematic within a small and close-knit community of arts practitioners and supporters as many of the painters who submitted work were also subscribers and buyers. Rejecting their work would not only risk a break down of community support, it could also have a significant effect on the Society's financial position. This was highlighted by the Hon. Treasurer, William Midgley, in 1932, when, in his

³⁵⁸ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting, 30 January 1929, Minute Book 3 October 1928-3 November 1936, unpublished manuscript, inserted between pages 7 and 8, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁵⁹ Leslie, *The Inner Life of the Royal Academy*, 70-114.

³⁶⁰ Hangers Report, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 4 March 1938, RBSA Minutes book 20 March 1936 - 25 March 1939, 125, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

report to the Annual General Meeting, he declared that 'it would be quite impossible to carry on the Society on its recent lines without the £320 which we receive every year from the subscribers.'³⁶¹ In this same report Midgley regretted what he describes as 'the merciless light-hearted way in which the Members turn out the pictures of the Society's old friends from the exhibitions'.³⁶² Clearly Midgley believed that by rejecting works by subscribers, the Society risked alienating supporters and losing subscriptions. Resolution to this was reached when an exhibition exclusively for subscribers was staged,³⁶³ later deemed to have been a success. This became a regular feature in the annual exhibition programme, an ingenious way of turning the issue of subscribers' art works to advantage. This would have been important to Fleetwood-Walker, as the lack of other gallery space in the city meant that it was vital for the Society to maintain the support of subscribers; failure to do so could have led to the loss of an essential exhibition venue.

Upheaval within the RBSA art world also had a direct effect on Fleetwood-Walker's career. The final appearance of exhibitions held in the RBSA galleries was decided by the exhibition hangers. Artists from the Membership were

³⁶¹ Hon Treasurer's report, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual Meeting 19 March 1932, Minute Book 5 September 1912–2 May 1928, inserted after page 61, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁶² Hon Treasurer's report, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual Meeting 19 March 1932, Minute Book 5 September 1912–2 May 1928, inserted after page 61, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁶³ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual Meeting (date unreadable) March 1936, Minute Book 20 March 1936-25 March 1939, 15, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham and Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 5 October 1936, Minute Book 20 March 1936 - 25 March 1939, 37, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

appointed to carry out this work through an election process.³⁶⁴ During Fleetwood-Walker's career the names of the hangers are noted in the minutes and some names appear frequently: Ernest Albert Chadwick was involved in hanging exhibitions for almost twenty years, from 1935-1954, during which time he hung six exhibitions.³⁶⁵ In the 1930s Ormond Gollins was frequently elected, in the 1940s, Harold Holden.³⁶⁶ The significance of the work of the hangers was recognised as the hangers were asked to report back to Council. However detail is rare as the minute books usually only record a summary of the business of each meeting and in general only the reports to the A.G.M. are pasted into the books; the hangers' reports, which seem to have been kept in a separate file, no longer exist, only occasional summaries and comments are included in the minutes themselves.³⁶⁷

The practice of leaving the inclusion of doubtful or deferred works to the hangers had been halted in 1929, with all selection decisions to be taken by the selection

³⁶⁴ See for example Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 30 January 1929, Minute Book 3 October 1928–3 November 1936, 8, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 25 May 1936, Minute Book 20 March 1936-25 March 1939, 30, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham and Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 24 September 1934, Minute Book 3 October 1928–3 November 1936, 135, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁶⁵ See for example Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual Meeting 23 March 1935 Minute Book 3 October 1928–3 November 1936, 171, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 7 September 1936, Minute Book 3 October 1928–3 November 1936, 34, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham and Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual Meeting 2 June 1945, Minute Book 25 March 1939–16 December 1948, 220, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁶⁶ See for example Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 3 July 1939, Minute Book 25 March 1939–16 December 1948, 21, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham and Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Council Meeting 4 February 1949, Minute Book 7 November 1947-14 October 1955, 41, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁶⁷ See for example General Meeting 7 XII 36, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 7 December 1936, Minute Book 20 March 1936-25 March 1939, 45/46, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

committee. However it seems that this ruling was not always respected. In 1950 there is a rare instance of a minute using emotive language:

A very acrimonious discussion ensued on the question of works accepted by the judges being thrown out by the hangers, and non-accepted works being hung. In protest Vice President Chadwick resigned his Vice Presidency. Several Members pointed out that the action was very unusual and the meeting confirmed an earlier resolution that works not accepted by the judges should not under any provocation be hung in the exhibition³⁶⁸

Evidently the selection committee's decisions had been challenged and overridden by the hanging team and Chadwick considered this to be serious enough to warrant his resignation. Bernard Fleetwood-Walker had not exhibited in the exhibition to which this discussion refers, but 1951 brought to an end his regular appearances at RBSA exhibitions.³⁶⁹ This might suggest that the discord about selection affected his decision not to exhibit at the RBSA—he was not to become an Academician until 1956, therefore it is unlikely that increasing involvement with the RA was the reason for his non-participation in RBSA exhibitions between 1951 and 1956. As has been discussed earlier, Fleetwood-Walker's actions demonstrate that he preferred changes to be made democratically and that he had a vision for a dynamic Society and one that fostered emerging artists.

³⁶⁸ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Adjoined Annual Meeting 20 June 1950, Minute Book 7 November 1947-14 October 1955, 68-70, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham. This decision was confirmed again, see Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Bi Monthly Meeting 16 March 1956, Minute Book 11 November 1955-1 September 1964, 15, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁶⁹ Although the incident of the dual proposals for President had occurred in 1948, Fleetwood-Walker exhibited at the RBSA in 1950 and 1951, the year of the RBSA's Festival of Britain exhibition. For full details of dates of exhibitions see Appendix.

More detail is revealed about these issues by the minutes from the later 1950s. These show that the Society was caught up in what Becker has called 'a revolution in art'.³⁷⁰ The minutes show that display was not considered a self-contained aesthetic issue; it had implications for the fundamental purposes of the Society and its creative vision. The division that had appeared concerning the standard of work that should be accepted at open exhibitions was articulated. Some Members, aware of the Society's financial difficulties, felt that rejecting works could reduce the Society's income and impact on support for the Society in terms of the loyalty of local people who were both gallery visitors and potential exhibitors.³⁷¹ For these Members the wider community was so closely associated with the Society that selection should show some sensitivity to that community. Other artists, such as Trevor Denning, the Hon Secretary, favoured a different interpretation of the Society's role, emphasising that 'the Society had been formed as a professional society; that we were looked to for (sic) the setting of some standards in art'.³⁷² Such debate can be traced to the 1930s, if not earlier. In 1932 a committee was appointed to consider how the Society could be promoted.³⁷³ At this time, however, the committee's report said: 'we feel that the Society should be more than an exhibiting body, and should extend its activities,

³⁷⁰ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 305.

³⁷¹ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Bi-Monthly Meeting 16 January 1956, Minute Book 11 November 1955-1 September 1964, 9-10, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁷² Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Bi-Monthly Meeting 16 January 1956, Minute Book 11 November 1955-1 September 1964, 9-10, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁷³ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 5 October 1932, Minute Book 3 October 1928-3 November 1936, 68, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

and aim at being the centre of artistic thought within the Midlands.³⁷⁴ The RBSA minutes from the very early part of Fleetwood-Walker's exhibiting career show that the space was used for concerts, 'smokes', 'conversazione', and lectures as well as private views.³⁷⁵ These events were held to publicise the gallery and its exhibitions, and to offer value for money to subscribers so as to maintain their commitment, indicating that the gallery's existence was perceived as closely allied to support from its community. This can be seen in the distinct cross over between prominent citizens and supporters of the RBSA, for example John Sutton Nettlefold (1866-1930), commissioned RBSA Member Joseph Lancaster Ball to design his house at Winterbourne³⁷⁶ and this included relief decoration by another RBSA Associate, Catterson Smith.³⁷⁷ However Denning's report shows that he felt that more than a gradual change was required: the RBSA was experiencing a fundamental upheaval, akin to those described by Becker as revolutions in art.³⁷⁸ Becker has suggested that such revolutions can be recognised by the existence of manifestos, and Denning's report could be considered one such tract. The discussions reported in the minutes demonstrate that this was an example of 'the organisational attack' which 'aims to take over sources of support, audiences and distribution facilities'.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁴ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' General Meeting 2 November 1932, Minute Book 3 October 1928–3 November 1936, inserted between pages 69 and 70, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁷⁵ Hon Secretary's Report, Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual Meeting 23 March 1929, Minute Book 3 October 1928–3 November 1936, 14, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁷⁶ Remo Granelli, 'Joseph Lancaster Ball', in Ballard (ed.), *Birmingham's Victorian and Edwardian Architects*, 413-414.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 414.

³⁷⁸ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 305.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

These debates can be seen as part of the wider cultural background of 1950s Britain. As has been recorded in Chapter One, by the 1950s the Arts Council was increasingly focused on support of a national and metropolitan professionalism. Jonathan Harris' has recorded the impact of this policy.

This excluded from benefit millions of people whose interest in a wide variety of arts occupied time outside their working lives and those for whom artistic practices were a marginal part of their economic activity. The latter situation was the case for a large proportion of visual artists.³⁸⁰

This was the case for the many artists at the RBSA who, like Fleetwood-Walker had to develop careers alongside their artistic practice. Therefore when, in 1954, Trevor Denning proposed that the Society should request support from the Arts Council³⁸¹ this was with the knowledge that to gain this support the RBSA needed to be a professional organisation comprising artists of national significance. This was a contested issue in view of the Society's community roots and the financial backing provided by subscribers, many of whom were seeking to develop their art practice with the support of the RBSA and to progress from 'amateur' to 'professional' status. As has been described, Fleetwood-Walker himself was well aware of this dichotomy. His involvement with the Society decreased in the 1950s until his eventual relocation to London, although, as has been noted in Chapter One, many different factors contributed to this decision. A resolution to these debates was to come in 1969, a few years after the death of Fleetwood-Walker,

³⁸⁰ Jonathan Harris, 'Cultured into Crisis: The Arts Council of Great Britain', in Marcia Pointon (ed.), *Art Apart, Art Institutions and Ideology Across England and North America*, Manchester and New York, 1994, 185.

³⁸¹ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Bi-Monthly Meeting 21 December 1954, Minute Book 7 November 1947-14 October 1955, 196, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

when the Society's Memorandum of Association was again revised. In 1969 Clause 3 in the 1912 document was deleted; no reference was made to the sale of artists' work and a new objective for the Society was inserted, emphasising its community role; its aims now included: 'In the interest of social welfare to provide facilities for recreation and other leisure-time occupation of an artistic nature.'³⁸²

Fleetwood-Walker's career as a portrait artist was clearly affected by his withdrawal from the Society's exhibitions. Portraits of two prominent members of Birmingham's civic life, *The Rev. Ronald Lunt, M.C., M.A., Chief Master of King Edward's School, Birmingham* and *Professor Thomas Bodkin, the Director of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts*, were shown at the RA in 1956 but were never exhibited at the RBSA. Given the close connections between Edgbaston and customers for portraiture that has been described in Chapter Two, showing these works in Birmingham could well have stimulated further portrait commissions from visitors who, recognising portraits of respected figures and near neighbours, might have been stimulated to commission other portraits by Fleetwood-Walker.

Summary

It has been argued in this chapter that the RBSA in the first half of the twentieth century was a place which witnessed a transitional moment in the display of art works in Birmingham and beyond. Rooted in a heritage that connected gallery space with the secular temple, it created a new kind of sanctuary. Some of the latest concepts in architectural design were combined with traditional and symbolic

³⁸² Clause (e) page 2, 'Memorandum and Articles of Association of The Royal Birmingham Society of Artists', Revised 1969, unpublished typescript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

features to create a gallery that was a distinctive reflection of the early-twentieth-century environment. Approached via a contemporary exterior, access to a ritual space was signalled by the sunflower-pattern door, reminding the visitor of the values of the Aesthetic Movement. A comfortable interior demonstrated the return to simplicity of the Arts and Crafts Movement, but was reached after climbing to the classically-influenced piano nobile and traversing an enfilade, bringing a special dignity to that simplicity. In the exhibition space itself the contemporary interior was offset by an eighteenth-century hang and top lighting. All these co-existing elements show that the new RBSA Gallery was indeed a 'contested terrain',³⁸³ reflecting not only the Society's own debates about its purpose and its business model but also issues of national concern. In an article in the *Burlington Magazine* in early 1910 lamenting the closure of the New Gallery³⁸⁴ in London, the writer highlighted the need for exhibition spaces: 'Private venture cannot in these days of financial pressure afford to maintain such institutions for the benefit of the public. Where can the fine arts flourish apart from academical (sic) restriction and commercial tyranny?'³⁸⁵ These issues were central to many of the country's regions. Already major manufacturing cities like Manchester and Liverpool had lost their artist-led exhibition spaces. Bristol's art society was thriving, but under a different model as it was not artist-led and had the benefit of an endowment and the support of very wealthy commercial and aristocratic patrons. In Birmingham the RBSA's aspiration was to provide a venue for artists to exhibit their work and to maintain a gallery 'for the benefit of the public', but it did not have the financial

³⁸³ Hill, *Culture and Class in English Public Museums, 1850-1914*, 10.

³⁸⁴ Joseph Southall exhibited there from 1897 until the gallery closed in 1909. Breeze, *Joseph Southall 1861-1944: Artist-Craftsman*, 7.

³⁸⁵ Anon., 'The New Gallery', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 16:83, Feb 1910, 254.

strength to fulfil this ambition, despite its efforts to identify alternative ways of supporting its activities, such as introducing a Membership fee.³⁸⁶ The structure of the gallery itself showed that it was constructed at a transitional moment when the need for change was recognised but the retention of the support of stakeholders was also acknowledged. The RBSA also perceived that the art world was changing and that as an institution it should adapt to these changes; its attempts to do this met with varying success. As an exhibition venue it needed to align itself with contemporary life. This involved distancing itself to an extent from the public art gallery and the art school, and moving closer to providing a shopping experience. It recognised that in Birmingham there were fewer extremely wealthy patrons; survival for the gallery would mean understanding and implementing some of the lessons learnt by department stores at the turn of the century, without losing income associated with its prestige. The gallery had to participate in the breaking down of the boundaries between public and private spaces, providing an attractive and comfortable shopping environment, rather than being only an exclusive space designed to entertain a small number of wealthy patrons. This environment had to be attractive to visitors with different incomes; the Arts and Crafts theme suited this perfectly as, for example, the settle could be found in the housing constructed on the Bournville estate³⁸⁷ as well as in the homes of wealthy business people.³⁸⁸ In confronting these challenges the new RBSA Gallery was very distinctive. Furthermore, the changes in the RBSA, from the reconstruction

³⁸⁶ Minutes of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Annual Meeting, 27 March 1920, Minutes of Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Plenary Meeting, 20 January 1921, Minute Book September 5th 1912 – July 25th 1928, 219 and 225, unpublished manuscript, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

³⁸⁷ William Alexander Harvey, *The Model Village and its Cottages, Bournville*, London, 1906, 55 and plate L1.

³⁸⁸ Crouch and Butler, *The Apartments of the House, Their Arrangement, Furnishing and Decoration*, 148.

programme and on until the middle of the century, some physically embodied in the Crouch, Butler and Savage gallery, others connected to the functioning of the institution, show that this art society was directly connected to and reflective of the transitions of modern life.

The continued existence of an art world and its institutions and of public exhibiting venues was essential for the career of a portrait artist like Fleetwood Walker who was committed to exhibiting his works in public venues to encourage further commissions. This was particularly the case in Birmingham because of the limited availability of alternative venues. It was a matter of dual importance to the Council of the RBSA, who were determined to support the RBSA as an exhibiting venue and themselves as individual artists. This cultural context had a discernable impact on the artistic output of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker and the reception of his work. The development of the gallery as part of a larger utopian urban environment in a rapidly growing city and facilitated by liberal politicians influenced the creation of works that would show the benefits of their advanced ideas in town planning. The group portrait of *Mr and Mrs R. H. Butler and their Daughters* is an example of this, although its acceptance for exhibition by the RA meant that it was not shown at the RBSA. The physical size of the exhibition gallery led him to produce large format works such as *Maudie in Pink*, showing a direct interaction between space and art production.

The artistic house as part of the new suburban ideal led to the creation of works appropriate to such an environment. *Greensleeves* showed how a family portrait

could be integrated into the new aesthetic 'temple' by combining fashionable clothing, a striking pose and green apparel. The impact of non-conformist Liberal politics meant that Aesthetic enjoyment could be depicted in a work like *Repose*, but that such tranquillity should be shown to be contemplative and lyrical rather than alluring. The changing perception of the role of gallery spaces, from the nineteenth-century concept of a space with a civilising aim, to primarily a commercial space and finally to a community resource in the second half of the twentieth century, is reflected in the output of Fleetwood-Walker. That *The Schoolboy* and *Coppertop* were shown in the same exhibition, with a young man depicted as either scholarly or fashionably sporting, shows how these different cultural influences were debated within the gallery environment. Fleetwood-Walker's ability to negotiate these shifting spaces from 1919 to 1951 by a sensitivity to the reception of his works is highlighted by the fact that he was able to produce works that would appeal to selectors and hangers over a considerable period of time, but that could also be distinctive enough in size, composition and technique to appeal to buyers and to withstand the crowded curatorial context within which they were shown.

This investigation into the role of the RBSA Gallery in the development of Fleetwood-Walker's career as a portrait artist provides a revealing case study when considered in the light of Janet Wolff's *The Social Production of Art* as it demonstrates 'the importance of institutions in creating, or enabling, artists'.³⁸⁹ It has shown that exhibition spaces are the physical embodiment of social and

³⁸⁹ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 42.

political ideas and that the form of the artist's work is affected by these spaces. It has demonstrated that strategies of display are closely connected to political, economic and cultural considerations. Furthermore, the impact of national political and economic policy on exhibition culture in Birmingham has been highlighted. The chapter has revealed the RBSA's central role in the Birmingham art world. At the same time the chapter has underlined the relevance of Becker's observation that what he calls 'art world officials' have the power to legitimise art—but that also such power can be challenged.³⁹⁰ Fleetwood-Walker was recognised as an artist because he succeeded in having his work shown in the RBSA Gallery. The gallery, as designed by Crouch, Butler and Savage, facilitated the formation of a fashionably spiritual audience, succumbing to the 'temple idea' as well as the ideal of the artistic house. Collectors, for example the emerging owner/directors of medium sized industries, were formed from these audiences and the collectors in turn enabled the further development of Fleetwood-Walker as an artist. This chapter therefore has, above all, demonstrated the relevance of exhibition culture to the individual artist's career.

³⁹⁰ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 163.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RELEVANCE OF A MODERN ARTIST'S RECEPTION FOR THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF PORTRAITURE

In this chapter, considerations of the reception of art works will be used to explore how critical recognition contributed to the formation of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker as an artist, and to assess the impact of such reception on his artistic output, based on an analysis of press coverage concerning the artist. Janet Wolff devotes a chapter of *The Social Production of Art* to an evaluation of reception,¹ arguing that any discussion of the production of art works must also include a consideration of the reception of those works. The central issue that reception theory seeks to investigate is the role of the viewer or reader in the creative process; although there are a number of different approaches to reception theory, in essence it argues that there is no objective meaning in a work; instead audiences co-determine or even create meaning.² Aspects of reception theory have been embraced by scholars in a variety of disciplines, for example, Megan Cifarelli, in her study of reliefs from the ancient world,³ Laura L. Meixner, who investigated the relationship between French Realist painting and American society,⁴ and Elizabeth Kryder-Reid, whose recent article considers the

¹ Chapter 5, 'Interpretation as Re-creation', Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, London, 1993, 95-116.

² Peter U. Hohendahl and Philip Brewster, 'Beyond Reception Aesthetics', *New German Critique*, 28-1983, 111.

³ Megan Cifarelli, "Gesture and Alterity in the Art of Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria", *The Art Bulletin*, 80:2, 1989, 210-228.

⁴ Laura L. Meixner, *French Realist Painting and the Critique of American Society*, Cambridge, 1995.

connections made between the California mission gardens and their occupants.⁵ Kryder-Reid probes the evolution of reception over time and how this contributes to the creation of cultural memory, echoing Jerome McGann's view that reactions to the work affect subsequent readings.⁶ Although a similar exploration of the critical history of Fleetwood-Walker's work could in theory be very revealing, in practice lack of critical discourse since the artist's death means that this would be impracticable, therefore the focus here is on critical reception during the artist's lifetime.

This chapter adopts the approaches to reception theory initiated by Hans Robert Jauss (1921-1997). Jauss suggested that, although critics have revealed the insights provided by artworks, few consider the subjectivity of the writers themselves; he aimed to investigate this subjectivity and so attain a fuller understanding of the work.⁷ Jauss also believed that there is only one accurate interpretation of a work, and that this can be discovered by study of the work. Some scholars have critiqued this aspect of Jauss' work: Dana B. Polan, for example, emphasising that 'Jauss argues that the history of an artistic text's receptions can be a history of misreadings but he assumes that beneath these misreadings there exists a true meaning that the individual consciousness can

⁵ Elisabeth Kryder-Reid, "'Perennially New': Santa Barbara and the Origins of the California Mission Garden", *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 69:3, 2010, 378-405.

⁶ Jerome J. McGann, *The Beauty of Inflections. Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory*, Oxford 1985, reprinted 1998, 10.

⁷ Hans Robert Jauss, translated by Timothy Bahti, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, Minneapolis, 1982; James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein, (eds), *Reception Study, from Literary Theory to Cultural Studies*, New York and London, 2001, x; Ormond Rush, *The Reception of Doctrine: An Appropriation of Hans Robert Jauss' Reception Aesthetics and Literary Hermeneutics*, Rome, 1997, 11.

reach by an activity of transcendence from limited, too concrete readings.’⁸ The approach used here recognises Polan’s critique and will therefore follow Jauss by scrutinising the subjectivity of those who commented on Bernard Fleetwood-Walker’s portraits; however, unlike Jauss, there is no underlying belief that there is an objective truth to be found.

In *The Social Production of Art* Wolff argued that production and reception are linked by ideology, insisting that when considering ideology, it is necessary to include a study of the ideology of both production and reception.⁹ Bernard Fleetwood-Walker’s portraits will therefore be scrutinized here in the light of Janet Wolff’s view that ‘the ideology of reception can [...] be analysed, to disclose the origin and construction of readers’ frames of reference’.¹⁰ Here the reception of the artist’s output will be examined with a view to revealing ‘the origin and construction’ of, in particular, art critics’ ‘frames of reference’. This analysis will also question how the reception of works can affect the creation of later works, specifically with a view to developing an enhanced understanding of the production of portraits in Birmingham in the first half of the twentieth century. This is particularly pertinent to a study of Fleetwood-Walker because, although reception is relevant to all works, in the case of commissioned portraiture it is particularly so, as the reception of existing portraits can have a direct bearing on future portrait commissions. As Sophie Krzys Acord and Tia DeNora have concluded, art works ‘play an important role as arbiters of social relations,

⁸ Dana B. Polan, ‘Review of *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* by Hans Robert Jauss;’, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 41:3, 1983, 355.

⁹ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 97.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 115.

meaning and action, through how they are used by individuals and groups to order daily existence. In this mutually mediated engagement, cultural consumers are simultaneously its producers'.¹¹ The concept expressed by Howard Becker, that audiences are an integral element of artistic production and that they, by sharing knowledge of artistic output, become part of the support system of an art world,¹² will also be used to inform this discussion. In addition this chapter explores how the reception of Fleetwood-Walker's portraiture can provide an insight into the modernity of the work, in the light of Robert Witkin's recognition of modernist art's 'dialectical relationship to tradition'.¹³ The range of language used by critics writing about Fleetwood-Walker's work will be investigated to see if such a tension between tradition and contemporaneity can be discerned in descriptions of Fleetwood-Walker's paintings.

A substantial archive of press cuttings collected by Bernard Fleetwood-Walker was discovered after the death of his widow. Full access to this archive has been granted by Fleetwood-Walker's descendants to facilitate this research, and it is this material which forms the basis of this chapter. The very existence of the press cuttings, and details of why they were collected and how they were used is an intriguing subject. Most of the reviews were collected by the International Press Cuttings Bureau.¹⁴ The majority are tagged with information about the agency and the source of the cutting, showing that these cuttings were supplied by the agency. They remained in the artist's family, implying that the agency was

¹¹ Acord and DeNora, 'Culture and the Arts: From Art Worlds to Arts-in-Action', 235.

¹² Becker, *Art Worlds*, 67.

¹³ Witkin, 'Constructing a Sociology for an Icon of Aesthetic Modernity: Olympia Revisited', 116.

¹⁴ The agency is still in existence, see www.ipcb.co.uk, accessed 8 November 2011.

commissioned by Fleetwood-Walker himself, and indicating that the artist was aware of the significance of the reviews to his career: adding value to existing works, and helping to generate future sales. Although the artist's grandson vividly describes the discovery of the box full of cuttings on a high shelf above the boiler after Mrs Peggy Fleetwood-Walker's death,¹⁵ no further information about the commissioning of the agency has been uncovered. The selection of reviews is also of interest. It seems that there are very few negative reviews. There is no evidence to suggest that these were thrown away, but it is a possibility. In addition lack of archive material means that it has not been possible to discover how accurately press comments reflected public opinion or how they influenced public opinion. Despite these limitations, the analysis of the press cuttings is one way of assessing reception and can provide a valuable insight for the topic under consideration here.

The examination of the press clippings will be accompanied by an assessment of the regional particularities of the reception of Fleetwood-Walker's work. As will be seen, coverage in national newspapers of exhibitions in which Fleetwood-Walker participated was limited to exhibitions that took place in London. However, regional newspapers in Birmingham were thriving and therefore able to support the dissemination of information about Fleetwood-Walker, contributing to a heightened profile, in the region, for the artist and his work. This highlights a regional difference in the reception of an artist's work, for a regionally-based artist. Although the dealer-critic model did not develop to the same extent in Birmingham

¹⁵ Interview with Timothy Walker, 18 May 2008.

as in other cities, a critical element did develop, and this helped to further the artist's career.

The first section of this chapter singles out key terms used to describe the artist's work and analyses how critics evaluated his artistic skill. It will be observed that most of the early coverage reflects a formalist approach to describing work, with little background information given about the subject. Some writers, particularly in the post-war period, discuss the portraitist's ability to reflect the character of the sitter. Towards the mid-to-later point of Fleetwood-Walker's career critics noted that his painting style had changed and this statement will be analysed. Finally, the impact of international recognition and of the artist's association with public figures will be investigated.

A second section of this chapter will explore the newspapers themselves in more depth, considering which ones covered the different exhibitions and the comments made in the national newspapers compared to the local press. The emergence of tabloid culture during Fleetwood-Walker's career will also be scrutinised as will the political stance and ideology of publications which reviewed exhibitions.

Social Factors and the Development of Media Communications

Technological, economic and social changes, and their impact on the evolution of the news media, affected the reception of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's work.¹⁶

Advances in printing and in newspaper production, such as faster printing presses

¹⁶ Colin Seymour-Ure, 'Northcliffe's Legacy', Peter Catterall, Colin Seymour-Ure and Adrian Smith (eds), *Northcliffe's Legacy: Aspects of the British Popular Press, 1896-1996*, Basingstoke, 2000, 11.

and quick-drying inks, and in distribution, for example special newspaper trains, which occurred during this period, had a considerable impact on the dissemination of newspapers and therefore on the reception of artistic works.¹⁷ As has been described, one of the first references to Fleetwood-Walker was the inclusion of a photograph of *Petronilla* in a review of the RBSA's 1927 centenary exhibition; in this case Fleetwood-Walker's profile would have benefited from these technological developments which enabled rapid distribution of the article on a nationwide basis.

The reception of Fleetwood-Walker's artworks was also connected to the improvement in literacy during the period. The minimum school leaving age was raised to fourteen in 1918 and to fifteen in 1944.¹⁸ Reading skills increased,¹⁹ and it was the popular press that identified and responded to the needs of these readers.²⁰ The losses of the 1914-18 war, particularly amongst men, meant that there was a significant age gap between young people growing up in the inter-war period and the older generations. Younger people found it difficult to relate to the literary interests of the older generations and therefore looked for alternative and more relevant forms of writing. The newspaper industry, with its sensitivity to market needs, responded to demand by providing a new and appropriate source of reading matter for this generation.²¹

¹⁷ Seymour-Ure, 'Northcliffe's Legacy', 10.

¹⁸ Arthur Marwick, *A History of the Modern British Isles 1914 -1999*, Oxford, 2000, 55 and 181.

¹⁹ Comprehensive assessments of reading skills were not introduced until the 1940s. Thomas William Heyck, 'Freelance Writers and the Changing Terrain of Intellectual Life In Britain, 1880-1980', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 34:2, 2002, 236 and 241.

²⁰ Thomas William Heyck, 'Freelance Writers and the Changing Terrain of Intellectual Life In Britain, 1880-1980', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 34:2, 2002, 241.

²¹ Urszula Clark, *War Words, Language, History and the Disciplining of English*, Oxford, 2001, 50.

The development of advertising revenue as the primary source of finance for newspapers was a further social change which went on to affect the reception of art works. This was a dramatic change in the structure of the press, as recognised by historian Colin Seymour-Ure, critical to the success of, for example, the *Daily Mail*.²² The emergence of advertising revenue was itself affected by other economic issues, for example, the ability of manufacturers to produce goods in volume to meet the needs of a national market, and the development of a transport infrastructure to distribute products throughout the country. Similarly, the growth of individual retail outlets, which in turn was affected by the ability of customers to visit stores thanks to developments in public transport and increasing car ownership, also fed the demand for press advertising.²³ Technological, economic and social structures therefore had a direct impact on the reception of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's work as well as on its production. This effect can be assessed by considering the way in which his work was reported in newspapers.

The Vocabulary of Description

It will be argued here that comments about Fleetwood-Walker's portraiture reflected the shifting definition of modernism during the first part of the twentieth century. Fleetwood-Walker's output as an artist was featured in the press for nearly forty years. The earliest recorded mention of his work in a newspaper article

²² Seymour-Ure, 'Northcliffe's Legacy', 11.

²³ Ralph Harrington, 'Civic Pride, Urban Identity and Public Transport in Britain, 1880-1980', Colin Dival and Winstan Bond (eds), *Suburbanizing the Masses: Public Transport and Urban Development in Historical Perspective*, Aldershot, 2004, 266, and Gordon E. Cherry, *Cities and Plans: The Shaping of Urban Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, London, 1991, 101.

is in 1927, when he chose to pay²⁴ to include an illustration of his work in the *History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists*.²⁵ As a result his work was illustrated in *The Times*' review of the exhibition.²⁶ In the same year he held his first and only solo show, at the Ruskin Galleries, which was reviewed in both the *Birmingham Daily Post*²⁷ and the *Gazette*. This first review made an observation with regard to Fleetwood-Walker's output that was to be repeated by art critics for many years: 'Mr Fleetwood Walker is a modern—one of the few Birmingham painters who have broken with tradition—and couples a fine colour sense with a direct method which aims at the elimination of unnecessary detail.'²⁸ The writer highlighted Fleetwood-Walker's 'modern' approach. However, as will be seen, any definition of the word 'modern', when applied to art in the early-twentieth century, must be fluid. In 1902 a writer in *The Athenaeum* asserted that a full-length portrait by John Singer Sargent—*Winifred, Duchess of Portland*—belonged to this category, commenting: 'Here modernity is unmitigated by any reference to past conventions, but it is modernity seen at its best and in the happiest circumstances.'²⁹ As has been described in Chapter One, Fleetwood-Walker's early works show stylistic connections with those of Sargent. This may be the reason why Fleetwood-Walker's work was described as modern. However Jutta Vinzent has explored what was meant by the term 'modern' when applied to art

²⁴ Works by 16 out of 39 Associate members in 1928 were illustrated in Hill and Midgley, *The History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists*.

²⁵ Hill and Midgley, *The History of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists*.

²⁶ Anon., un-titled, *The Times*, Saturday 24 [month missing] 1927, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²⁷ E.S.H., 'Pictures by B Fleetwood Walker, Exhibition at the Ruskin Galleries', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 18 January 1927, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²⁸ Anon., 'Mr E (sic) Fleetwood Walker's Art. Modern Treatment in Lively Portraiture', *Birmingham Gazette*, 18 January 1927, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²⁹ Anon., 'Fine Arts: The Royal Academy', *The Athenaeum*, 3889, 1902, 600, press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

practice in the UK at a point slightly later in the twentieth century, the inter-war period, concluding that 'modern art was regarded as mainly French or, as we have already seen above, at least influenced by French Impressionists, French Post-Impressionists, the Fauves, the Cubists or, in later years, the Surrealists'.³⁰ Contemporary perception of what was modern can also be gauged from an article written in the early 1940s by Robin Ironside, the Assistant Keeper of the Tate Gallery, who described recent acquisitions at the Tate Gallery, emphasising that the 'modern section of the Gallery has been enriched'.³¹ He went on to explain that the gallery had 'taken a rapid and unprecedented step forward towards the ideal of maintaining a complete collection of what is best in contemporary art'.³² Contemporary artists whose work was acquired by the Tate Gallery at this time include William Coldstream, Mark Gertler, Frances Hodgkins, David Jones, Paul and John Nash, Ben Nicholson, Vivian Pitchforth and Claude Rogers.

A further insight into the use of the term 'modern' in the early-twentieth century can be derived from contemporary writings. Fleetwood-Walker's close contemporary, Herbert Read (1893-1968),³³ expressed his vision of the modern artist in *Art Now* first published in 1933. Like Charles Baudelaire, who had fused stylistic properties of the visual arts with experience of the contemporary world, Read linked formal qualities of artworks to lived experience, but with a more inclusive approach: 'It is

³⁰ Jutta Vinzent, *Identity and Image*, Weimar, 2006, 71.

³¹ Robin Ironside, 'The Tate Gallery: Wartime Acquisitions', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 78:455, February 1941, 57. Robin Ironside was Assistant Keeper at the Tate Gallery from 1937 to 1946 and the assistant secretary of the Contemporary Art Society from 1938 to 1945. Anon., Obituary, 'Mr Robin Ironside', *The Times*, 4 November 1965, 13.

³² Robin Ironside, 'The Tate Gallery: Wartime Acquisitions', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 57.

³³ Tanya Harrod, 'Read, Sir Herbert Edward (1893–1968)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35695, accessed 28 July 2011.

to the diversity of the human spirit, and with the realisation that this diversity can be diversely expressed, that we must look for an explanation of the vitality and of the validity of modern art'.³⁴ Despite this statement Read, a promoter of abstract English artists like Henry Moore (1898-1986),³⁵ Ben Nicholson (1894-1982)³⁶ and Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975),³⁷ was emphatic in his lack of interest in mimesis, declaring that 'the artist seeks something underneath appearances, some plastic symbol which shall be more significant of reality than any exact reproduction can be'.³⁸ Read's belief was that this theory 'opened the door to every development of modern art'.³⁹ These examples illustrate the varied use of the word 'modern' during this period.

Fleetwood-Walker's output in the early part his career, as can be seen from such works as *Peggy White* and *Repose*, both from 1925, contained no references to, for example, Surrealism or Post-Impressionism, and was highly-finished: it was only after the 1939-45 war that his work began to feature visible brushstrokes, similar to French Impressionist work, for example in *The Family Doctor*, (1947) or the portrait of *Dr Edward Bramley*, (1950). Therefore formal echoes of the artistic styles listed by Vinzent were not the reason for the use of the adjective 'modern' when describing Fleetwood-Walker's work. There is nevertheless a similarity between these works and others described as modern: many of the artists listed

³⁴ Herbert Read, *Art Now: an introduction to the theory of Modern Painting and Sculpture*, London, 1933, 60.

³⁵ Alan G. Wilkinson. "Moore, Henry." In *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T059425, accessed March 9, 2012.

³⁶ Duncan Robinson and Judith Collins, 'Nicholson.' In *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T062342pg3, accessed March 9, 2012.

³⁷ Penelope Curtis. "Hepworth, Barbara." In *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T037619>, accessed March 9, 2012.

³⁸ Read, *Art Now*, 67.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

by Ironside favoured simplified compositions and used light tones and often clear colours: Frances Hodgkins' *Wings over Water* (1930) and Paul Nash's *Behind the Inn* (1919-22), are examples of works by artists in Ironsides' list which use soft pinks and greens, and Hodgkins again used pinks and greens in her experimental and non-representational *Self-portrait: Still Life* of 1941. It can be seen that the palette used by Frances Hodgkins and Paul Nash is similar to that exploited for example in *Repose* 1925. Fleetwood-Walker's portraiture, as exemplified by the works referred to here, was broadly realistic, particularly when compared, for example, to the Hodgkins *Self-portrait: Still Life*, and therefore did not meet Read's requirement for a mode of communication that was not representational. It seems therefore that the critic reviewing Fleetwood-Walker's solo show in 1927 found that it was the artist's uncluttered compositions and use of fresh clear colours that indicated its modernism.

Fleetwood-Walker's paintings therefore were perceived as modern—and this was considered praiseworthy, as is emphasised by a comment that appeared in the press a few years later: 'Coventry may congratulate itself on having secured a picture by Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, whom Birmingham may regard as one of its most progressive artists. He is, in technique, a modernist without any of the more extreme, or abstruse manifestations of modernism.'⁴⁰ As this comment illustrates, Fleetwood-Walker's work was well received by writers working for the press as an acceptable interpretation of modernism. His vein of modernism had widespread appeal: By 1935 it was remarked upon in more specialist publications such as the

⁴⁰ Anon., untitled, publication name and date missing, dated 1929 in pencil, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

Methodist Times, whose writer highlighted the ‘modern feeling’⁴¹ in Fleetwood-Walker’s *A Village Madonna*. *The Birmingham Post*, like other newspapers, felt that Fleetwood-Walker managed to be modern but not “too” modern: ‘What concessions there are to modern feeling in this gallery are offered mainly by B. Fleetwood-Walker ROI but the artist avoids the ferment of modernism by a very long way.’⁴² A similar view was expressed several years later, in 1948.⁴³ These examples of how Fleetwood-Walker’s work was described demonstrate that many critics writing at the time felt that his work could be categorised as modern—although each individual critic’s understanding of the word ‘modern’ varied. This perceived modernism helped Fleetwood-Walker to gain extra exhibition opportunities and further press exposure. For example in 1939 he exhibited, as an Honorary Member, with the ‘Birmingham Group’, described as a ‘collection of young Birmingham artists, all very modern in their work, who have held exhibitions several times both in London and Birmingham’.⁴⁴ This usage of the word ‘modern’ underlines the relevance of Corbett’s view of modernism as an evolving concept with no clear definition, appropriated by different elements of the art world at different times.⁴⁵ At the same time the application of the word ‘modern’ reflects the contemporary tension between tradition and modernity, described by Witkin.⁴⁶ This suggests that critics were attempting to reconcile an interest in both

⁴¹ Anon., un-titled, *Methodist Times*, London, 9 May 1935, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁴² Anon., ‘Birmingham Society of Artists. Autumn Exhibition of Members’ work. To-morrow’s opening by Earl of Dudley’, *Birmingham Post*, 9 November 1937, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁴³ M.L., ‘Modern But NOT Futuristic’, *Derby Evening Telegraph*, 9 January 1948, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁴⁴ Anon., ‘Picture Show’ *Birmingham Gazette*, 21 July 1938, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁴⁵ Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art*, 1.

⁴⁶ Witkin, ‘Constructing a Sociology for an Icon of Aesthetic Modernity: Olympia Revisited’, 116.

approaches. Fleetwood-Walker's portraits demonstrate a continuing commitment to realism in that they are proportionate and use flesh tones, yet they were considered modern during a period when much artistic output was shifting from figurative to abstract work. The portraits were themselves, then, expressive of debates about modernism, embodiments of Corbett's conception of artistic modernism as one that could be expressed in ways that were not abstract.

As has already been noted, one of the aspects of Fleetwood-Walker's work that was commented upon in particular was his use of colour. Comments about colour occurred even when the colours used were more subtle, for example *Nicolette* was described as 'a painting more restrained in colour than most of his recent work, yet which nevertheless "carries" remarkably well.'⁴⁷ In 1936 *The Maidens*,⁴⁸ was singled out because of the colours used and described as 'a work that is at once arresting and calm, that gains much in dignity and beauty from its quiet harmony of colours'.⁴⁹ In the same year another painting was included in a review because of its use of colour, when a critic praised Fleetwood-Walker's *A Village Madonna* as 'easily the best of his elaborate compositions, graced by much subtlety in the modelling and much skill in unifying his cool colours. It is one of the most ambitious works in the exhibition.'⁵⁰ Even in 1946 Fleetwood-Walker's colour

⁴⁷ L.B.P., 'Contemporary Art. ROI Exhibition in London. Midland Painters.', *Birmingham Mail*, 10 October 1935, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁴⁸ The painting has not been traced and no colour illustrations of it have been found, although a poor quality snapshot of the work in the Memorial Exhibition can be found on www.fleetwood-walker.co.uk.

⁴⁹ From an art correspondent, 'A Fine Midland Art Exhibition. Covernty and Warwickshire Society's Show. High General Level of Talent', *Birmingham Post*, 22 May 1936, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁵⁰ Anon., 'Contemporary British Art. Features of Birmingham Exhibition, Examples of all styles of Painting', *Birmingham Post*, 12 February 1936, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

palette was still exciting remark: ‘the new ARA Mr B. Fleetwood-Walker, whose demure *Eve* refreshes the eye with its harmonious colour and quiet rhythms’.⁵¹ It appears then that Fleetwood-Walker’s use of colour, even though in realistic presentation, contributed to what was felt to be the modern appearance of his work.⁵² Indeed, Herbert Read emphasised the ‘the emotive effect of pure colours and tones’ in *Art Now*.⁵³ However, such descriptions of colour may have partly been motivated by the fact that colour printing was not in frequent usage in magazines and newspapers early in the twentieth century. *The Burlington Magazine* itself commented on this in an editorial in 1921, when the rare fact that a colour illustration was included was featured in the magazine’s editorial and described as a ‘unique specimen of colour printing’.⁵⁴

Fleetwood-Walker’s drawing skills also attracted the attention of critics. This was an aspect of his work that was commented on again and again over the years and in a range of different publications. In 1927 it was the clarity of the drawn line that was highlighted, when describing *Peace*: ‘a group carried out in simple line and wash with considerable success.’⁵⁵ The next year drawing skills were emphasised when describing Fleetwood-Walker’s entry at the Paris Salon and his award of a ‘honourable mention’: ‘Mr Walker’s picture “The Schoolboy”, is an impressive example of his work, the dominant features of which are accurate

⁵¹ W. T. Oliver, ‘The Victory Academy. Beauty and Tranquillity at Burlington House’, *Yorkshire Post*, 4 May 1946, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁵² Anon., ‘Autumn Show Reveals High Standard. St Ives Society of Artists. Study in Technique at Porthmeor’. *Western Morning News, Plymouth*, 11 September 1936 unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁵³ Read, *Art Now*, 48.

⁵⁴ Anon., ‘The Painter and the Printer’, *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 39:225, 1921, 253.

⁵⁵ Anon., ‘Pictures by B Fleetwood Walker. Exhibition at the Ruskin Gallery’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 18 January 1927, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

draughtsmanship, a high sense of colour harmonies and orderly restraint, allied with broad, simple execution'.⁵⁶ When *Mr and Mrs Robert H. Butler and their Daughters* and *A Village Madonna* were exhibited in the inter-war years, *Country Life* magazine highlighted these skills, observing that these works 'show sound draughtsmanship, good composition and quiet, harmonious colour'.⁵⁷ After the 1939-45 war similar comments were still being made, this time about Fleetwood-Walker's exhibits at the Royal Society of Portrait Painters: 'Mr Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, ARA, of Hagley Road, Edgbaston, the well-known portrait painter, has one picture on show—a well-drawn study of a nude'.⁵⁸ Even in the memorial exhibition held in 1966, the year after his death, this aspect of Fleetwood-Walker's work was singled out: 'Fleetwood-Walker's skilful drawing and graceful touch, equally outstanding in both oil and watercolour—in itself a remarkable achievement—make him one of Britain's best portrait and figure painters'.⁵⁹

Good draughtsmanship was not the only technical skill that was highlighted in the press. Many comments described the range of Fleetwood-Walker's abilities, particularly composition and modelling, or his proficiency in depicting drapery and foliage. *Mr and Mrs Robert H. Butler and their Daughters* elicited the following comment: 'Outdoor groups with wonderful flesh tints and clever drapery are Mr Fleetwood-Walker's speciality, and his other picture is a portrait group of Mr and

⁵⁶ Anon., 'The Diary of a "Despatch" Man. Honour for Midland Artist', [...] (part of publication title missing) *Despatch*, Saturday 16 June 1928, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁵⁷ Anon., title missing, *Country Life*, 11 May 1935, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁵⁸ Anon., 'Talk of the Midlands', *Birmingham Gazette*, 11 April 1949, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁵⁹ Anon., 'The Fleetwood Walker Memorial Exhibition', *The Birmingham Post, Midland Magazine*, Saturday June 4, 1966, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

Mrs Robert H. Esutler (*sic*) and their daughters formally grouped in a kind of picnic scene.⁶⁰ The same year another writer observed: 'Bernard Fleetwood Walker is represented by his Academy picture, "The Maidens", in which the warm tone and supple modelling of the figures is admirably set off by foliage and drapery. A few more pictures like this would redeem the exhibition from general dullness'.⁶¹

Several years later similar comments were being made about *The Model's Throne*. 'It is distinguished by a classical and sculptural quality. His model is a slim youthful girl kneeling on the floor, and the flesh tints are offset by a long sweep of white drapery, exquisitely painted, and the cool blue of the chair which forms the background.'⁶² Even critics who were free with their criticisms of the Royal Academy exhibitions, such as Sydney Paviere in 1946, praised Fleetwood-Walker's technical skills. Having started his review with the words: 'the writer has never seen so much incompetent, badly conceived, badly drawn rubbish masquerading as art', Paviere goes on to add: 'Satisfying in colour and composition is 209 *Mrs George Cohen and Rayner* by B. Fleetwood Walker'.⁶³

An evaluation of these comments should include a consideration of what was considered 'good drawing' in the early-twentieth century. Accuracy of scale and proportion had been considered essential attributes of good drawing from at least

⁶⁰ Anon., 'Few Outstanding Pictures in this year's Academy. Portrait Painters below the standard of their sitters', *Evening D*(presumed *Evening Despatch*), dated in pencil May 4 1935, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁶¹ From an Art Correspondent, 'Birmingham Artists' work. A review of twenty years' *Birmingham Post*, 7 November 1935, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁶² From Our Art Critic, 'Midland Artists Lead the Academy', *Birmingham Gazette*, 4 May 1940, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁶³ Sydney H. Paviere, FSA, 'Too Much "Rubbish" at Academy Show', *Northern Daily Telegraph*, 30 April 1948, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

the late-sixteenth century.⁶⁴ Initially artists aimed to establish the ideal proportions of the human figure, as these could be seen, from a neo-Platonic perspective, as a representation of divine perfection.⁶⁵ Despite this, artists observed the vast variety of human form and wished to render what they saw accurately. The first 'academy', the Accademia del Disegno founded in Florence in 1562,⁶⁶ and succeeding institutions, aimed to resolve the differences between ideal and observed proportions.⁶⁷ In turn this belief in the value of accurate drawing led to the development of techniques, such as the use of measurements and size comparisons, designed to help artists reproduce proportion faultlessly. Such techniques became embedded in the training programmes for artists adopted by art academies and continued to be developed during Fleetwood-Walker's lifetime.⁶⁸ These concepts would have been familiar to critics writing about the work of Fleetwood-Walker. Most would have received their education and training between around 1900 and 1940, when the Slade School of Fine Art dominated the teaching of drawing,⁶⁹ as recalled for example by the artist Randolph Schwabe in an article about his student years at the Slade: 'This was the important thing in our

⁶⁴ For a detailed exploration of these concerns, see Ann Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art*, New Haven and London, 2000, 3 and 38-40.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ For example, by William Menzies Coldstream (1908-1987). For a full description of Coldstream's system of measuring, see Bruce Laughton, *The Euston Road School; A Study in Objective Painting*, Aldershot, 1986, 155-160.

⁶⁹ The Slade School of Fine Art was created as part of University College London in 1871; Sir Edward John Poynter was its first Slade Professor of Fine Art and emphasized the importance of life drawing, introducing methods of teaching based on approaches then prevalent in France. Andrew Brighton, "'Where Art the Boys of the Old Brigade?': The Post-War Decline of British Traditionalist Painting', 38, and Alison Inglis, 'Poynter, Sir Edward John, first baronet (1836-1919)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2010 www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35600, accessed 22 October 2009.

lives—drawing. “Action, construction, proportion,” we were told.⁷⁰ It is probable therefore that most writers would have been exposed to this method of evaluating drawing, in which the attributes of ‘good drawing’ would have been a harmony of scale and proportion and the achievement of a sculptural three dimensionality.⁷¹ The writer Cora Gordon, who mentioned Fleetwood-Walker’s work in one of her reviews,⁷² is an example of an art critic who was herself trained at the Slade and would therefore have been familiar with this approach to drawing.⁷³ However, as has been observed by John Elderfield, artists like Paul Cézanne (1839-1906)⁷⁴ developed a distinct approach to drawing, concentrating on line alone, limiting, and often excluding, the use of tonal shading to suggest form.⁷⁵ This technique was critically embraced by Roger Fry, who, in 1919, just as Fleetwood-Walker was starting his exhibiting career, wrote in praise of the eloquence of what he called ‘a tense and functional line’.⁷⁶ Despite these developments many critics continued to be interested in the use of both tone and line, for example, the language used by one writer to describe Fleetwood-Walker’s figure study *The Maidens* emphasised the artist’s ‘satisfying control of line and mass.’⁷⁷ Other writers highlighted not only the sculptural quality of Fleetwood-Walker’s work but also the artist’s interest in

⁷⁰ Randolph Schwabe, ‘Three Teachers: Brown, Tonks and Steer’, *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 82:483, June 1943, 142.

⁷¹ See for example Edward John Poynter, *Lectures on Art*, London, 1885, 135-164.

⁷² Cora J. Gordon, ‘Royal Academy Exhibition, New Members Have Learned Much From Impressionism’, *Christian Science Monitor Boston*, 29 May 1948, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family archive, London.

⁷³ Anon., ‘Mrs Jan Gordon’, Obituary, *The Times*, 5 July 1950, 8.

⁷⁴ Geneviève Monnier, ‘Cézanne, Paul’, In *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com, accessed 9 March 2012.

⁷⁵ John Elderfield, *The Modern Drawing*, London, 1983, 20-22.

⁷⁶ Roger Fry, ‘Line as a Means of Expression in Modern Art (Continued)’, *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 34:191, 1919, 62-62 and, 66, 67 and 69.

⁷⁷ From An Art Correspondent, ‘A Fine Midland Art Exhibition. Coventry and Warwickshire Society’s Show. High General Level of Talent’, *Birmingham Post*, 22 May 1936, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

drawing drapery, a core element of the academic drawing curriculum.⁷⁸ These comments, when seen alongside the use of the word 'modern', show how Fleetwood-Walker's work was closely related to, but not bound to, tradition. The critics praised Fleetwood-Walker's academic drawing style whilst still considering his work modern, so reflecting the fluidity vital to the conceptions of modernity articulated by both Witkin and Corbett.

An Analysis of Contemporary Critics: The Formalist Approach

Elizabeth Prettejohn has provided a revealing introduction to the history of art criticism in British newspapers and periodicals in the early-twentieth century.⁷⁹ She identifies the approach taken by Sydney Paviere, as quoted above, as part of a tradition dating back to 1875 when Frederic George Stephens, a contributor to the *Athenaeum*⁸⁰ had described the Royal Academy exhibition as 'acres of rubbish'.⁸¹ She also notes that 'the conviction that the world of art is divisible between a tiny number of great works and a vast mass of mediocrity was deeply embedded in the English critical tradition,'⁸² a stance adopted, as has been seen, by many critics of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's work.

Prettejohn points out that as early as the middle of the nineteenth century there were two different approaches to art criticism, one style was for the writer to select

⁷⁸ See for example, From Our Art Critic, 'Midland Artists Lead the Academy', *Birmingham Gazette*, 4 May 1940, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁷⁹ Elizabeth Prettejohn, 'Out of the Nineteenth Century, Roger Fry's Early Art Criticism, 1900-1906', in Christopher Green, (ed.), *Art Made Modern: Roger Fry's Vision of Art*, London, 1999, 31-44.

⁸⁰ Dianne Sachko Macleod, 'Stephens, Frederic George (1827-1907)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36272, accessed 20 Oct 2011.

⁸¹ Prettejohn, 'Out of the Nineteenth Century, Roger Fry's Early Art Criticism, 1900-1906', 33.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 33.

works of personal interest and describe them; other writers, such as Prettejohn examined the formal characteristics of the work.⁸³ Prettejohn goes on to say that Fry and other writers differentiated 'their critical writing from more generalist approaches by claiming specialist expertise in the discernment of artistic quality, particularly on formal grounds'.⁸⁴ The result of this gradual separation of professional art writers and general writers will also be discussed in this chapter.

Much of the writing about Fleetwood-Walker's work continued a formalist approach to art criticism, as can be seen in this caption to an illustration of *The Three Boys* in the *Birmingham Mail*:

This fine painting *The Three Boys* by Bernard Fleetwood-Walker ROI has been purchased by the National Gallery of New Zealand, the ninth important gallery to acquire an example of this Birmingham artist's work. It is one of the most satisfactorily composed of all his figure groups, and is especially note-worthy as an instance of the artists' supple rendering of flesh tones and the ability to relate the subject successfully to the background. The broad handling of the tree trunks and foliage, the reflected light from the buildings beyond, combine with the bold treatment of the figures to give uncommon decorative interest to the painting.⁸⁵

This analysis of the work on formal lines seems particularly evident in writing about Fleetwood-Walker's large figure groups, produced prior to the 1939-45 war; often writers emphasized that the interest in the work was in its formal properties, rather than in its portrayal of individuals, as in this description of *The Farmer's Daughter*.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁸⁵ Anon., title missing, *Birmingham Mail*, 15 February 1937, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

In its combination of decorative and romantic intention it presents an attractive subject: a blonde girl in a pale blue dress seated gracefully on the ground, with a youth reclining across the picture behind her, a subsidiary figure but intimately linked to her by his interest and admiration. The colour-scheme of cool greens and pale blues is one this artist has frequently used with success, though here the greenish half-tones of the flesh somewhat break up the structure of the girl's face. There is no depth of character or individuality, emotion or intelligence in the faces; the charm of the picture lies in its simplicity and idyllic grace.⁸⁶

This style of critique echoes the interests of prominent writers of the period; for example, in *Art*, Clive Bell stated 'if a representative form has value, it is as form, not as representation'.⁸⁷ This seems to suggest that the impassive expressions of sitters in the large figure groups led to a positive reception for Fleetwood-Walker's works; they could be interpreted as formal exercises and evaluated on such terms, so could sit within an art criticism that was interested in increasingly abstract manifestations of modernism. This is a further example of Witkin's 'dialectical relationship to tradition'. The critics simultaneously valued drawing skills, perceived as traditional, and impassive expressions, considered modern. Fleetwood-Walker's work juxtaposed these seemingly divergent stylistic approaches. At the same time these very contradictions attracted the attention of critics and contributed to the interest shown in the works, so they were brought to the attention of the wider public. As a result the works themselves helped

⁸⁶ From an Art Correspondent, 'A Welcome Art Exhibition. Royal Birmingham Society Show', *Birmingham Post*, October 9 1941, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁸⁷ Clive Bell, *Art*, London, 1928, 27.

audiences to deal with the development of art practice—an embodiment of Becker’s concept of a perpetual dialogue between audiences and producers.

An Alternative Critique: ‘Character’ in Portraiture

As well as acknowledging the decorative value of the paintings, critics also recognised Fleetwood-Walker’s proficiency as a portrait artist; indeed some writers emphasised his successful integration of formal composition with an insightful likeness, as did this critic: ‘Not, however, till we come to examples by Bernard Fleetwood Walker ROI, do we find portraiture conceived in the modern sense, which makes it strongly decorative, without—as in the portrait of Alderman H. W. Hughes, lent by Dudley Conservative Club—losing anything in reality’.⁸⁸ Indeed, many commentators highlighted Fleetwood-Walker’s ability across a range of skills, as demonstrated by this excerpt:

But the longest pause in this room is likely to be before the group of paintings and drawings by B. Fleetwood-Walker ROI. They represent all phases of this painter’s skill – the academic (in the big, elaborately-organised family group), the not-so-academic, in the alert and zestful portrait of Mrs Nancy Dickinson, and the entirely personal in “Mary and Gillian” a thing of lovely softened contours and instinctive feeling for subtleties of expression.⁸⁹

This comment expresses the range of contemporary responses to portraiture: at the same time as a formal and posed group portrait is praised, an interest in both insightful likeness and personal connection with the sitter is revealed.

⁸⁸ Anon., untitled, press cutting fragment about the RBSA exhibition in 1936, undated, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁸⁹ L.B.P., ‘Autumn Exhibition, Royal Birmingham Society’s Work. Instinct—and Good Taste, *Birmingham Mail*, 9 November 1937, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

It was not until the 1940s that critics began to report on the rendition of the sitters' personalities in more detail. The role of portraiture as a means of conveying character as well as appearance has been explored since the sixteenth century,⁹⁰ so a consideration of what portraiture can reveal of the individual was far from being new in the post-war period. Yet it does seem, from the reviews in the archive, that this aspect of Fleetwood-Walker's portraiture was of lesser interest to critics earlier in his career. So far no archive material has been traced which uncovers the importance of the depiction of personal qualities to Fleetwood-Walker's clients and prospective clients as opposed to critics, but this would be an interesting comparison to make should such material be discovered.

One of Fleetwood-Walker's entries to the Royal Academy, *Auntie*, attracted considerable attention, because of its rendition of the personality of the sitter:

There is a subtle and penetrating study called *Auntie* painted by the newest Associate Academician, Mr B. Fleetwood-Walker. In all her life *Auntie* could never have won a beauty prize. She is a homely, fragile little elderly lady, wistful and careworn, in frumpish clothes and hat. But her plain features tell a story of patient kindness, not un-tinged with pathos. I was not surprised to hear that the real *Auntie* had journeyed all the way from Australia to Birmingham, to nurse a sick brother. Mr Fleetwood Walker met her there and asked to paint her portrait. It

⁹⁰ West, *Portraiture*, 37.

was acclaimed by fellow-Academicians as one of his best works and his election followed close on this picture's acceptance.⁹¹

In 1947 a review in the *Birmingham Gazette* included the following comment about *The Family Doctor*: 'Birmingham's own Associate, Fleetwood Walker of Hagley Road, Edgbaston, *The Family Doctor*, a rather tubby little man with eyes that appear a trifle worried—a consummate picture expected of such an artist.'⁹² A work of local interest caught the eye of the *Yorkshire Post's* art critic and was remarked upon for the personality conveyed: 'Mr B. Fleetwood-Walker reveals his accustomed grasp of character in a portrait of another Yorkshire sitter, Dr E. Bramley, Pro-Chancellor of Sheffield University'.⁹³ A similar comment was made by the writer for the *Sheffield Telegraph*: 'Dr Bramley's thought worn, intense face and quizzical eyes, over his robes of subdued blue and gold, command attention for him and admiration for the artist.'⁹⁴

Critics' interest in the depiction of character in portraiture can be linked to the evolution of ideas concerning the functions of portraiture. Portrait painters working in England in the seventeenth century became deeply absorbed in the rendition of character, stimulated by the arrival of Anthony van Dyck in 1632⁹⁵ who 'brought

⁹¹ Marita Ross, 'Royal Academy', *Everybody's*, London, 18 May 1946, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁹² Anon., 'Midland Lights at Royal Academy', *Birmingham Gazette*, 3 May 1947, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁹³ W. T. Oliver, 'Yorkshire artists at the Academy. Dales landscapes that take the eye.' *The Yorkshire Post*, Leeds, 1 May 1950, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁹⁴ Anon., 'Rebel painter back to the fold', *Sheffield Telegraph* 29 April 1950, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

⁹⁵ Richard Wendorf, *The Elements of Life, Biography and Portrait-Painting in Stuart and Georgian England*, Oxford, 1990, 68.

with him a strong taste for intimate portraiture'.⁹⁶ Richard Wendorf, when describing some of Van Dyck's close-up portraits, explains 'everything that the artist wishes to say about his sitters must be communicated through the expression of character in the face alone'.⁹⁷ Wendorff has emphasised that this legacy was passed on to some of the prominent painters of the eighteenth century and quotes Jonathan Richardson's emphatic support of this point of view: '*Painting* gives us not only the Persons, but the Characters of Great Men',⁹⁸ an idea subsequently taken up, as Wendorf identifies, by Reynolds in the *Discourses*.⁹⁹ Shearer West's examination of this issue has shown how the influence of ideas from other branches of study, for example theories of physiognomy, gesture and conduct, all added to the interest in the depiction of personality as well as likeness,¹⁰⁰ and has noted that this aspect of portraiture continued to evolve, particularly as a result of nineteenth-century Romanticism's interest in the idiosyncrasies of well-known figures.¹⁰¹ It can be seen then, that in the tradition of portrait painting exemplified by Van Dyck, Kneller and Reynolds, portraits were expected to show the character of the sitter. It is notable that many of the poses seen in Fleetwood-Walker's portraits are similar to those used by these portraitists. Fleetwood-Walker's treatment of hands can be used to illustrate this, for example by comparing Van Dyck's *Charles I in Three Positions* (1635)¹⁰² or Kneller's

⁹⁶ Wendorf, *The Elements of Life, Biography and Portrait-Painting in Stuart and Georgian England*, 99.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁹⁸ Jonathan Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting*, (Second Edition). London, 1725, 10.

⁹⁹ Wendorf, *The Elements of Life, Biography and Portrait-Painting in Stuart and Georgian England*, 11.

¹⁰⁰ West, *Portraiture*, 32-37.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁰² In the Royal Collection, see www.royalcollection.org.uk, date accessed 10 March 2012.

Joseph Addison (c 1703-1712),¹⁰³ with Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's *Amity*. Both show slender, tapering fingers, slightly spread as though to be shown most elegantly. Robert Walker, in *John Evelyn* (1648) painted the sitter's left hand with the index finger and little finger slightly parted from the other fingers; Fleetwood-Walker's *Dr Ethel Poulton* of 1935 echoes Robert Walker's work; an even stronger connection can be made with Mrs Butler's left hand in *Mr and Mrs Robert H. Butler and their Daughters* (1935). These carefully positioned hands can be found again in the work of Sir Joshua Reynolds, for example in *Lady Cockburn and her Sons* (1773),¹⁰⁴ a work that has been discussed above. This indicates that inclusion of hands was of significance to Fleetwood-Walker's portraiture and that he rendered character by poses and through depicting hands, evidenced by his favouring of the three-quarter length portrait rather than the close-up on the face alone, particularly in the early part of his career. The lasting impact of the Royal Academy on portraiture in Britain and Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's early interest in exhibiting at that institution; the kind of training that dominated art schools in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century; the highly visible visual links with the portrait tradition in England, and an established concept of what, in the minds of the art critic, makes a good portrait are all therefore very relevant to a study of the style and the reception of Fleetwood-Walker's portraits.

It is argued here, as demonstrated by the examples given above, that it is possible to detect two distinct and consecutive types of evaluation of Fleetwood-Walker's works, each reflecting contemporary currents of art writing. In the early part of the

¹⁰³ At the National Portrait Gallery, London, see www.npg.org.uk, date accessed 10 March 2012.

¹⁰⁴ At the National Gallery, London, see www.nationalgallery.org.uk, date accessed 10 March 2012.

twentieth century, as many artists' work moved towards abstraction, writers increasingly focused on formalist analysis. Elizabeth Prettejohn, in her study of John Singer Sargent, details why critics wishing to write from a formalist perspective might have felt uncomfortable reviewing the work of a portrait artist: as she explains, on 'a literal interpretation a portrait can never be a perfect work of art in formalist terms, since some kind of representational likeness is an irreducible requirement'.¹⁰⁵ Portraits therefore were reviewed as decorative works rather than portrayals of character. It would appear that Fleetwood-Walker's early portraiture reflects an awareness of these currents in art criticism. He presents his sitters in a stylised manner, as seen for example in *Louba Reubens* (1927). Other portraits, such as *Greensleeves* (1927) are not even given the sitter's name, the title drawing attention to a different aspect of the work. Yet other portraits are given narrative titles such as *Waiting for the Caravan* (1926). This suggests a deliberate intention to draw critics away from the fact that this was unfashionable portraiture and make writers concentrate their attention instead on the formal qualities of the work. It is noteworthy that these stylised portraits all date from the late 1920s, and it was in 1926¹⁰⁶ that Roger Fry criticised the work of portraitist John Singer Sargent— what Prettejohn has described as 'Roger Fry's stinging comments on Sargent's memorial exhibition' became well known after the publication of Fry's *Transformations*¹⁰⁷—suggesting that Fleetwood-Walker's move away from a Sargent-inspired approach was linked to Sargent's fall from critical recognition.

¹⁰⁵ Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Interpreting Sargent*, New York, 1998, 73.

¹⁰⁶ See for example Jensen, *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siecle Europe*, 13. Roger Fry described Sargent as 'undistinguished as an illustrator and non-existent as an artist'. Roger Fry, *Transformations: Critical and Speculative Essays on Art*, London, 1926, 135.

¹⁰⁷ Prettejohn, *Interpreting Sargent*, 73.

The evolution of the reception of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's work is likely to have been related to a more widespread change: the professionalization of the study of art history in the inter-war period. The Courtauld Institute, for example, was founded in 1932, with the intention of 'training the first generation of art historians'.¹⁰⁸ Malcolm Gee has suggested that this can be linked to the emergence of the avant-garde, a period when innovation and experimentation in artistic output mean that audiences felt that they needed help to formulate their response to this unfamiliar art, leading to the need for and development of critical interpretation, in Gee's words: 'the critic as reporter, arbiter, and even maker of art trends has been perceived as a central participant in the dynamic of contemporary art'.¹⁰⁹ David Carrier, in *Artwriting*, attempted to explain how and why the style of writing about art changes.¹¹⁰ His book aimed to show 'that as the artworld system changes, successive critics necessarily play different roles.'¹¹¹ From a social approach, the techniques of different writers are related to the conditions in which they write. Examples Carrier considers are Bernard Berenson (1865-1959)¹¹² and his involvement with the early growth of the market for historic European artworks in the United States¹¹³ and Clement Greenberg (1909-1994)¹¹⁴ and his creation of a link between Italian artists of the fifteenth century and abstract expressionism in the United States in the twentieth century.¹¹⁵ Carrier explains: 'As a connoisseur,

¹⁰⁸ See www.courtauld.ac.uk, date accessed 3 October 2009.

¹⁰⁹ Malcolm Gee, 'The Nature of Twentieth-Century Art Criticism', Malcolm Gee, (ed.), *Art Criticism Since 1900*, Manchester, 1993, 3.

¹¹⁰ David Carrier, *Artwriting*, Amherst, 1987.

¹¹¹ David Carrier, 'Artwriting Revisited', *Leonardo*, 25:2, 1992, 198.

¹¹² William Mostyn-Owen. "Berenson, Bernard." In *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T008048, accessed March 10, 2012.

¹¹³ Carrier, *Artwriting*, 11.

¹¹⁴ Ken Carpenter. "Greenberg, Clement." In *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T034771, accessed March 10, 2012.

¹¹⁵ Carrier, *Artwriting*, 26.

Berenson filled an essential role in an art market in which scarcity of works by the masters determined value. In dealing with contemporary art, attributions are less important, so the artwriter has a quite different role'.¹¹⁶ One of the points that Carrier makes is that, whilst writers like Roger Fry and Greenberg viewed individual works of art as part of the linear progress of art and part of a *Zeitgeist*, other art historians like Adrian Stokes (1902-1972)¹¹⁷ critiqued the suggestion that a work's interest is related to its place in the development of historical narrative and adopted a new approach to evaluating and writing about artwork. However, according to David Carrier's analysis, although Stokes did avoid placing artwork in a chronological sequence he still used a framework to structure his writing about art: that of his own personal development.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, a new approach to writing about art had been attempted. In the early part of Fleetwood-Walker's career, therefore, following the trend set by Roger Fry, critics were attempting to impose a formalist approach on their discussions of portraiture, so concentrated on the formal qualities of the work and by the 1940s and 1950s this approach was commonplace amongst art historians and specialist art critics. Janet Wolff in *AngloModern: Painting and Modernity in Britain and the United States* has noted that 'the familiar perspective that has privileged modernist (post-Cubist) art as the art of the twentieth century was largely the retroactive effect of a mid twentieth-century discourse.'¹¹⁹ Furthermore, as Gijs van Hensbergen has emphasised,

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹¹⁷ Stokes published several books in the 1930s which received critical acclaim, for example *The Stones of Rimini*, London, 1934. Stephen Bann, "Stokes, Adrian.", in *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com, accessed March 10, 2012 and Diané Collinson and Julian Bell, "Stokes, Adrian", in *The Oxford Companion to Western Art*, edited by Hugh Brigstocke, *Oxford Art Online*, www.oxfordartonline.com, accessed March 10, 2012.

¹¹⁸ Carrier, *Artwriting*, 69.

¹¹⁹ Janet Wolff, *AngloModern: Painting and Modernity in Britain and the United States*, Ithaca, 2003, 159.

'Carrier hopes to show the interested nature of all criticism and why some becomes adopted as the accepted canon and others not'.¹²⁰ In the case of art critics, one suggestion might be that these writers were looking to their own futures in the post-war curatorial and academic art-historical world, and therefore their writing reflected what van Hensbergen called 'the interested nature of all criticism', in other words, the varying potential motives for art criticism. For example, in 1949 one art critic described the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition and Fleetwood-Walker's entries: 'Among the other painters in oils, Mr B. Fleetwood-Walker shows his full quota of exhibits, portraits in various shades of pink, green and blue'.¹²¹ The author, Andrew McLaren Young (1913-1975) was assistant curator at the Barber Institute of Fine Art from 1946 to 1949, and in 1949, went on to an academic post at the University of Glasgow, there also tasked with the establishment of an art history department.¹²² The style of writing he adopted when writing for the *Birmingham Post* may have been intended to further his career as an academic, determining the use of the word 'modernist' in the headline and the abbreviated description of the portraits, simply listing the colours used. This example shows how critical writings are embedded in what Janet Wolff has called the 'readers' frames of reference'.¹²³

In contrast a distinctly different style of writing about art was adopted by newspapers aiming to build circulation by appealing to a mass readership, as will

¹²⁰ Gijs Van Hensbergen, , 'Artwriting by David Carrier', *The Burlington Magazine*, 130:1028, 1989, 866.

¹²¹ A. McL. Y., 'Fewer Midland Works at Academy. Modernist Paintings', *Birmingham Post*, 2 May 1949, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹²² Dennis Farr, 'Young, Andrew McLaren (1913–1975)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/56383, accessed 21 September 2009.

¹²³ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 115.

be discussed in greater detail below. The latter were less concerned with the academic approach, and the favouring of canonised works, but with finding aspects of art that could capture the attention of their readers and encourage them to keep on buying newspapers. This suggests a reason for the concentration on the capturing of character and attempts to recreate the individuals in the portraits for the reader. This focus on personalities matched the marketing strategy of the newspapers which placed emphasis on a policy of including human interest stories, as these were felt to be central to the building of high sales volume of newspapers.¹²⁴ One of the first writers to comment on the personal narrative implicit in one of Fleetwood-Walker's portraits works was W. T. Oliver,¹²⁵ the art critic of the *Yorkshire Post* who, when describing *Children in the Country* (1942), noted that 'the artist has caught the startled look of evacuees undergoing a new experience'.¹²⁶ Evidently capturing the expressions of young people was another of Fleetwood-Walker's skills, cause for comment in the medical journal *The Lancet* where a note about his entries in the Royal Watercolour Society exhibition appeared, highlighting his portrayal of the 'obstinate faces' of the young people he painted and especially 'that blank and sulky look with which they defy the curiosity of their elders'.¹²⁷ It would appear that even this long-established specialist

¹²⁴ Jean Chalaby, 'Northcliffe: Proprietor as Journalist', Peter Catterall, Colin Seymour-Ure and Adrian Smith (eds), *Northcliffe's Legacy: Aspects of the British Popular Press, 1896-1996*, Basingstoke, 2000, 39-41.

¹²⁵ It has not been possible to trace the author's full name; for example, all detailed entries in the COPAC library catalogue give initials only.

¹²⁶ W. T. Oliver, 'Royal Academy, Studies of a Nation under Fire', *Yorkshire Post*, 2 May 1942. Having joined the *Yorkshire Post* in 1927, Oliver became its art critic in 1942 and ended his career as Deputy Editor of the publication before retiring in 1967. Oliver was awarded an OBE in 1977. Frances Spalding, *Jacob Kramer, 1892-1962*, exhibition catalogue, London, Ben Uri Art Gallery, London, 31 May 1984– 8 July 1984 and travelling throughout England until 2 December 1984, London, 1984, 28.

¹²⁷ Anon., untitled, *Lancet*, London 1944 (full date information missing); Anon., 'Society of Painters in Water-Colours, Autumn Exhibition', *The Times*, 5 November 1945, unpaginated press cuttings, Walker family private archive, London.

publication was influenced by the perceived need to offer human interest stories to its readership. Fleetwood-Walker was to produce numerous portraits of children¹²⁸ and this may have been partially as a result of his understanding of the immediate press appeal of such works, so demonstrating the impact of social factors on artistic reception and indeed production.

The reciprocal relationship between reception and production is reflected in other aspects of Fleetwood-Walker's work. Many of his portraits use a neutral background, as is frequently the case in early twentieth-century portraiture,¹²⁹ often only the chair the sitter is seated on shown, for example, in *The Family Doctor*, *Dr E. Bramley*, *Frank G. Woollard*, *J. W. Gaunt* and *J.G. Newey*. This treatment is not restricted to the portraits of industrialists. Early portraits such as *Greensleeves* describe little of the setting for the portrait. Context is provided by the dress of the sitters, but often in the portraits of industrialists, as well as in the portraits of academics, the conventional suit is worn, indicating middle-class Western working standards. It may well be that Fleetwood-Walker was not only following contemporary directions in portrait composition, but was particularly concerned with capturing the likeness and expressing the personality of his sitters and therefore excluded all narrative elements. This is an example of how the reception of art co-produces it. As reviewers placed more emphasis on character,

¹²⁸ Seddon, *Royal Birmingham Society of Artists B. Fleetwood-Walker Memorial Exhibition*.

¹²⁹ See for example, the website of the National Portrait Gallery in London; a search for portraits painted between 1910 and 1939 reveals numerous examples of portraits with neutral backgrounds by artists active in Britain during the first part of the twentieth century, including Mark Gertler, Duncan Grant, Augustus John, Gerald Kelly, Henry Lamb, Ambrose McEvoy, Rodrigo Moynihan, William Nicholson and William Orpen; www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/ date accessed 1 November 2009.

other details, that may have been considered superfluous by writers, are stripped away by the artist, concentrating attention on the personality of the sitter.

The group portrait of the directors of Kenrick and Jefferson and the portrait of *Auntie* are both unusual in that the sitter is placed in a room. With regards to the directors of Kenrick and Jefferson, inclusion of background information may have been part of the brief for the commission; this seems especially likely in the light of the fact that the contemporary photograph of the directors in their offices includes objects similar to those in the group portrait. There are some other examples of portraits and figure studies in the post-war period including details of the room setting: these include *Eve* (1946) and *Margaret* (1954), but considering Fleetwood-Walker's output as a whole, the inclusion of a furnished room is rather rare. When this does occur, it could be interpreted as a further example of how reception—or perhaps, assumed or projected reception—has an impact on art works and it is tempting to speculate that the composition and content of *Auntie* was a deliberate attempt to catch the attention of art critics and the Royal Academy, but no archival material has been found to evidence this.

Several press cuttings from the mid-1940s note a change in Fleetwood-Walker's style of painting. In 1943 the *Birmingham Gazette* observed: 'The Edgbaston artist, Mr Fleetwood Walker, has contributed three works in oils. Each of them is in a happy, seemingly care-free, French impressionistic style.'¹³⁰ In 1950 an un-

¹³⁰ From our Art Critic, 'The Work of the Midland Artists', *Birmingham Gazette*, 1 May 1943, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

named critic wrote 'Fleetwood-Walker's two pictures are broad impressions.'¹³¹ By using the words 'French impressionistic' and 'impressions', these writers were connecting Fleetwood-Walker with what had been perceived in the inter-war period as modern, as described by Vinzent.¹³² This demonstrates the effect of reception on artistic output: a painting style that had been considered challenging in the late-nineteenth century, was now part of the mainstream in provincial England and could be adopted by an artist seeking portrait commissions from local people.

Unfortunately there are no archival sources available to identify whether this change in style can be directly connected to reviews of Fleetwood-Walker's earlier works. The *Wolverhampton Express* hinted that a change in style had definitely been to Fleetwood-Walker's benefit, reporting that Charles Wheeler had said, of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, that some academicians did not like 'his colourings' and that as soon as Fleetwood-Walker changed the colours he used, he was elected.¹³³ This change may also be traced to a change in the reception of particular painterly styles. As has been observed, Fleetwood-Walker's early portraits echoed those of Sargent, and his training had included an emphasis on the Pre-Raphaelite interest in detail. By 1941 Robin Ironside, following the lead offered by Fry described above, was to emphasise the decline of public collections' interest in the work of Sargent.¹³⁴ Therefore it may be that Fleetwood-

¹³¹ Anon., 'Portraits of Children', *Yorkshire Observer*, 2 June 1950, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹³² Vinzent, *Identity and Image*, 71.

¹³³ Anon., 'Colour Bar', *Wolverhampton Express*, 3 October 1946, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹³⁴ Ironside, 'Wartime Acquisitions', 54.

Walker, looking for commercial gain from his output, as well as focusing on the personality depicted, adapted his painting technique to one that had more contemporary appeal.

Similarly, as has been noted in Chapter One, Fleetwood-Walker painted fewer nudes after the end of the 1939-1945 war, although in the inter-war period these had met with considerable critical praise, as is shown in this example:

Mr Fleetwood Walker, whose nude studies created a considerable amount of interest at last year's Royal Academy exhibition, is represented by one of the pictures that hung on "the line" on that occasion. Entitled *Sea Born Thetis* the picture has been loaned to the Society by Mr Louis Porter, and is a very striking study, by a master of nude portraiture.¹³⁵

These examples suggest that, without abandoning his career as a portrait artist, Fleetwood-Walker was influenced by the reception of his works and the effect of reviews which could impact upon requests for portrait commissions. A move away from mimetic work would be difficult to align with the portrait artist's need to seek commissions from a range of audiences, not necessarily aware of the detail of trends in art practice and criticism, but there were other ways that painting could be adapted to reflect contemporary ideas. Simply structured compositions, neutral backgrounds, fresh colours, and later, broad brush strokes and loose handling, were all ways in which Fleetwood-Walker's work looked 'modern' to writers supplying text to newspapers and to their readership. Fleetwood-Walker's career

¹³⁵ Anon., 'Coventry and Warwickshire Society's Annual Effort. More works by local artists. Outstanding pictures and sculptures.' *The Midland Daily Telegraph*, 8 May 1936, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

can therefore be seen as an illustration of the collaborative nature of the reception and production of creative output.

Newspaper articles about Fleetwood-Walker's work had an effect on his career in other ways. In 1929 a letter to the Editor appeared in the *Birmingham Mail*: 'Sir, In May, 1929, a picture appeared in the 'Mail' of a portrait painted by Mr Fleetwood Walker of the then Lord Mayor'; the letter writer complains that this painting is never on show. Solomon Charles Kaines Smith, the Keeper of the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery between 1927 and 1941¹³⁶ was given space to reply, responding that 'this picture, a portrait of Alderman A. H. James, was for years on view in Room 2 and was there until recently.' The piece goes on to say that it was painted for presentation to Birmingham, described by Kaines Smith as the 'Corporation', rather than the Art Gallery.¹³⁷ Clearly this early portrait commission helped to launch Fleetwood-Walker's career, as the announcement of his appointment to the School of Art refers to the portrait of James, underlining the impact that this early work had on the reputation of the artist.¹³⁸ Fleetwood-Walker seems to have been well aware of the value of such portraits and official presentation ceremonies and apparently endeavoured to be included in attendant photo-opportunities:

At the annual commemoration supper of the Aston Old Edwardians, at King Edward's School Aston, on Saturday, a portrait of the late Mr E. W. Floyd (headmaster from 1895 to 1913), presented anonymously to the school by a

¹³⁶ Anon., 'Mr S. C. Kaines Smith', Obituary, *The Times*, 1 July 1958, 12.

¹³⁷ Anon., untitled, publication title missing, probably *Birmingham Mail*, undated, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹³⁸ Anon., untitled, annotated in pencil 'NV 1930', unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

former pupil, was unveiled by Councillor E. R. Canning, himself an Old Boy. In the group, from left to right, are Mr B. Fleetwood-Walker (who painted the portrait), Councillor Canning, and Mr J. Manton, the present headmaster.¹³⁹

The next year another portrait by Fleetwood-Walker was presented to a school, a portrait of Miss Freda Godfrey, the headmistress of the Church of England College for Girls in Edgbaston.¹⁴⁰ This time the commission was not paid for by a former pupil, instead 'the idea of the portrait originated at the school garden party the previous summer, and the School Council, pupils past and present, parents, staff and a number of friends had contributed. There were nearly 400 subscribers, and the amount collected was £195.'¹⁴¹ Perhaps the idea of the portrait had been stimulated by the reporting of Mr Floyd's portrait. Tracing this connection between Fleetwood-Walker's portraits and newspaper coverage of his work illustrates the relevance of Acord and DeNora's assessment that 'artistic objects are themselves mediators; they are one of the many reflexive elements of co-production marking cultural experience in any given situation.'¹⁴² Here an initial portrait of a head teacher led to comments by audiences, in the form of a report in the local press; following this, 400 audience members—the subscribers who paid for Godfrey's portrait—co-produced another portrait.

Fleetwood-Walker's ability to choose his subject and to render it in a way that would be likely to appeal to art critics must also have contributed to his success.

¹³⁹ Anon., 'Gift to Aston School', *The Birmingham Mail*, 21 November 1932, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁴⁰ Anon., 'Presentation to Headmistress', *Birmingham Mail*, 14 December 1933, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁴¹ Anon., 'Presentation at Church of England College, Edgbaston', no publication title, undated, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁴² Acord and DeNora, 'Culture and the Arts: From Art Worlds to Arts-in-Action', 227.

This can be demonstrated by responses to *Repose*. This work shows the artist's first wife, Marjorie White, known as Mickey, wearing a pink silk or satin dress, reclining on a rich blue couch and reading a book; a pink and green teapot, milk jug and teacup are placed on a table in the foreground and a green blanket or throw is glimpsed at the end of the couch. Part of a panelled door can be seen in the background. This painting was first exhibited in 1928, at the RBSA,¹⁴³ when Fleetwood-Walker was living at 163a Victoria Road, Aston and teaching at the King Edward VI Grammar School, Aston.¹⁴⁴ The panelled door would have been typical of Victorian housing in that area at the time and it may well be that Fleetwood-Walker set this figure study up in his own home, using his wife as a model, as a simple and inexpensive way of producing a dramatic figure study. It seems that every aspect of this work has been set up to demonstrate the artist's skill. The figure is strongly lit from one side, creating distinct shadows, highlighting the effective modelling of the figure, in particular the arms, and showing off the artist's skill at painting the folds of drapery and the sheen of silk and satin. The natural pose, with the subject absorbed in reading, the small still-life of a perfectly co-ordinating tea set, and the choice of fresh looking colours, all seem designed to catch the viewer's eye—or perhaps the eyes of the judging panel or of the art critic. *Repose* was exhibited several times, as well as at the 1928 Autumn Exhibition at the RBSA, when it was priced at £157, it was shown in the Paris Salon, where its success was reported as follows:

Three Birmingham artists have pictures in the Paris Salon exhibitions, and one Mr Bernard Fleetwood Walker, who has previously achieved distinction in the same

¹⁴³ *The Autumn Exhibition 1928*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, Birmingham, 1928, RBSA Archive, Birmingham.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

quarter, is awarded a bronze medal for “Repose”, This is a study of a girl recumbent on a couch, and reading, the whole of the work being richly imbued with colour and handled with the very firm and distinctive technique which characterises most of Mr Walker’s work.¹⁴⁵

The work was exhibited at the Royal Society of Portrait Painters and also at Cheltenham in 1932.¹⁴⁶ It was subsequently sold and is now in a private collection.¹⁴⁷ It would appear that the artist’s investment in the work might have been justified in terms of the number of exhibitions in which this work was shown and the accolades it achieved. The work also seems to have marked the beginning of a very successful period in Fleetwood-Walker’s career. From 1928 to the outbreak of the 1939-45 war considerably more than half of the works he exhibited at the RBSA were un-priced, and, from their titles, appear to have been portrait commissions.¹⁴⁸ Many of the other pieces were clearly large exhibition pieces, such as *The Children at Vernonnet*, priced at £262.10¹⁴⁹ and *The Family at Polperro*, priced at £500.¹⁵⁰ This analysis suggests that the development of Fleetwood-Walker’s career was connected to the reception of his work, demonstrating the relevance of Becker’s conception that ‘all the co-operation which produces art works, then, also produces the reputations of works’.¹⁵¹ In the

¹⁴⁵ Anon., ‘Day by Day. Exhibiting in Paris. Dr H. Levinstein, Mr J. T. Homer retiring’, no publication title, dated 1929 in pencil, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁴⁶ *Exhibition of Oil Paintings, Water-colours and Arts & Crafts by the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists (Founded 1812) held in the Municipal Art Gallery and Museum, Clarence Street, Cheltenham, 4th December 1931 to 23rd January 1932*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, 1932, Archive of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, Birmingham.

¹⁴⁷ Catalogue no 123, *Bonhams Sale 11056, Paintings, Furniture & Works of Art, 24 Feb 2004, Knowle*, sale catalogue, Knowle, 24 February 2004.

¹⁴⁸ See Appendix.

¹⁴⁹ 250 guineas, *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *The Autumn Exhibition, 1931*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, 1937, Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, Archive of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, Birmingham.

¹⁵¹ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 362.

example of Fleetwood-Walker, support for an artistic output by selectors, stimulated the production of work in a similar style, leading to further exhibitions and commissions and an enhanced reputation for the artist.

As has been emphasised here, Robert Witkin, in his essay about Manet's *Olympia*, has suggested that art works can express 'a reflective understanding of themselves and their age'.¹⁵² *Repose* exemplifies this concept in its rendition of a relaxed pose. According to Yosifon and Stearns, in this period 'rigorous posture began to suggest an incapacity to relax and to mix, while holding the body casually increasingly served as an index of modernity'.¹⁵³ In the same way *Repose*, already discussed in some detail in Chapter Three, depicting as it did softer furnishings and a reclining pose, not only looked modern in terms of visual style, but also reflected modernity as expressed in behaviour. The reviewer's matter-of-fact description of the painting of a girl 'recumbent on a couch', infers no criticism and shows how 'transformations in social structure'¹⁵⁴ are reflected in artworks. In turn this helped the viewer to understand the easing of formality in posture and to assimilate such relaxation into their own lifestyles. Similarly, the portrait *Mr G. Newey* (1943) could be seen as a representation of the complex issue of war time: the portrait, with the figure placed against a dark curtain and in harsh artificial lighting seems to embody the contradictions that would have been shared by those undergoing the war experience and might have helped the viewer achieve

¹⁵² Eyerman and Ring, 'Towards a New Sociology of Art Worlds: Bringing Meaning Back In', 282.

¹⁵³ David Yosifon and Peter N. Stearns, 'The Rise and Fall of American Posture', *The American Historical Review*, 103:3, 1998, 1066.

¹⁵⁴ Eyerman and Ring, 'Towards a New Sociology of Art Worlds: Bringing Meaning Back In', 282.

some reconciliation in their own lives, through considering and sharing this range of issues.

Writers, Newspapers and Contemporary Art

One way of analyzing individual writer's frames of reference could be to assess the individual writer's allegiance to social and political spheres, or class spheres if taking a Marxist approach. Such affiliation might be indicated by the types of publications that employed or commissioned the individual writers: it could be expected that there would be a synergy of outlook between writer and newspaper; a publication would be unlikely to retain a writer who regularly challenged editorial policy in writings for that particular paper. Therefore it will be argued here that an ideology of reception can be discerned, however considering an ideology of reception in isolation is limiting because there are subtleties of reception that the theory of ideology obscures.

Fleetwood-Walker did gain coverage in the national newspapers, but this was usually only when he was involved in London-based exhibitions. *The Times* covered the RBSA Centenary Exhibition in 1927¹⁵⁵ and it was on this occasion that a work by Fleetwood-Walker was illustrated, and further coverage in that newspaper came when his work was included in an exhibition that travelled to Stockholm.¹⁵⁶ Otherwise the coverage resulted from his inclusion in the RA

¹⁵⁵ Anon., untitled, *The Times*, Saturday 24 [month missing] 1927, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁵⁶ Anon., 'Exhibition of Modern British Art in the Stockholm Royal Academy.' *The Times*, 27 October 1929, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

Summer Exhibition, as was the case, for example, in 1937,¹⁵⁷ or the ROI exhibition in 1944¹⁵⁸ and the RWS exhibition in 1945.¹⁵⁹ Similarly *The Daily Telegraph* singled out Fleetwood-Walker's work in coverage of the RA exhibition in 1938¹⁶⁰ and 1951;¹⁶¹ *The Observer* included Fleetwood-Walker in an article about the RP in 1935;¹⁶² articles in *The Spectator* in 1935¹⁶³ and the *Illustrated London News* in 1938¹⁶⁴ mentioned Fleetwood-Walker amongst more general coverage of the RA Summer Exhibition. There is only one reference to Fleetwood-Walker from *The Studio: an Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art*,¹⁶⁵ reviewing the Royal Academy exhibition; there are none in the *Burlington Magazine* and it is unlikely that any such articles would have been destroyed.¹⁶⁶ This suggests that all these publications devoted more space to exhibitions held in the capital than to those held outside the capital.

One of the milestones in Fleetwood-Walker's career which gained the most coverage was his election as Associate of the Royal Academy (ARA) in 1946.

¹⁵⁷ By Our Art Critic, 'Royal Academy. Achievements and Omissions. First Notice' *The Times*, 1 May 1937, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁵⁸ Anon., 'Oil Painters. Royal Institute's 58th Exhibition.', *The Times*, 18 October 1944, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁵⁹ Anon., 'Society of Painters in Water-Colours, Autumn Exhibition', *The Times*, 5 November 1945, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁶⁰ T. W. Earp, 'Picture of the Year at the Royal Academy. Frank Salisbury's Painting of the Coronation', *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 April 1938, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁶¹ T. W. Earp, 'Fine Artistry at the Academy, Tradition Holds its Own With Experiment' *The Daily Telegraph*, 5 May 1951, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁶² Jan Gordon, 'Art and Artists. Backgrounds. The Portrait Painters', *The Observer*, 24 November 1935, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁶³ Anthony Blunt, 'Art. The Royal Academy', *The Spectator*, 10 May 1935, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁶⁴ Anon., 'The Royal Academy, 1938: Murals in the Octagon Hall—A Novelty', *The Illustrated London News*, April 30 1938, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁶⁵ Anon., untitled, *The Studio*, August 1938, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family archive, London.

¹⁶⁶ To check this the archives of *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 1903-1947 and *The Burlington Magazine* 1948-2003 were searched, www.jstor.org, accessed 25 July 2009.

This was featured in a wide range of publications, including *The Guardian*,¹⁶⁷ *The Illustrated London News*,¹⁶⁸ *Everybody's*¹⁶⁹ and *Calvacade*.¹⁷⁰ The purchase of his painting *Auntie* by the RA through the Stott Bequest led to features in over 10 publications including *The Sunday Times*.¹⁷¹ As many of these reports are virtually identical, it may be possible that the stories were sold from one newspaper onto others or that the stories were syndicated. The archive does not contain any press cuttings from newspapers from other countries reporting this election, so it seems probable that coverage did not appear beyond Britain. One explanation for the apparent lack of coverage beyond the UK might simply be that the agency was only commissioned to compile cuttings from British publications at this time.¹⁷² Items appeared in publications in other countries on only rare occasions, for example a portrait by Fleetwood-Walker was mentioned in an article about the RP in *American Art News* in 1935.¹⁷³ The vast majority of press cuttings are from the local Birmingham newspapers. Early in his career Fleetwood-Walker's solo show at the Ruskin Gallery was covered by several local publications including the *Daily Post*¹⁷⁴ and the *Gazette*.¹⁷⁵ The RBSA's annual

¹⁶⁷ R.W., 'Portraits at the Royal Academy', *The Guardian, London*, 31 May 1946, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁶⁸ No author, 'Prominent People in the Public Eye Today', *Illustrated London News*, 11 May 1946, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁶⁹ Marita Ross, 'Royal Academy', *Everybody's London*, 18 May 1946, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁷⁰ Anon., 'Tradition Dies Hard. In a Mixture of Patchouli and Mothballs the Old Guard of the Royal Academy Achieves the Customary Level of Competent Dullness', *Calvacade*, 10 May 1947, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁷¹ Anon., 'RA Pictures bought', *The Sunday Times*, 28 July 1946, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁷² Philip Elliott, 'Professional Ideology and Organisational Change: the Journalist Since 1800', in George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate (Ed.s), *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, London, 1978, 174.

¹⁷³ Anon., untitled, *American Art News*, New York, USA, 28 December 1935, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁷⁴ Anon., 'Pictures by B Fleetwood Walker, Exhibition at the Ruskin Galleries', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 18 January 1927, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

exhibition, held every October (except for 1939) was usually featured in these newspapers, particularly in the *Birmingham Post*.¹⁷⁶

Some regional newspapers, for example the *Yorkshire Post*, devoted more space to coverage of the arts, and therefore to Fleetwood-Walker. This newspaper was an exception amongst local papers in that it did have some success in combining local and national news in a top-selling publication¹⁷⁷ and in that it had had a dedicated music and art critic from 1886.¹⁷⁸ Editorial policy at the *Yorkshire Post* was consistent during Fleetwood-Walker's career as this newspaper had the same editor—Linton Andrews—for over twenty years, from 1939 to 1960.¹⁷⁹ Again, it was often reviews of the RA Summer Exhibition that led to mention of Fleetwood-Walker's work, as was the case, for example, in 1946.¹⁸⁰

Often newspapers included Fleetwood-Walker in their reviews when he was involved in exhibitions taking place within their circulation region, for example, in 1935 *Bristol Evening World* covered the exhibition at the Royal West of England Academy,¹⁸¹ the *Sussex Daily News* featured an exhibition at the Brighton Public

¹⁷⁵ Anon., 'Mr E (sic) Fleetwood Walker's Art. Modern Treatment in Lively Portraiture', no publication, undated, annotated in pencil 'Gazette 18.1.1927', unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁷⁶ See for example, From an Art Correspondent, 'The Royal Birmingham Society of Artists. Good Work in the Autumn Exhibition', *Birmingham Post*, 9 November 1935, and C.R., 'Autumn Art Exhibition. Royal Birmingham Society.' *The Birmingham Post*, 21 October 1950, unpaginated press cuttings, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁷⁷ Mildred A. Gibb and Frank Beckwith, *The Yorkshire Post: Two Centuries* Leeds, 1954, 90-94.

¹⁷⁸ Herbert Thompson was 'Art and Music Critic from 1886 to 1936' Mildred A. Gibb and Frank Beckwith, *The Yorkshire Post: Two Centuries* Leeds, 1954, (caption to illustration facing page 88).

¹⁷⁹ David Linton, *The Twentieth-Century Newspaper Press in Britain, An Annotated Bibliography*, London, 1994, 23.

¹⁸⁰ W. T. Oliver, 'The Victory Academy. Beauty and Tranquillity at Burlington House', *Yorkshire Post*, 4 May 1946, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁸¹ Anon., 'West Academy Impressions, Two General Criticisms', *Bristol Evening World*, 31 October 1935, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

Art Gallery,¹⁸² in 1936 *The Cornish Post* discussed the exhibition at St Ives,¹⁸³ *Southport Visitor* included Fleetwood-Walker in a review in 1937,¹⁸⁴ and the *Hull Daily Mail* also mentioned him in 1945.¹⁸⁵

Special interest subject matter led to articles in related publications. The magazine *Health and Efficiency* observed

In these days when most people have become aware of their bodies and the possibilities of health, strength, enjoyable activity and beauty which cultivation of the body can bring, it is surprising to find at this year's Royal Academy Summer Exhibition that so old a favourite as the human body has faded right out of the picture.¹⁸⁶

Fleetwood-Walker's nudes were singled out for their role in reversing this trend.

Ironmonger in 1943 reported on the portrait of J. W. Gaunt, a director of a foundry,¹⁸⁷ and *Iron and Coal Trades Review* in 1949 drew attention to the portrait of the Chair of the Hepworth Iron Company, on show in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition.¹⁸⁸ Even the portrait of Father Vincent Reade had this effect, leading to press coverage in the *Catholic Times*:

¹⁸² Anon., 'Modern Art at Brighton, Interesting Exhibition, Collection of over 260 pictures.', *Sussex Daily News*, 19 October 1935, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁸³ Anon., 'New Works at St Ives Gallery. Another Academy Nude', *Cornish Post*, 24 October 1936, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁸⁴ Anon., 'In the Modern Manner', *Southport Visitor*, 15 May 1937, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁸⁵ Anon., 'Exhibition of Portrait Paintings At Ferens Art Gallery', *Hull Daily Mail*, 1 August 1945, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁸⁶ Anon., untitled, *Health and Efficiency*, June 1936, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁸⁷ Anon., 'Personal Notes', *Ironmonger*, London 2 Oct 1943, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

¹⁸⁸ Anon., *The Iron & Coal Trades Review*, 27 May 1949, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

There is a priest too—Father Vincent Reade of the Birmingham Oratory, painted by Mr B. Fleetwood-Walker. Bespectacled and cassocked, with ruffled hair, he sits sideways on a small chair, one arm flung over the back, his face downbent and partly turned away from spectators, as though shy, and surprised to find himself in Burlington House.¹⁸⁹

This positive response to his portrait of Reade, and equally the favourable comments made about the portraits of Gaunt, indicate, as in the examples of portraits of head teachers, the impact of reception on future production. Society in Birmingham had accepted— or arguably even promoted—the concept that local business men and Catholic clergymen, though neither members of the ruling aristocracy nor preachers of the national religion, were suitable subjects for portraits; the existence of early portraits of members of these sections of the community helped to bring about changes in public perception of these roles and as a result further portraits were produced. This provides an example of the effect that audiences can have on artistic output. Acord and DeNora have developed Becker's concept, asserting that individuals or groups relate to specific art objects 'to connect their own situated action to wider cultural frameworks'.¹⁹⁰ This concept is illustrated, for example, in the connection made by the writers of *The Catholic Times* between an artwork and their own cultural issues, hinted at in the 'surprise' at the inclusion of a Catholic priest in an exhibition at a venue connected to the established church through its royal patronage.

¹⁸⁹ Anon., 'Shy Priest?', *Catholic Times*, 7 May 1948, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London..

¹⁹⁰ Acord and DeNora, 'Culture and the Arts: From Art Worlds to Arts-in-Action', 228.

This initial analysis of press coverage already indicates that the reception of Fleetwood-Walker's work can be seen as being socially determined. His work gained little press coverage in national newspapers. Journalists writing for national newspapers headquartered in London¹⁹¹ concentrated on describing exhibitions held in London. This may have simply been because exhibitions in London were conveniently located for both journalist and reader in view of the recognised population density of the capital city.¹⁹² Specialist publications with their offices in London included exhibitions to make their publications more attractive to their readers, but picked out aspects of the exhibitions that were relevant to the special interest of the publication. In general those readers outside Birmingham who might have discovered Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's work through the press were the educated readers of *The Times*, the national newspaper which gave him the most coverage, and the *Daily Telegraph*. No coverage has been traced in newspapers from the period that were aimed at the mass market, for example the *Daily Mail*, which was aimed at the working class and lower middle class¹⁹³ or the *Daily Mirror*, with a target market of factory workers.¹⁹⁴ The lack of coverage for Fleetwood-Walker in specialist art publications such as *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* and *The Studio* could be the result of the editorial policies of these publications. An article

¹⁹¹ Most newspapers (except the *Manchester Guardian* which only became a nationally distributed newspaper after 1945), which were distributed nationally in the first half of the twentieth century were based in London. Seymour-Ure, 'Northcliffe's Legacy', 15 and footnote 2, 25.

¹⁹² The 'population potential' described as a 'sophisticate measure of density' of the most densely populated London borough in 1951 was 1,475,000 person per km; that of Birmingham was 718,000 persons per km. John Craig, *Population Density and Concentration in Great Britain, 1951, 1961 and 1971*, London, 1980, 8 and Appendix Table 15.

¹⁹³ Thwaites, 'Circles of Confusion and Sharp Vision: British News Photography, 1919-1939', 99.

¹⁹⁴ Adrian Smith, 'The Fall and Fall of the Third Daily Herald, 1930-1964', Peter Catterall, Colin Seymour-Ure and Adrian Smith (Ed.s), *Northcliffe's Legacy: Aspects of the British Popular Press, 1896-1996*, Basingstoke, 2000, 180.

published in 1929 suggests that, at least for *The Burlington Magazine*, this could have been for commercial reasons. 'Notable Works of Art Now on the Market: Supplement'¹⁹⁵ was an 'advertising supplement' and it was paid for by the London dealers whose works were featured in the article,¹⁹⁶ again confirming that this publication was aimed at readers likely to visit London and was therefore more likely to feature artists and exhibitions held in the capital.

A deeper knowledge of the publications in which articles about Bernard Fleetwood-Walker appeared could reveal reasons why coverage was obtained in some publications and not in others. Many of the newspapers espoused a particular political outlook. For example, *The Times*, the newspaper from which some of the earliest cuttings in the Fleetwood-Walker archive are taken, and which was widely distributed and seen as a national newspaper:

The Times came very close to being a spokesman for the Conservative-dominated national government, though always aiming to be national, rather than partisan, in approach: it was bought mainly by upper-class and upper-middle-class readers, including, because of its special status, those of Liberal and, indeed, Labour persuasion.¹⁹⁷

One of the other major national newspapers was the *Daily Telegraph*. 'The *Daily Telegraph* presented itself as a "serious newspaper" and was considered in this period as 'less austere and more blatantly Conservative than the *Times*'.¹⁹⁸ The

¹⁹⁵ Robert Rattray Tatlock, 'Notable Works of Art Now on the Market: Supplement', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 55:321, 1929, unpaginated.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Arthur Marwick, 'Print, Pictures and Sound: The Second World War and the British Experience', *Daedalus*, 111:4, 1982, 137.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

readership was made up of 'aspiring, Conservative-minded people at all levels of the middle class, and by ultra-right members of the upper class.'¹⁹⁹

New titles continued to emerge during the twentieth century. By the mid 1930s there were eight national newspapers in Britain. One of the newer nationals was the *Daily Mirror*, founded in 1903. This newspaper, like the *Daily Mail*, had been deliberately launched as a commercial venture, rather than being the mouthpiece of a political party, and it aimed to meet the needs of a particular audience so as to capture sales. The best-selling newspaper in the country was the *Daily Express* – in summer 1937 the number of copies sold each day was 2,330,000; in comparison the *Daily Telegraph* was selling 637,000 copies a day and *The Times*, 192,000.²⁰⁰ However it is noteworthy that no cuttings in the Fleetwood-Walker archive are from the *Daily Express*.

The vibrant world of newspaper publishing was therefore an intensely competitive environment. This tension was particularly felt between the local and the national press, as speed of printing and improved distribution made it easier for the national press to reach distant parts of the country quickly. As a result national newspapers were able to compete directly with local newspapers.²⁰¹ This meant, as Colin Seymour-Ure has suggested, that the national press developed 'at the expense of the provincial press'.²⁰² Seymour-Ure observes that throughout the twentieth century there were consistently around ten or eleven national daily

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 136.

²⁰¹ Seymour-Ure, 'Northcliffe's Legacy', 10.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 15.

papers based in London. But, he notes, 'before the *Daily Mail*, the difference between a London paper's circulation and that of the papers in large provincial cities was not always huge, Northcliffe made it so'.²⁰³ By 1939 the total circulation of the national daily newspapers had risen to 10.6 million from 3.1 million in 1918.²⁰⁴ The number of morning newspapers published declined from 41 in 1921, to 28 in 1937 and again down to 18 in 1961.²⁰⁵ Birmingham was therefore unusual in continuing to publish a morning newspaper throughout this period and on until 2009, as well as an evening newspaper.²⁰⁶ In general however a new pattern of newspaper usage emerged, with readers using the national morning papers as a source of national political and economic news and reading a regional evening paper for local news.²⁰⁷ Whilst it might be expected that this would lead to the devotion of additional space to regional artists in national newspapers aimed at local audiences, this, as has been shown, was not the case. Fleetwood-Walker was mentioned comparatively rarely in these newspapers. In contrast, the regional newspapers did seek out locally relevant stories and, for Fleetwood-Walker, his frequent appearances in print must have contributed to a wider awareness of his work as a portrait artist in Birmingham. This regular flow of information about the artist would have affected the reception of his work. Seymour-Ure underlines the impact of newspaper coverage on the reception of art, concluding that: 'At every step in the development of newspaper content across the twentieth century, editors have responded to popular taste, in order to

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ Graham Murdock and Peter Golding, 'The Structure, Ownership and Control of the Press, 1914-76' in George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate (eds), *Newspaper History from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, London, 1978, 131.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 132.

²⁰⁶ The *Birmingham Post* continued to be published every morning until 12 November 2009, when it became a weekly newspaper, www.pressgazette.co.uk, date accessed 14 November 2009.

²⁰⁷ Seymour-Ure, 'Northcliffe's Legacy', 15.

optimise sales and advertising revenue. In the process, naturally, they have also helped to shape taste.²⁰⁸ As well as being a constant reminder of the presence of a nationally active artist in their city, the numerous photographs of Fleetwood-Walker's portraits would have encouraged the readers of Birmingham's newspapers to believe that they were both accepted and acceptable.

In their coverage of Fleetwood-Walker's artistic output, the art critics' personal backgrounds and the outlook adopted by the newspapers themselves may have contributed to the writers' frames of reference and could provide an insight into the relevance of Wolff's claim for an ideology of reception as well as production.

However, it can be very difficult to identify the specific writers who commented on art and exhibitions in any given newspaper. Many newspapers had insufficient resources to employ writers with expertise in a particular subject. In the early days of newspaper publishing, when the motivation for publishing was essentially political, there was no need to have specialist art writers. Syndicated stories could fill gaps in local knowledge. In addition, there was a tradition of journalistic anonymity within the press²⁰⁹ and many reviews are unsigned. However, as the twentieth century progressed, specialist writers began to appear and articles referring to Fleetwood-Walker began to be signed with the writer's initials or even full name.

Where writers have been identified, examination of their comments, combined with an investigation into their background, is revealing, as is demonstrated by the

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁰⁹ Elliott, 'Professional Ideology and Organisational Change', 177.

following examples. Thomas Wade Earp, art critic at the *Daily Telegraph*, considered the Essex murals in one of his articles, describing them as ‘a reconstructive experiment that is sure to delight’.²¹⁰ Earp (1892-1958), the son of self-made man and radical Liberal MP Thomas Earp (1830-1910),²¹¹ was the art critic at the *Daily Telegraph* for more than 20 years, having previously been art critic for the *New Statesman*²¹² as well as writing for *Apollo*.²¹³ His development as a writer and critic was at first stimulated by his association with the literary and artistic patron Lady Ottoline Morrell.²¹⁴ His obituarist described Earp as an ‘urbane stylist, with a passion for the humanist painting of past time, and with a wide and deep knowledge of French literature, he was also a courageous champion of original artistic impulses in the 1930s.’²¹⁵ Earp’s interest in what he himself described as ‘social and antiquarian research’²¹⁶ suggests that he would have been likely to look favourably on a re-kindling of interest in the historic technique of mural painting. His positive comment about the Colchester scheme sits well with his background. The project’s backing by a local council might also have increased the likelihood of his support: Earp’s involvement with an establishment newspaper suggests a probable support of local government initiatives.

Furthermore, the brother of Julien Courtauld, the donor of the murals, was a

²¹⁰ T. W. Earp, ‘Picture of the Year at the Royal Academy. Frank Salisbury’s Painting of the Coronation’, *The Daily Telegraph*, 30 April 1938, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²¹¹ Christine Clark, ‘Earp, Thomas (1830–1910)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/53562, accessed 23 July 2009.

²¹² Anon., ‘Mr T. W. Earp, Art Critic and Author’, Obituary, *The Times*, May 9, 1958, 15.

²¹³ Earp wrote numerous articles for *Apollo* in the 1920s and 1930s. See for example, T. W. Earp, ‘Edward Wadsworth’, *Apollo*, 9:53, May 1929, 139.

²¹⁴ Miranda Seymour, ‘Morrell, Lady Ottoline Violet Anne (1873–1938)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2005, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35111, accessed 17 Nov 2011.

²¹⁵ Anon., ‘Mr T. W. Earp, Art Critic and Author’.

²¹⁶ Earp, Thomas Wade, *Who Was Who*, Oxford 2007, www.ukwhoswho.com, date accessed 23 July 2009.

Conservative MP—the same party as that supported by the *Daily Telegraph*, a publication which was itself considered to be the ‘organ of modern conservatism’.²¹⁷ All this is likely to have encouraged Earp to look favourably on the Essex murals.

In contrast, Eric Newton, writing for the *Manchester Guardian*, described the same work as ‘a collection of decorative mannerisms’.²¹⁸ Eric Newton (1893-1965) was the art critic for the *Manchester Guardian* from 1930-1947 and the *Sunday Times* from 1937-1951 and the author of a number of books on art related subjects.²¹⁹ He was particularly supportive of the work of Stanley Spencer (1891-1959),²²⁰ Paul Nash, Graham Sutherland (1903-1980)²²¹ and that of his friend Henry Moore (1898-1986).²²² He too has an obituary in *The Times* which says that ‘he followed every manifestation of modern art with an unfailing interest’.²²³ The artists in whom he was particularly interested, such as Paul and John Nash (1893-1977)²²⁴ and Edward Wadsworth (1889-1949),²²⁵ whose proposals for a mural using a

²¹⁷ John M. McEwen, ‘The National Press during the First World War: Ownership and Circulation’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 17: 3, 1982, 464.

²¹⁸ Eric Newton, ‘The Royal Academy. No Rebels. Chances missed and made. Lesser Achievements.’, *Manchester Guardian*, undated, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²¹⁹ For example Eric Newton, *The Artist and his Public*, London, 1935, Eric Newton, *Stanley Spencer*, Harmondsworth, 1941.

²²⁰ Fiona MacCarthy, ‘Spencer, Sir Stanley (1891–1959)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2011, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36211, accessed 1 April 2012.

²²¹ Roger Berthoud, ‘Sutherland, Graham Vivian (1903–1980)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31737, accessed 1 April 2012.

²²² www.npg.org.uk, accessed 23 July 2009

²²³ Anon., ‘Mr Eric Newton’, Obituary, *The Times*, 11 March 1965, 14.

²²⁴ Ronald Blythe, ‘Nash, John Northcote (1893–1977)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2006, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31486, accessed 1 April 2012.

²²⁵ Mark Glazebrook, ‘Wadsworth, Edward Alexander (1889–1949)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2009, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36674, accessed 1 April 2012.

more progressive visual style for Leeds Town Hall had been rejected, worked in an innovative style²²⁶ in complete contrast with that of the Essex mural. It was therefore unlikely that Newton would approve of Fleetwood-Walker's murals.²²⁷

The backgrounds of these two art critics and the comments they made about the murals seems to show the importance of what Janet Wolff has called the art critics 'frames of reference' in the reception of art works. Earp's interest in history meant that he was inclined to view artworks with historic connotations, both in terms of subject matter and composition, positively, whereas Newton's interest in avant-garde work was likely to lead him to see such work as reactionary. Similarly, the training of the critics was reflected in the comments they made. Eric Newton had been trained as a mosaic designer²²⁸ and some of the other writers who wrote about Fleetwood-Walker were also artists. This was the case for Jan Gordon, a writer as well as a critic who wrote numerous reviews for *The Studio*²²⁹ and who reviewed the Royal Society of Portrait Painters' exhibition in 1935. He complained about the poor execution of the backgrounds of many of the portraits, writing 'if the heads were chopped out it would be easy to perceive what wastes of perfunctorily brushed canvas would remain over'. However he goes on to say 'many of the

The proposals included *Slag Heaps*, by Wadsworth; an image of this can be seen at www.bridgemanart.com/asset/123076/Wadsworth-Edward-Alexander-1889-1949/Slag-Heaps-a-design-for-the-Leeds-Town-Hall-, accessed 11 March 2012.

²²⁶ See Ironside, 'The Tate Gallery: Wartime Acquisitions', 57.

²²⁷ Emma Chambers, 'Redefining History Painting in the Academy: the Summer Composition Competition at the Slade School of Fine Art, 1891-1922.', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 6:1, 2005, 95.

²²⁸ 'Newton, Eric', *Who Was Who*, Oxford, 2007, www.ukwhoswho.com date accessed 23 July 2009.

²²⁹ Jutta Vinzent, *Identity and Image, Refugee Artists from Nazi Germany in Britain (1933-1945)*, Weimar, 2006 and 'Muteness as Utterance of a Forced Reality – Jack Bilbo's Modern Art Gallery (1941-1948)', *The Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies*, ed. Shulamith Behr/Marian Malet, Amsterdam/Atlanta: Editions Rodopi 2005 (*Arts in Exile in Britain 1933-1945. Politics and Cultural Identity*, 6), 301-337.

better things here are the smaller ones' and mentions Fleetwood-Walkers 'faunesque *Alice*'²³⁰ Gordon's obituary, written by Jack Bilbo, was to appear in *The Studio* in 1944 and shows that Bilbo and Gordon were close friends.²³¹ Whilst Earp was an Oxford graduate on social terms with the Garsington set,²³² Gordon mixed with Bilbo, a refugee artist who ran his own gallery,²³³ particularly supporting the work of avant-garde artists.²³⁴

Not all the writers who discussed Fleetwood-Walker's work were professional art critics. Sometimes writers were selected to write about art and exhibitions for entirely different reasons. For example, Ethel Carnie Holdsworth wrote about an exhibition for the *Blackburn Times* in 1937.²³⁵ This article is very different from those by, for example, T. W. Earp. It recounts her experiences of visiting an exhibition with a friend, narrated in the first person. One of the works that she chose to describe was Fleetwood-Walker's *The Village Madonna*. She wrote that this painting was 'just a study of a country woman, child in arms. So real, so like many a good, homely woman to be found. It was its beautiful reality that made it so attractive. This applied to both woman and baby.'²³⁶ Ethel Carnie Holdsworth

²³⁰ Jan Gordon, 'Art and Artists. Backgrounds. The Portrait Painters', *The Observer*, 24 November 1935, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²³¹ See Jack Bilbo, 'Salute to Jan Gordon', *The Studio*, 127:614, May 1944, 158-159.

²³² 'Earp, Thomas Wade', *Who Was Who*, Oxford 2007, www.ukwhoswho.com, date accessed 23 July 2009.

²³³ Vinzent, 'Muteness as Utterance of a Forced Reality – Jack Bilbo's Modern Art Gallery (1941-1948)', 301-337.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ Ethel Carnie Holdsworth, 'A Wayfarer's Diary. Stray Notes and Musings', *The Blackburn Times*, 12 November 1937, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London. It has not been possible to establish to which exhibition this review refers. *The Village Madonna* was exhibited at the RA Summer Exhibition in 1939. There is no record of this work being exhibited in 1937. Similarly, other works described in the review, such as Ethel Walkers *The Zone of Hate* and *The Zone of Love* were not exhibited in 1937, see tate.org.uk date accessed 24 November 2009.

²³⁶ Ethel Carnie Holdsworth, 'A Wayfarer's Diary. Stray Notes and Musings', *The Blackburn Times*, 12 November 1937, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

(1886-1962) was an early twentieth-century novelist,²³⁷ described as ‘the South Lancashire ‘ex-mill girl’ who was one of the few working-class women novelists in Britain to sustain an actual writing career.’²³⁸ Carnie Holdsworth’s literary themes centred on romantic love²³⁹ together with a radical and militant socialism.²⁴⁰ Her comments on Fleetwood-Walker’s work show that she identified and focused on an aspect of the exhibition which reflected her own concerns with the ordinary woman’s situation.

A deeper insight into the social formation of reception can be gained by considering Carnie Holdsworth’s relationships with the newspaper industry.

Patricia E. Johnson relates that it was William Hall Burnett, the editor of the *Blackburn Standard and Express* who first noted Carnie Holdsworth’s work; later Robert Blatchford, the editor of *The Clarion*, was also to promote her writing.²⁴¹ If *The Blackburn Times*²⁴² was trying to appeal to the mass-market readership of a 1930s mill town, using a well-known writer with whom the public could identify could have been a strategy to increase circulation. Carnie Holdsworth’s observations contrast vividly with other descriptions of the painting, for example that of the *Birmingham Post* writer who concentrated exclusively on an analysis of

²³⁷ Patricia E Johnson, ‘Finding Her Voice(s): The Development of a Working-Class Feminist Vision in Ethel Carnie’s Poetry’, *Victorian Poetry*, 43:3, 297.

²³⁸ Pamela Fox, ‘The “Revolt of the Gentle”: Romance and the Politics of Resistance in Working-Class Women’s Writing’, *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, 27:2, 1994, 144. Carnie Holdsworth’s *This Slavery* has just been republished with an introduction by Nicola Wilson; Ethel Carnie Holdsworth, *This Slavery*, Nottingham, 2011.

²³⁹ Fox, ‘The “Revolt of the Gentle”: Romance and the Politics of Resistance in Working-Class Women’s Writing’, 144.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ Johnson, ‘Finding Her Voice(s): The Development of a Working-Class Feminist Vision in Ethel Carnie’s Poetry’, 299.

²⁴² *The Blackburn Times* was in production from 1855 to 1982 and it was a Liberal newspaper, www.cottontown.org, accessed 25 July 2009.

the skill of the work from a formal viewpoint, reporting: 'His *Village Madonna* (48) is easily the best of his elaborate compositions, graced by much subtlety in the modelling and much skill in unifying his cool colours. It is one of the most ambitious works in the exhibition'.²⁴³ Furthermore, returning to the points made by David Carrier in *Artwriting*, it is noteworthy that very few of the works highlighted in the article by Carnie Holdsworth have become part of the art historical canon; most of the artists and works discussed in this review have received little or no attention from art historians and curators.²⁴⁴

Another art critic from the period who discussed the work of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker was Robert Melville. In 1940 Melville had been appointed art critic of the *Birmingham Evening Despatch*; he was the art critic of the *New Statesman* from 1950 to 1977.²⁴⁵ He wrote a detailed piece about Fleetwood-Walker in 1946: Some recent portraits by Fleetwood Walker, Birmingham's latest ARA, will be seen at the Gallery of the Royal Society of Artists, New-street, when the Autumn Exhibition opens on Tuesday. Fleetwood Walker has become one of the best portrait painters in the country, and the fact that his work is now rarely seen in Birmingham gives the New-street show a special claim upon our attention. His style has changed radically in recent years and is related to the studied informality of the Euston Road Group. The texture of his paint is dry without chalkiness and

²⁴³ Anon., 'Contemporary British Art. Features of Birmingham Exhibition, Examples of all styles of Painting', *Birmingham Post*, 12 February 1936, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²⁴⁴ For example, *Red Engine House, Blackburn* by Charles Homes and *The Hat Stand in the Hall* by J. Kynnersley Kirby. Ethel Carnie Holdsworth, 'A Wayfarer's Diary. Stray Notes and Musings', *The Blackburn Times*, 12 November 1937, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²⁴⁵ Michael Remy, Tessa Sidey, Lisa Rull, Silvano Levy, Theodore Melville, Phoebe Tulip, *Surrealism in Birmingham 1935-1954*, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, 2000-2001, 62-63.

the impasto is lightened by glimpses of untouched canvas, giving an air of spontaneity to deeply considered effects. His likenesses are never sugary or “official” and his poses never betray a hint that the model is feeling the strain of sitting still. He loves to paint people the way they are, when they’re just being around. He can portray a wistful little boy without a trace of false sentiment, or depict a woman with raised arms without giving the spectator sympathetic cramp.²⁴⁶

This very positive coverage from a writer whose brother John, along with the other Birmingham surrealists, had ‘set out to challenge Birmingham’s conservative artistic establishment’²⁴⁷ could come as a surprise. But close scrutiny of archive material reveals a longstanding co-operation between the artists of the Birmingham Surrealists and Bernard Fleetwood-Walker. Fleetwood-Walker had exhibited alongside John Melville and Emmy Bridgwater in the Birmingham Group exhibitions around 1937;²⁴⁸ Bridgwater had been an art student whilst Fleetwood-Walker was a lecturer²⁴⁹ and had joined the sketching trips he led.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ Robert Melville, ‘Birmingham ARA in Exhibition’, *Birmingham Evening Dispatch*, 28 September 1946, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²⁴⁷ Remy, Sidey, Rull, Levy, Melville, Tulip, *Surrealism in Birmingham 1935-1954*, 62.

²⁴⁸ For example, Emmy Bridgwater exhibited three paintings in The Birmingham Group exhibition, held 29 September-11 October 1937 at the Lucy Wertheim Gallery, *Ibid.*, 53. Bernard Fleetwood-Walker showed *Mary and Gillian* in this exhibition, Anon., ‘From my Diary. London takes Art’, *Birmingham Evening Dispatch*, 25 September 1937, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family archive, London.

²⁴⁹ See for example, register for 1935-1936, Emmie (sic) Bridgwater aged 29, of 1 Pakenham Road, Birmingham 15, is registered on course 26, Birmingham School of Arts and Crafts, Student Register of Addresses 1935-1936, SA/AD 012002, Birmingham City University Art and Design Archives, Birmingham.

²⁵⁰ ‘Paintings and drawings by the Sémur Sketching Party under the direction of B. Fleetwood-Walker’, February 1932, Exhibition catalogue., Birmingham, February 1932. Miss E. Bridgwater is included in this catalogue and it is assumed that this is Emmy Bridgwater. In ‘Catalogues of the Ruskin Gallery, May 1931-March 1940’, exhibition catalogue, Birmingham, Birmingham Archives and Heritage Service, Central Library, Birmingham, LF547.

It can be seen that journalists' responses were conditioned by their social circles and professional networks, as well as their upbringing and training, perhaps reinforced by the newspaper's editorial policy. However, the connection between background and reception is not always as may be expected. As is illustrated by the example of Robert Melville, a writer who strongly supported innovation in art practice may have been expected to criticise Fleetwood-Walker's work, rooted as it was in the classical tradition of portraiture and figure drawing, but this was not the case. It may be that personal knowledge of the artist contributed to the writer's positive comments about Fleetwood-Walker's work. Some aspects of this research, therefore, suggest that the reception of the artwork, as well as its production, can enact ideology in that it promotes the interests of the ruling class. Such a link can be made most clearly when considering the personal background of Earp and the stance of the *Daily Telegraph*. However, if Marx's viewpoint is taken, that all individuals outside the working class are part of the dominant class because they do not live from their manual labour,²⁵¹ then all of these different critics, despite the differences between them identified above, are speaking from the point of view of the dominant classes. The case of Ethel Carnie Holdsworth is particularly interesting as she has been acclaimed as a politicized working class writer.²⁵² Therefore it could be argued that Fleetwood-Walker's work was discussed beyond the dominant classes and therefore, following Harrington, that 'the art media develop in isolation from ideology and can speak for multiple social milieu'.²⁵³ Indeed, this seems to be the position adopted by Carnie Holdsworth

²⁵¹ Harrington, *Art and Social Theory: Sociological Arguments in Aesthetics*, 18.

²⁵² Fox, 'The "Revolt of the Gentle": Romance and the Politics of Resistance in Working-Class Women's Writing', 144

²⁵³ Harrington, *Art and Social Theory: Sociological Arguments in Aesthetics*, 6.

herself. It is therefore argued here that, in the case of Fleetwood-Walker, although ideology can provide an insight into production and reception, it can also reduce the complexity and subtlety of different layers of interpretation to one rigid premise, threatening to lose the full richness of a social history of art interpretation. Such an interpretation, as has been suggested by Witkin,²⁵⁴ can be taken into realms other than ideological analysis and still be relevant.

The Portrait Artist and the Emergence of Tabloid Culture

Central to Howard Becker's analysis of the art world is the premise that an artist cannot exist without the apparatus of that world, therefore changes in society and artistic output are connected. In Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's case, it is argued here that his art world was affected by the emergence of tabloid culture. It can be seen that this new journalistic style affected how his work, and comments he made, were reported. Fleetwood-Walker was able to manage this change in newspaper content and style; indeed the knowledge that the artist was paying for press cuttings to be collected suggests that he was astute about the influence of the press. Fleetwood-Walker's artistic output did not change radically—he stayed within the genre of portraiture and his work continued to be relatively realistic—demonstrating that he was able to adapt to these cultural changes.

Newspaper publishing underwent a fundamental change of business model at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first part of the twentieth century. The former dependence on funding from political parties changed to a reliance on

²⁵⁴ Witkin, 'Constructing a Sociology for an Icon of Aesthetic Modernity: Olympia Revisited', 102.

earnings raised through consumer sales and linked to the cover price, which in turn was partially replaced by advertising income.²⁵⁵ Advertising sales relied on high circulation figures and to achieve this, newspaper proprietors aimed their publications at a mass working-class readership by including only articles of a wide popular appeal.²⁵⁶ This was in dramatic contrast to the earlier newspapers funded by political parties when the voting population, and therefore the target readership, was limited to a small number of highly educated readers. Although newspapers had broadened the scope of their editorial policy beyond political and financial news in the late-nineteenth and very early-twentieth centuries, leading to increased press coverage of artistic output, by the inter-war period and into the middle of the century, appeal to the widest possible readership was vital.²⁵⁷

Editorial direction was therefore determined by an anticipation of readers' interests, as has been demonstrated by Jean Chalaby's research into the career of Alfred Harmsworth, later Lord Northcliffe:

Northcliffe's philosophy of news was embedded in his resolutely modern approach to newspaper publishing. He adopted the reader's point of view to his papers and thought that, above all, papers should captivate the readers. To him a newspaper should not really inform but also amuse and entertain.²⁵⁸

There were several methods employed by newspapers to achieve this. The length of serious articles was reduced and content was lightened.²⁵⁹ A wider range of subject matter was included.²⁶⁰ Perhaps the most significant tactic was the

²⁵⁵ Seymour-Ure, 'Northcliffe's Legacy', 11.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

²⁵⁷ Chalaby, 'Northcliffe: Proprietor as Journalist', 40.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

decision to concentrate on covering sensational news. Jean Chalby has defined this as 'an encompassing definition of sensational material' which includes, she notes, 'happenings which are unusual, rare and infrequent'.²⁶¹ In addition, a certain style of address was needed. As Chalby concludes:

Fierce circulation wars in the 1930s between various British daily newspapers, all aimed variously in their language and layout at differing versions of the working classes, led to developments which aimed at a clearer, more succinct, more populist and more commercially successful format for a mass readership.²⁶²

Therefore, for art to gain coverage in the tabloid press, it needed to be presented as a dramatic event and described in emotive language. This change in the newspaper publishing business model began to be felt in all newspapers, as has been described earlier, because funding from political parties dwindled and at the same time gains in advertising revenue in some publications forced the cover prices of all newspapers downwards. These changes were reflected in Birmingham's newspapers.²⁶³ As a result much coverage of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker and his artistic output was recounted tabloid-style. There are numerous examples of this method of reporting in the press cuttings archive. A review of two exhibitions, the London Group exhibition and that of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters is given the headline: 'New Orientation of English Painting. The Headless Woman'.²⁶⁴ The choice of this headline was patently determined by a need for sensationalist writing, a feature of the tabloid press. Another headline makes this

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁶² Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Britain: Constructing a Community Through Language*, London, 2006, 7.

²⁶³ Seymour-Ure, 'Northcliffe's Legacy', 11.

²⁶⁴ L.B.P., 'New Orientation of English Painting. The Headless Woman', *Birmingham Mail*, 19 November 1935, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London..

point even more emphatically by actually using the word ‘sensational’:

‘Birmingham’s Sensational Art Show: 500 Gems (Ancient and Modern) for Sale By “HP”’.²⁶⁵

An apparent engagement with tabloid culture is therefore revealed by the study of the archive of Fleetwood-Walker’s press cuttings. It has not been possible to discover exactly how the information was obtained by the newspapers—whether the articles were the result of personal contact between Fleetwood-Walker and the newspapers and who initiated that contact. Precise authorship has also yet to be determined—did Fleetwood-Walker write the text himself, in the form of a press release, or was the journalist entirely responsible for the form of words used? Whatever the process, it is clear that articles were printed that were in tune with tabloid culture. The selection of particular aspects of the story line, the wording and the construction all suggest a good understanding of the methods of writing for those publications and their readers. The wide appeal of *The Village Madonna* has already been noted, but another ‘angle’ has also been used to publicise this work. An article which appeared in the *Brighton Evening Argus* on 28 January 1936 concentrated on the life model who had posed for the work. Headlined ‘Her year of adventure’, it recounted the story of 21-year-old Connie Swan who had resigned her office job to become an artist and artist’s model. The article concentrates on this aspect of the work and the painting itself is not described.

²⁶⁵ Anon., ‘Birmingham’s Sensational Art Show: 500 Gems (Ancient and Modern) for Sale By “HP”’, *Birmingham Evening Dispatch*, 11 February 1936, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

Coverage about Bernard Fleetwood-Walker also seemed to engage with contemporary issues of interest to the general reader, rather than describing a painting in any detail, yet another tactic of tabloid culture. For example, Fleetwood-Walker apparently challenged the growth of portrait photography head-on in 1937 when an article headlined ‘No “Photographer”!’ appeared in the *Birmingham Gazette* on 8 October 1937, in which the artist is quoted as saying ‘“I am not a photographer. I depict people as they impress themselves upon my mind as well as my vision.”’²⁶⁶

The content of some of the articles also included personal details, a prominent feature of tabloid publishing, with its increased interest in personality culture and revelations of insider information, and the articles are often written in a punchy ‘tabloid’ style: ‘Mr B. Fleetwood-Walker, dark, short, jovial, in a determined check suit, revealed that the artists who painted the murals of Essex history for the new Essex County Hall at Chelmsford have painted their own portraits into them. He himself is a Rising Peasant in the John Ball tableau.’²⁶⁷ Some of the articles are also notable for their ‘lifestyle’ details, such as this quotation from an article published in 1938: ‘When he was young, making a living by teaching art, he could not find time to paint. He therefore solved his problem by getting up at five in the morning for several years. And he still believes in hard work and no nonsense.’²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ Anon., ‘No “Photographer”!’, *Birmingham Gazette*, 8 October 1937, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London..

²⁶⁷ Dudley Barker, ‘London Today’, *Evening Standard*, London 25 Apr 1938, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London..

²⁶⁸ Anon., ‘Despatch Man’s” Diary’, *Birmingham Evening Dispatch*, 5 Mar 1938, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

Another aspect of the new style of newspaper was the recognition of the need to target new markets. *The Daily Mirror* was established to target the female audience by creating content that would be of interest to women, with the aim of raising advertising revenue from companies marketing their products to women.²⁶⁹ It seems that Fleetwood-Walker was alert to the commercial potential of these new markets, for example in 1943 he gave a talk to the 'Birmingham (Central) Business and Professional Women's Club – and this was reported in the 'Birmingham Women's Notebook' in the *Birmingham Weekly Post*, including praise for his portraiture and a reminder of his national reputation: 'his work is of such quality, and, what is, perhaps, more to the point, so much valued, that he could go to London tomorrow if he wished to do so'.²⁷⁰ This particular point provides an insight into the ambivalent relationship between Birmingham and the capital city. Artistic merit is validated by recognition in London, therefore reception in London affects reception in the regions—but it is the artist's connection to Birmingham that is promoted in the *Birmingham Weekly Post*. Although it is difficult to see how the visual appearance of Fleetwood-Walker's work was changed by the emergence of tabloid newspapers, there were occasions when descriptions of existing works were slanted to attract the interest of tabloid journalists. This was the case when a work was loaned for display on board a ship. A headline from 1957 'In the cruiser's wardroom...A nude shocks the stars' describes *The Bane*, a work first shown at the RA in 1932, in sensational language; Fleetwood-Walker is reported

²⁶⁹ Harold A. Innis, *The Newspaper in Economic Development*, *The Journal of Economic History*, 2, 1942, 28.

²⁷⁰ Anon., 'Birmingham Women's Notebook', *Birmingham Weekly Post*, 13 August 1943, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

as commenting: “It’s just a picture of a nude who is kneeling. There is nothing vulgar about it.”²⁷¹

Other examples of Fleetwood-Walker’s grasp of the press medium are the linking of his work to subjects of widespread interests. His speech, when opening the annual Wolverhampton Society of Artists exhibition in 1949, linked art and beer and was reported as follows:

He could not understand why brewery companies spent large sums on building and decorating public-houses yet paid only a few pounds for cheap prints to hang on the walls.

He did not mean that they should buy masterpieces, but a fair selection could be made of the works of local artist. Not only would the pictures serve as better decoration but they would give visitors a clear idea of what local artists were doing.²⁷²

Similarly, in an article which appeared on 3 January 1951 headlined ‘Midland Art Ideas Based on Fashion’ Fleetwood-Walker, opening an exhibition in his role of President of the RBSA, complains that people in Birmingham do not buy original art by contemporary artists because their picture buying is dictated by trends in interior decoration.²⁷³ Again, Fleetwood-Walker’s ability to relate the problems of the art market to an issue which had increasing exposure in the newspapers,²⁷⁴ and his vivid, colloquial phrases, won him extra coverage in the Birmingham

²⁷¹ Anon., ‘In the cruiser’s wardroom...A nude shocks the stars’, name of publication missing, undated, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²⁷² Anon., ‘Brewers can help artists’, *Birmingham Gazette*, Birmingham 12 November 1949, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²⁷³ Anon., “Midland art ideas based on fashion”, *Birmingham Gazette*, 3 Jan 1951, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²⁷⁴ Seymour-Ure, ‘Northcliffe’s Legacy’, 11.

newspapers, contributing to the raising of his public profile. It could be argued that, in some cases, the emergence of the tabloid style of coverage, with its emphasis on individuality, was reflected in the portraits produced by Fleetwood-Walker. His portrait of Mrs Goodway (1936) shows this friend of the family as spirited and perhaps even audacious, when compared with her appearance in a contemporary photograph and this work did gain a mention in the press.²⁷⁵ Such depictions could also be related to the informality characteristic of modernity. Indeed, Fleetwood-Walker's use of family and friends as portrait sitters, posing for un-commissioned works, accords with Woodall's identification of the use of such models as one of the characteristics of intimate and informal portraiture and figure painting,²⁷⁶ The portrait of Mrs Goodway therefore shows Fleetwood-Walker's connection with this element of modernity at a number of levels.

Publications, Politics and Ideology

The regional press, from the end of the 1914-18 war until Fleetwood-Walker's death, is notable for the standardization and consistency of its contents across the regions and over the years;²⁷⁷ and its agenda has been described as a commitment to 'promote a local patriotism'²⁷⁸ and its political outlook as 'conservative'.²⁷⁹ The newspapers in Birmingham conformed to this pattern. The *Birmingham Post* was founded as the *Birmingham Daily Post* by John Frederick

²⁷⁵ L.B.P., 'New Orientation of English Painting. The Headless Woman.' Birmingham Mail, 19 November 1935, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

²⁷⁶ Woodall, *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, 7.

²⁷⁷ Bob Franklin and David Murphy, *What News? The Market, Politics and the Local Press*, London, 1991, 1.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

Feeney in 1857.²⁸⁰ This newspaper was owned by the same family until 1942, first passing to the founder's son, John Feeney²⁸¹ and then his grandson Sir Charles Hyde, who became sole proprietor of the business in 1913.²⁸² Hyde was also the publisher of the *Birmingham Mail*. In the early part of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's career, until Sir Charles Hyde's death in 1942,²⁸³ management of *The Birmingham Post* remained unchanged. Although Hyde was very actively involved in running the paper, he pursued interests outside the business, sponsoring archaeological excavations and donating a number of the resultant finds to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.²⁸⁴ Hyde's General Manager was Bertram Joseph Tottey Ford, appointed in 1913;²⁸⁵ Ford retained his connection with the paper beyond Hyde's death in 1942 until his own death in 1955.²⁸⁶ Ford was also an active member of Birmingham's community: amongst many other responsibilities he was a life governor of Birmingham University and President of the British Hospitals Contributory Schemes Association.²⁸⁷ Like Hyde, Ford, in *Cornish's Birmingham Year Group* gives his 'Club' as 'Union'²⁸⁸ and it can be surmised that proprietor and manager shared the same political approach. Although Hyde said that he did not dictate editorial policy—during his ownership this was devolved to the editor, George William Hubbard²⁸⁹—both Hyde and Ford certainly influenced such policy.

²⁸⁰ Andrew McCulloch, *The Feeneys of the Birmingham Post*, Birmingham, 2004, 31.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, ix.

²⁸² Charles Hyde was the nephew of John Feeney; John Feeney's will entitled Charles Hyde to purchase the newspaper from the trustees of his will. *Ibid.*, 140 and 151.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 161.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 160 and bmagic.org.uk, date accessed 23 September 2009.

²⁸⁵ McCulloch, *The Feeneys of the Birmingham Post*, 151.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 151 and 162.

²⁸⁷ *Cornish's Birmingham Year Book 1938-1939*, Birmingham, 1938, 422.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 153 and Anon., 'The Austen Chamberlain Diary Letters. The Correspondence of Sir Austen Chamberlain with his Sisters Hilda and Ivy, 1916-1937', *Royal Historical Society Camden Fifth Series*, 259, footnote 50.

The Birmingham Post at the beginning of the twentieth century has been described as 'conservative'²⁹⁰ and as 'Unionist',²⁹¹ despite the increasing prominence of the Labour party in the country as a whole,²⁹² a stance underlined by the inclusion, in the 1931 General Election, of an article with the headline 'The Mad Folly of Socialism'.²⁹³ The *Post* 'was aimed specifically at an educated readership, being geared primarily towards the business and professional classes'.²⁹⁴ It sold around 30,000-40,000 copies per day during the 1920s,²⁹⁵ when the population of Birmingham was around 800,000.²⁹⁶ The political stance of the newspaper remained aligned with the Unionist politics prevailing in Birmingham in the inter-war period. Unionist strongholds included Edgbaston and Moseley²⁹⁷ —areas where many of Fleetwood-Walker's customers and potential customers lived.²⁹⁸ The *Birmingham Post* would have been a vital route of communication with Fleetwood-Walker's customers and potential customers. Hyde's interests in history and the arts indicate that the owner of the newspaper would at least have been favourably disposed towards the visual arts and to Fleetwood-Walker and it seems reasonable to suppose that this would have been passed on to the editorial team. It may be that Fleetwood-Walker's portrait of Ford

²⁹⁰ John S. Ellis, 'Reconciling the Celt: British National Identity, Empire, and the 1911 Investiture of the Prince of Wales', *The Journal of British Studies*, 37:4, 1998, 405.

²⁹¹ David G. Boyce, 'British Opinion, Ireland and the War, 1916-1918', *The Historical Journal*, 17:3, 1974, 575-593.

²⁹² Asa Briggs, *History of Birmingham, Volume II, Borough and City 1865 – 1938*, 320.

²⁹³ Arthur W. Macmahon, 'The British General Election of 1931', *The American Political Science Review*, 26:2, 1932, 344.

²⁹⁴ McCulloch, *The Feeneys of the Birmingham Post*, 154.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 154.

²⁹⁶ See www.visionofbritain.org.uk, date accessed 23 September 2009.

²⁹⁷ Asa Briggs, *History of Birmingham, Volume II, Borough and City 1865 – 1938*, 320.

²⁹⁸ For example, Sir William Waters Butler, the uncle of Robert H. Butler, and also a sitter for one of Fleetwood-Walker's portraits, lived at Southfield, Norfolk Road, Edgbaston. *Cornish's Birmingham Year Book 1938-1939*, Birmingham, 1938, 398. Walter Barrow, a portrait of whose wife was painted in 1927 (see appendix) lived at 13 Ampton Road, Edgbaston. He was also in the Union club, *Ibid.*, 383.

(1942), the Birmingham Post's General Manager,²⁹⁹ was painted to reinforce such favourable connections with the newspaper, as the production of the portrait coincided with the sale of the newspaper after Hyde's death, managed by Bertram Ford as one of Hyde's executors.³⁰⁰ This work also provokes further debate about the impact of tabloid journalism and the continuing conservative views of the newspaper industry, despite the differences in the use of language, as Ford is portrayed in ceremonial military uniform with medals and other regalia.

Part of the reason for the uniformity of press response was that, after the 1939-45 war, 60% of all newspapers were owned by only three groups of companies and, as John Benson has observed, most newspapers supported the established political parties.³⁰¹ As Benson concludes, during this period the media served 'to sustain the age, gender, ethnic and class assumptions upon which power was predicated and authority maintained'.³⁰² In the light of this, as power and authority were centred in London, communication with and about London became the central preoccupation of the national press. Therefore individual artists developing a career predominantly outside London were of lesser interest to these publications. They did not engage with power on a national basis and editors and newspaper owners' interest in their representation in national newspapers was curtailed. This could reflect Tanner's comment that 'the privileged status of 'artist' is not naturally determined by artistic technologies but socially constructed and

²⁹⁹ McCulloch, *The Feeneys of the Birmingham Post*, 151.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 151.

³⁰¹ John Benson, *Affluence and Authority: A Social History of Twentieth-Century Britain*, London, 2005, 119.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 118.

subject to continual negotiation'.³⁰³ In the case of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker, he was seen as a successful artist in Birmingham because the press in Birmingham reinforced and even partially created this status; in the country as a whole his success was reduced because of the limited recognition awarded to him by the national press.

Summary

In this chapter the close links between the reception and the production of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's portraiture have been revealed. The direct relationship between the outlook of individual art critics and their newspaper articles about Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's work has been delineated. Young's interest in developing his career as a curator drove his adoption of the preferred discourse for academics and his use of formalist terminology to describe Fleetwood-Walker's portraits. Oliver's commitment to his own county and its local newspaper, and his ambition for success within the area rather than beyond it, led to his concentration on the regional relevance of Fleetwood-Walker's work. He eventually became the assistant editor of the *Yorkshire Post*, as well as continuing to provide art reviews. Writers for the *Birmingham Weekly Despatch*, schooled in sensitivity to market needs, interpreted Fleetwood-Walker as a larger-than-life personality who nevertheless shared the same human experiences as the reader. The needs and ambitions of different writers shaped their coverage of the portrait artist.

³⁰³ Tanner (ed.), *The Sociology of Art: A Reader*, 74.

This chapter has also shown that the production of Fleetwood-Walker's portraits was affected by the reception of his own output and that of other artists' portraits. Fleetwood-Walker's earliest portraits show his awareness of one of the most successful career portraitist of the day, John Singer Sargent.³⁰⁴ In the inter-war period interest in mural painting, whether modernist or traditional, was widespread and Fleetwood-Walker too, produced murals. The reception, as indicated by the contrasting views of Earp and Newton, was mixed. Fleetwood-Walker did not pursue this kind of work for long. Later, the dominance of 'English impressionism' after the 1939-45 war had its effect, as was noted by Robert Melville, and Fleetwood-Walker's early-career, highly-finished, treatment of portraiture was replaced by a looser approach which Melville equated to the 'Euston Road School' style. This interaction between reception and production, described by Becker as an ongoing dialogue between audiences and artists,³⁰⁵ enabled Fleetwood-Walker to maintain contact with certain types of buyers for over thirty years; for example, with regional public collections: the corporation of Birmingham commissioned *Alderman James* in around 1928 and the McLean Museum and Art Gallery in Greenock purchased *Christine* in 1961.³⁰⁶

Simultaneously, authors and newspapers who wrote and published articles about art, also, perhaps sometimes unconsciously, taught their readers to be discriminative about art. The dominance of tabloid newspapers, particularly in the

³⁰⁴ For a summary of the profile and financial success enjoyed by John Singer Sargent as a portrait artists, see Elaine Kilmurray and Richard Ormond, 'Sargent, John Singer (1856–1925)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2010 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35950>, accessed 26 November 2009].

³⁰⁵ Becker, *Art Worlds*, 66.

³⁰⁶ Purchased 1961 by the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, Greenock, Sales Ledger, unpublished manuscript, Archive of the Royal Watercolour Society, London.

post-war period, had a direct effect on Fleetwood-Walker. Nationally, the drive for sensationalist stories which would fuel advertising revenue effectively marginalised Fleetwood-Walker. A portrait of an industrialist from the Midlands could not create headlines that would drive mass consumption of newspapers. Therefore his work was of limited or no appeal to newspapers like the best selling *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express*. There was virtually no coverage of his portraiture in the national tabloids. Although Conservative national broadsheets were read by regional audiences, these publications rarely covered regional exhibitions such as those held at the RBSA; any coverage of Fleetwood-Walker's portraiture was limited to general coverage of the RA Summer Exhibition and similar exhibitions. Only in some national broadsheets which were slower to adopt the tabloid approach, did Fleetwood-Walker's work achieve anything like sustained press coverage—and that was in the newspaper which, perhaps, offered the most vociferous criticism of tabloid journalism: *The Times*.³⁰⁷ As a result, Fleetwood-Walker's skill as a portrait artist was rarely exposed to the significant patrons of portraiture. Few portraits were commissioned by nationally known institutions, for example that of the Bishop of London³⁰⁸ shown at the Royal Academy in 1957 but even local institutions of national renown such as the University of Birmingham only occasionally commissioned him to carry out official portraits.

This research has also demonstrated that the earliest stages of Fleetwood-Walker's career reveal how reception and production were intertwined and socially conditioned. Here taste was influenced and social structure expressed through

³⁰⁷ Seymour-Ure, 'Northcliffe's Legacy', 23.

³⁰⁸ The Right Rev. H.C. Montgomery Campbell, M.C., D.D., Bishop of London; Bishop of Guildford, 1949 - 56.

newspapers. One of the most significant gatekeepers of reception in the region was the Unionist newspaper, *The Birmingham Post*. Many of the readers of *The Birmingham Post* lived in the Unionist stronghold areas of Birmingham such as Edgbaston, the residential area favoured by a number of Fleetwood-Walker's customers. Clearly the provincial patriotism of newspapers and local customers for portraiture were linked. It could even be speculated that the portrait of Bertram Ford was a means of cementing the positive relationship between the artist and *The Birmingham Post*—any discovery of archive sources which explain how the portrait came about would be particularly stimulating. As Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's first customers began to fade away, exemplified by the death of William Waters Butler, and the move of Robert H. Butler and others of his generation to the suburban countryside beyond the circulation of the *Birmingham Post*, they were replaced by the aspiring local industrialists whose businesses boomed towards the end of the 1939-45 war and later.

Similarly a link between the appearance of Fleetwood-Walker's work, press reaction and ideology has been identified: *The Birmingham Post* in particular and newspapers in general, were conservative and supported the existing structure of society; portraits of industrialists also reinforced this structure. Although this was already changing by the 1940s when the canonisation of avant-garde works became entrenched, an issue itself debated in the press,³⁰⁹ individual works by Fleetwood-Walker still received critical accolades, as is illustrated by Sydney

³⁰⁹ 'The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) was accused not long since in the correspondence columns of *The Times*, of giving too much encouragement to ultra-modern and "subversive" painting.' Anon., 'CEMA and the RWS, Watercolours by 46 Artists.', *The Times*, London, 21 July 1944, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

Paviere's favourable comment about *Mrs George Cohen and Rayner* (1948) despite his critique of the Royal Academy in general. Ten years later attitudes were even more polarised and the resultant loss of interest in portraiture and lack of customers might have contributed to Fleetwood-Walker's acceptance of the commission to paint *King Faisal II of Iraq*, (1958) leading to a long stay in Iraq at a time when the artist's health was in decline, factors which seem to be reflected in the conservative composition and the inert rendition of the sitter's face.

The connections between wider social forces and the way that art is received, as suggested by Jauss, have been shown to be very relevant to the reception of Fleetwood-Walker's work. This is evident when considering the links between the tabloid press, the way art works were described in these newspapers and especially their concentration on personal aspects of the artist, with reduced analysis of the art works themselves. The emergence of the tabloid press created a new picture of the artist. This was distanced from both the idealising classical view of art and the artist described, for example, by Klonk,³¹⁰ and from the romantic interpretation of an artist, elevated above the practical considerations of earthly life. It was the tabloid press that created Fleetwood-Walker, the artist, as a personality, a vividly described and down-to-earth individual, and concentrated coverage on the works that highlighted these elements of the artist.

Societal attitudes therefore had a particular influence on the reception of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's portraits, and, as suggested by Janet Wolff, a sensitive

³¹⁰ Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800 to 2000*, 24.

consideration of the relationship between reception and production is necessary. This research has shown that time and place are particularly relevant to any such investigation. Changes took place during the course of Fleetwood-Walker's career. Attitudes varied between the regions. Furthermore, even at a given moment in time, attitudes were not uniform. By the time Bernard Fleetwood-Walker was collecting press cuttings—the late 1920s—critical reception of painting was already favouring the avant-garde, but this was not reflected by the level of consumption of portraiture in Birmingham. Similarly, there were inconsistencies on a national scale. *Country Life*, a national publication, seemed to approve of Fleetwood-Walker's portraits³¹¹ but his work was not collected by Tate, considered the repository of the best of contemporary art; contemporary critics of the Tate collecting policy felt that it was too conservative,³¹² although, as has been described above, the curators themselves believed that the work they acquired was 'modern'. Alternative approaches such as that adopted by Carnie Holdsworth in her article did not have any lasting impact. One result of this diversity of critique could have been to cause confusion amongst consumers leading to a neglect of portraiture in general.

This complex connection between reception and production of artworks can be regarded as a condition of modernism, a point emphasised by Patrick Collier. The study of reception is particularly relevant when considering modernism because the growth in the number of newspapers available, the emergence of new

³¹¹ Anon., untitled, *Country Life*, 11 May 1935, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

³¹² Anon., *Exhibition of the Chantrey Collection*, *The Burlington Magazine*, 91:552, 1949, 80-81.

newspapers aimed at different readers, and the increase in circulation of newspapers, all took place at the same time as modernism emerged. Collier has proposed that in the early-twentieth century writers were inconsistent in their approach to newspapers, benefiting from the financial support provided yet at the same critical of the mass market appeal of the press,³¹³ a concept developed by Lynn Pykett in her essay about Rebecca West,³¹⁴ and by Leonard Diepeveen in his writings about T. S. Eliot.³¹⁵ These writers see this problematic relationship as an inherent part of modernism. Collier concluded that writers were in the midst of a dichotomy: ‘the wide audience, cultural centrality, and apparent power of mass journalism were not easily renounced, and an appeal to an elite could begin to sound like a confession of irrelevance.’ Although Collier discusses writers, this issue is also very relevant to artists. The absence of coverage of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker in national mass circulation newspapers like the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror* is as relevant as his occasional presence in the national broadsheets and his frequent appearances in the regional press. Avant-garde exhibits lent themselves to sensationalist headlines; there was a need for such headlines to stimulate the purchase of newspapers and justify advertising revenue. Art that met these criteria gained coverage, other types were excluded. However, in Birmingham, this dichotomy was reduced because of the lack of dealers in the city. Therefore what Collier terms ‘an appeal to an elite’ continued to be relevant. It also seems that it was possible to take advantage of both types of publication in

³¹³ Patrick Collier, *Modernism on Fleet Street*, Aldershot, 2006.

³¹⁴ Lynn Pykett, ‘The Making of a Modern Woman Writer: Rebecca West’s Journalism, 1911-1930’ in Kate Campbell (ed.), *Journalism, Literature and Modernity: From Hazlit to Modernism*, Edinburgh, 2000.

³¹⁵ Leonard Diepeveen, “‘I Can Have More Than Enough Power to Satisfy Me’: T. S. Eliot’s Construction of his Audience’, in Kevin J.H. Dettmar and Stephen Watt (eds), *Marketing Modernisms: Self-Promotion, Canonization, Rereading*, Ann Arbor, 1996.

the regional context. Fleetwood-Walker appealed to mass audiences when he was involved in the project to exhibit art in public houses and was mentioned in the press coverage relating to the project in the more tabloid-style morning papers³¹⁶ but he was also included in press coverage in the more serious regional morning paper, *The Birmingham Post*. The different local newspapers, all in search of a large readership which would, in turn, attract advertising revenue, described Fleetwood-Walker's artistic output in a manner appropriate to their needs, and in so doing supported the RBSA Gallery, as it was the principal exhibition venue for this artist's work. This demonstrates the relevance of economic factors to artistic reception. Further, it corroborates the view that modernism and journalism were mutually supportive, indeed, as Collier has emphasised, 'the capitalist literary marketplace in fact supported and sustained modernism even while the reigning ideology of the struggling artist required gestures of disinterest or disdain towards sales and popularity',³¹⁷ a statement which could equally be applied to the art market in the early-twentieth century.

The ambivalent attitude towards commercial necessity, typified by a simultaneous disavowal of financial concerns and an integration into commercial infrastructures, was itself, as has been highlighted by Witkin,³¹⁸ a defining feature of modernism and one that was replicated in critical attitudes to Fleetwood-Walker's works. An appreciation of academic drawing skill became connected to an interest in the modern approach adopted by the painter. The sitter's personality and its rendition

³¹⁶ Anon., 'Artists Hold Shows at 30 Inns. Pictures Sold', *The Star*, London, 1 July 1949, unpaginated press cutting, Walker family private archive, London.

³¹⁷ Collier, *Modernism on Fleet Street*, 6.

³¹⁸ Witkin, 'Constructing a Sociology for an Icon of Aesthetic Modernity: Olympia Revisited', 116.

were considered alongside an interest in the formal patterns found in the portraits. Simultaneously modern life was represented and discussed in Fleetwood-Walker's works: a moment of new-style relaxation, lounging with a book; the depiction of a brewer as a husband and father and provider of a suitably wholesome environment for family life; the formidable issues of war as confronted by those on the home front.

The reception of Fleetwood-Walker's work in Birmingham, amongst readers of *The Birmingham Post* and his customers was equally supported by modernism in its wider interpretation, that which includes the emergence of a vibrant newspaper industry. Chapter Three demonstrated that regional differences affected the production of portraiture in the first half of the twentieth century; in this chapter it has been shown that regional differences also shaped the reception of that portraiture.

CONCLUSION

BERNARD FLEETWOOD-WALKER

AND MODERN PORTRAITURE

This thesis has shown that portrait painting in the twentieth century was determined by social, political and economic factors. Chapter One traced Fleetwood-Walker's development as an artist and showed how the existence of an art world in Birmingham facilitated the progress of his career. It emphasised that specific social conditions in this city meant that there was a delay in any emergence of a local dealer-critic system, instead an infrastructure for artistic production, exhibition and reception centred on the RBSA continued to develop. It suggested that Fleetwood-Walker's portraiture was a response to these circumstances and proposed, extending the concept of modernism articulated by David Peters Corbett—that modernism can be manifested by different forms of artistic expression—that modernism can also be represented through alternative means of artistic distribution, rather than being entirely tied to the dealer-critic system. Chapter Two examined Fleetwood-Walker's portraits. It contended that Birmingham's distinctive industrial character, including its role in wartime production, played a particular role in both the commissioning and the appearance of the portraits. The simultaneous development of other social factors, such as the growth of the suburbs, an interest in an idealised healthy outdoor life, and a fascination for the escapist opportunities afforded by leisure pursuits, all contributed to the creation of Bernard Fleetwood-Walker's portraits. It concluded that Fleetwood-Walker's depictions, although created within an environment

aligned to display and distribution within the RA and the RBSA—institutions which have been regarded as limiting any assimilation of modernity³¹⁹—did succeed in engaging with the contemporary. This analysis of Fleetwood-Walker's work therefore reconsiders and expands, to some extent, the relationship between art works exhibited at the Royal Academy and modernism. In Chapter Three the construction of a new gallery for the RBSA at the beginning of the twentieth century was shown to be of particular relevance to Fleetwood-Walker and his portraiture. The architecture of the gallery was revealed as a response to the need to create an exhibition space appropriate for contemporary life. The chapter argued that the design of the gallery, rooted in an Aesthetic Movement heritage, yet sensitive to an evolving vision for exhibition space with increasing connections between the display of art and the modern retail experience, had a distinctive effect on Fleetwood-Walker's artistic output. His early portraits resonated with a remembrance of the Aesthetic Movement by incorporating fans or green clothing or showing the sitter absorbed in reading. The size and impact of other portraits demonstrates an awareness of the practical issues of gaining attention for the artist's work specifically in that gallery, where most works were shown in a single, large, exhibition space. Chapter Four explored the links between the rapid expansion of the newspaper industry, especially the accelerating development of the tabloid press, and modernism. The launch of new newspapers, the targeting of audience segments and the shaping of content and language to attract readers, rising circulation figures and financial dependence on advertising were all inexorably linked. The chapter concluded that there is room for an alternative view

³¹⁹ See for example Corbett, *The Modernity of English Art*, 208.

of the relationship between newspaper publishing and artistic output in the first half of the twentieth century: a region with a thriving newspaper industry supported the contemporary emergence of a new retail space for art, itself adapted from an established artistic distribution infrastructure, rather than a separate dealer-critic model, so underpinning the relevance of art criticism to the formation of modern art even in regional environments.

Throughout these four chapters this thesis has made its own contribution to the discourse on modern art in general and in Britain in particular. It has indicated that portraiture, despite its interest in likeness, can be seen as an exemplar of modernity, in that portraits are responses to modern life, depicted in forms that are not necessarily formally innovative or avant-garde, but in ways that were felt to be relevant to contemporary observers. Fleetwood-Walker's portraiture was an appropriate form because it was directly related to Birmingham's particular situation: a number of relatively wealthy people and of moderately large companies wanted recognition of their worth as individuals and, in the case of the industrialists, acknowledgement of their contribution to service and innovation. Portrait painting, (as opposed to portrait photography), by convention closely linked to wealth and uniqueness, was a most appropriate medium with which to celebrate and promote such achievement. This concept finds particular expression in the portraits of the industrialists. This thesis also makes a contribution to the study of modern art with a regional perspective. The close dependence between Birmingham, particularly the RBSA, and London's Royal Academy of Art has been demonstrated. However, the difference in artistic

infrastructure between the capital and the region has also been highlighted, demonstrating the co-existence of multiple modern art worlds.

As a result, while achieving new insights into the political, social and the economic dependencies of the production of art, this thesis has also reconsidered the Marxist theory of modern art, as proposed by writers such as Wolff.³²⁰ In essence, Marxists take the view, as succinctly expressed by Austin Harrington, that ‘a Society’s ability to produce works of fine art is a privilege of its ruling classes’.³²¹ One of the proponents of a Marxist view of modern art is T. J. Clark. His monograph, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution*,³²² first published in 1973, is based on the idea that pictorial practice is related to the social effects of politics, in his case, the 1848 revolutions.³²³ This is a view that Clark referred to again in 2001 in *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism*.³²⁴ Here he explained his initial belief that there was a link between the advance of modernist style and improvements in society due to the impact of socialism.³²⁵ Clark’s approach echoes that of other writers who also saw socialism as the objective of modernity, and who, as has been observed by Larry Ray, further believed that ‘communism was the epitome of modernity’,³²⁶ a point also emphasised by Jameson in his considerations of modernity.³²⁷ However in

³²⁰ Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*, 49.

³²¹ Harrington, *Art and Social Theory: Sociological Arguments in Aesthetics*, 18.

³²² Timothy James Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution*, London, 1973.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 10.

³²⁴ Timothy James Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism*, Yale, 1999.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

³²⁶ Larry Ray, ‘Post-Communism: Postmodernity or Modernity Revisited?’, *The British Journal of Sociology*, 48:4, 1997, 543-560.

³²⁷ See for example Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present*, 134 and 211-212.

Farewell to an Idea Clark articulated his more recent belief about the meaning of progress that a direct connection between artistic modernism and socialism can no longer be made. Clark's reason for the change in viewpoint was that opposing evidence can always be found to counter any such suggestion: any sign of progress towards the ideal brought about by socialism is challenged by activities that undermine such advances. This point has also been considered by Ray who concluded that communism was a 'failed modernity', because Soviet societies, despite their elimination of the privileges of class, witnessed the emergence of different social structures that nevertheless enabled individuals to accumulate benefits and assets.³²⁸ Karsten Harries, echoing Jameson, in a review of *Farewell to an Idea*, notes that Clark's early concept was rooted in an idealized vision for a utopian society that will be achieved through the elimination of capitalism by socialism.³²⁹ However for Harries, 'Clark's focus on capitalism seems to me to misplace the real problem'.³³⁰ Harries instead suggests that the desire to achieve social equality is counterbalanced by the search for power but that this is not due to a polarization between capitalism and socialism: in Harries' words, 'this tension is not only ineliminable, but a condition of full humanity'.³³¹ This thesis has proposed an alignment with Clark's more recent stance, as expressed in *Farewell to an Idea*. It applies many of the modes of analysis undertaken by Clark, who wrote mainly about French modernism in the nineteenth century,³³² to art in

³²⁸ Ray, 'Post-Communism: Postmodernity or Modernity Revisited?', 548.

³²⁹ Karsten Harries, 'Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism by T. J. Clark, Review by Karsten Harries', *The Art Bulletin*, 83:2, June 2001, 359.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 359.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 360.

³³² Clark's principal works include *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution*, Berkeley, 1973; *The Absolute Bourgeois: Artists and Politics in France, 1848-1851*, Berkeley, 1973; *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers*, Princeton, 1985; *Farewell*

Birmingham in the first half of the twentieth century, but in addition has considered economic factors which seem to be of major relevance for the artistic scene at this time and place. It has shown that, indeed, the economy, particularly financial factors, was especially relevant to the production of art. Such issues influenced Fleetwood-Walker's decision to become a portrait artist and led wealthy individuals (including industrialists) to commission portraits. Economic factors had an impact on exhibition culture and on reception. Throughout this thesis it is economic factors which have been shown to have shaped the art of Fleetwood-Walker and to be inscribed in his portraiture. This leads to the conclusion, echoing Jameson's suggestion, that a more searching analysis of history arises from a complex economic description, than from a consideration of class struggle.³³³ Though this needs further scholarly attention, the recognition of economic factors underpins Harries' theoretical stance that the social history of art should extend beyond a polarisation of capitalism and socialism, and proposes that a modernity freed from a commitment to socialism can be envisaged.

to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism, New Haven, 1999 and *The Sight of Death: An Experiment in Art Writing*, New Haven, 2006.

³³³ See Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*, 297. Although Jameson has shown the relevance of the economy to the formation of modernism and postmodernism, a postmodern interpretation is not proposed.

APPENDIX

Bernard Fleetwood Walker 1893 - 1965

List of works with exhibition history

Notes:

Note, titles are listed separately unless there is clear evidence that the item exhibited is the same work

Abbreviations

RA Royal Academy

RWS Royal Watercolour Society

RBSA Royal Birmingham Society of Artists

NEAC New England Art Club

ROI Royal Institute of Oil Painters

Titles which include inverted commas are shown exactly as listed in the original catalogue

Title

"Greensleeves"

"Joan" 1950

"Nude" 1949

A Study of a Child

A Village Madonna

Exhibition history

RA 1927

Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Festival of Britain
Exhibition 1951

Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Festival of Britain
Exhibition 1951

RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1924

ROI October - November 1939

<i>A Village Madonna</i>	RA 1928
<i>A Village Madonna</i>	RA 1935
<i>A. W. Adams, Esq., MA</i>	RBSA, The Hundredth Autumn Exhibition, 1927
<i>Alderman H. W. Hughes</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1936
<i>Alderman H.B.W. Cresswell, J.P., first Lord Mayor of Coventry</i>	RA 1954
<i>Alderman H.B.W. Cresswell, J.P., first Lord Mayor of Coventry, 1954</i>	RA 1955
<i>Alice</i>	RA 1946
<i>Alice</i>	RP1935
<i>Amity</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1940
<i>Amity</i>	RA 1933
<i>An Interior</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1921
<i>Andrew</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1951
<i>Andrew</i>	RA 1959
<i>Ann</i>	RBSA, Autumn Exhibition 1950
<i>Ann</i>	Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Exhibition Autumn 1951
<i>Ann</i>	RP 1949
<i>Anne</i>	RA 1939
<i>Anthony (Drawings and Watercolours)</i>	RP 1944
<i>Anthony, son of Mr and Mrs W Charlton Edwards</i>	RP 1949
<i>Armchair</i>	RA 1960

<i>Armchair</i>	RA 1965 - posthumous, died 30 Jan 1965 aged 71 NEAC 1962w Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1946
<i>At the Mirror</i>	
<i>At the mirror</i>	RA 1944
<i>Auntie</i>	RA 1946 Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1946
<i>Baby</i>	
<i>Baby</i>	RP 1947
<i>Baby Ann</i>	RA 1963
<i>Back Yard</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1938
<i>Barbara</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1921
<i>Barbara</i>	RP 1951
<i>Betty</i>	RP 1948 Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1946
<i>Boy</i>	
<i>Boy</i>	ROI October - November 1944
<i>Boy</i>	ROI February - March 1946
<i>Boy</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1944
<i>Boy</i>	RA 1942
<i>Boy</i>	RP 1957
<i>Breton Peasant</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1928
<i>Bright</i>	NEAC 1956w

<i>Brigit</i>	Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Spring Exhibition (2) of Graphic Work, Sculpture & Crafts 1957
<i>Brigit</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1948
<i>Brigit</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1952
<i>Brigit</i>	RA 1948
<i>By the wayside</i>	RA 1932
<i>Café Portrait</i>	NEAC 1954w
<i>Carol</i>	RP 1955
<i>Caroline</i>	RA 1954
<i>Cecil E. W. Charrington, Esq., M.C. - presentation portrait</i>	RA 1949
<i>Celia</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1942
<i>Celia</i>	RA 1945
<i>Charlotte</i>	RA 1965 - posthumous, died 30 Jan 1965 aged 71
<i>Child in a Red Dress</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1946
<i>Child in Pink</i>	ROI 15 October - 6 November 1948
<i>Children</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1941
<i>Children</i>	RA 1947
<i>Children at Vernonnet</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1931
<i>Children at Vernonnet</i>	RA 1931
<i>Children from the Town</i>	Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1941
<i>Children from the Town</i>	Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1944

<i>Children from the Town</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1941
<i>Children from the town</i>	RA 1941
<i>Children in the country</i>	RA 1942
<i>Christine</i>	RA 1952
<i>Christine</i>	RA 1960
<i>Clent</i>	RBSA, The Hundredth Autumn Exhibition, 1927
<i>Colin</i>	ROI 1933
<i>Colin</i>	RP 1934
<i>Connie</i>	RP 1948
<i>Coppertop</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1926
<i>Coral</i>	RBSA, Autumn Exhibition 1950
<i>Coral</i>	RA 1949
<i>David Wiseman, Esq</i>	RA 1958
<i>Dawlish</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1925 Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1946
<i>Dawn</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1945
<i>Dawn</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1945
<i>Diana</i>	ROI February - March 1946
<i>Dorothy</i>	RA 1951
<i>Douglas Gresham, Esq</i>	RA 1950
<i>Dr E. Bramley - Pro. Chancellor of Sheffield Univ. presentation portrait</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1931
<i>Dr Eileen Dillon-Malone</i>	

<i>Dr Ethel Poulton (Mrs. Humphrey Watts)</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1935
<i>Edward Jefferson, Esq., J.P., T.Jefferson Cottrell, Esq.,</i>	RA 1953
<i>and A. Wynn Kenrick, Esq., J.P.</i>	RBSA, The Spring Exhibition 1936
<i>Elizabeth</i>	ROI October - November 1934
<i>Elizabeth</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1948
<i>Elizabeth</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1949
<i>Elizabeth</i>	RA 1959
<i>Elizabeth</i>	RP 1951
<i>Elizabeth</i>	RP 1957
<i>Elizabeth</i>	RP 1962
<i>Ennui</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1947
<i>Eric Vincent Esq</i>	RA 1947
<i>Ethelbert White, Esq., R.W,S.</i>	RA 1963
<i>Eunice</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1952
<i>Eve</i>	RA 1946
<i>F. Gerald Ratcliff, Esq., J.P.</i>	RA 1953
<i>Fanny</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1946
<i>Father Vincent Reade. Presentation Portrait.</i>	RA 1948
<i>Flora</i>	RA 1952
<i>Flora MacRae Forster, M.A., Head Mistress of Solihull High</i>	RA 1953
<i>School for Girls</i>	
<i>Four Days Old</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1921

<i>Fragment - Amy and Beryl</i>	ROI Summer 1942
<i>Frank G. Woollard, Esq., M.B.E., M.I. Mech. E</i>	RA 1952
<i>G Ferdo Cole Esq</i>	RP 1947
<i>Gabrielle: A portrait</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1919
<i>George F. Birtles, Esq</i>	RA 1957
<i>Geraldine</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1921
<i>Geraldine</i>	RA 1951
<i>Gillian and Mary</i>	RA 1938
<i>Girl in a blue chair</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1949
<i>Girl in a Check Suit</i>	RP Dec 19 1945 to Jan 20 1946
<i>Girl in a Hat</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1944
<i>Girl in Blue</i>	RA 1951
<i>Girl in Blue</i>	RP 1960
<i>Girl Reading</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1950
<i>Girl with a Picture Book</i>	RBSA, Autumn Exhibition 1950
<i>Girl with a picture book</i>	RA 1947
<i>Girl with Flowers</i>	RA 1962
<i>Guy</i>	RBSA, The Hundredth Autumn Exhibition, 1927
<i>Guy</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1928
<i>H. Jackson, Esq., A.R.I.B.A. in 14th century Costume</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1936
<i>Harry</i>	NEAC 1946w
<i>Head of a Boy</i>	ROI October - November 1937

<i>Head of a Girl</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1944
<i>Head of a Girl</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1948
<i>Head of a Girl</i>	RP 1949
<i>Helen</i>	RA 1955
<i>Hillside</i>	RA 1961
<i>His Majesty King Feisal II of Iraq</i>	RA 1958
<i>His Majesty King Feisal II of Iraq - pencil study</i>	RA 1957
<i>His Majesty King Feisal II of Iraq - study</i>	RA 1957
<i>His Majesty the Late King Faisal II of Iraq</i>	RP 1961
<i>Honor, Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Butler</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1935
<i>In the Dordogne</i>	RA 1959
<i>In the Mirror</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition, 1927
<i>Interval</i>	Cheltenham Municipal Art Gallery and Museum, exhibition of Oil Paintings, Water-colours and Arts & Crafts by the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, 1932
	Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1943
<i>J.G. Newey Esq. JP (Presentation portrait)</i>	Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1943
<i>J.W. Gaunt Esq. (Presentation portrait)</i>	
<i>James Arundel</i>	RBSA, The Spring Exhibition, 1930
<i>James Arundel Esq</i>	RP 1929
<i>Jane</i>	NEAC 1947w
<i>Janet, Daughter of Mr & Mrs H Rushbury</i>	Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1946

<i>Janet, daughter of Mr and Mrs Henry Rushbury</i>	RA 1960
<i>Janet, daughter of Mr Henry Rushbury RA (Oils)</i>	RP 1944 Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Exhibition Autumn 1951
<i>Jean</i>	
<i>Jean</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1950
<i>Jean</i>	NEAC 1952s
<i>Jill (Oils)</i>	RP 1946
<i>Joan</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1949
<i>Joan</i>	RA 1949
<i>Joan, 1950</i>	RA 1950
<i>Joanna</i>	ROI 16 October - 7 November 1950
<i>Joanna</i>	RA 1948
<i>John</i>	RP 1948
<i>John Ball and the Peasants' Rising of 1381, Panel decoration for the Council Chamber, Essex County Hall</i>	RA 1938
<i>John Park</i>	RP 1941
<i>John, son of Mr and Mrs George Cohen</i>	RP 1946
<i>Juanita</i>	RA 1958
<i>Julia</i>	RA 1965 - posthumous, died 30 Jan 1965 aged 71
<i>Julia</i>	RA 1965 - posthumous, died 30 Jan 1965 aged 71 Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1944
<i>Julia, daughter of Mr Henry Rushberry (sic) RA</i>	
<i>Julia, d. of Henry Rushbury Esq., R.A.</i>	RA 1945

<i>Julie</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1944
<i>Julie</i>	RA 1962
<i>Julie</i>	RP 1932
<i>Julie Rushbury</i>	ROI October - November 1938
<i>Julie, No 2</i>	RA 1955
<i>Julie, No. 1</i>	RA 1955
<i>Juliet</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1946
<i>Kathleen</i>	ROI Summer 1942
<i>Kathleen</i>	ROI 16 October - 7 November 1950
<i>Kathleen</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1942
<i>Kathleen</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1946
<i>Kathleen</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1947
<i>Kathleen</i>	RA 1947
<i>Kathleen</i>	NEAC 1949s
<i>Kenneth</i>	RBSA, The Spring Exhibition, 1930
<i>La Petite Boutique</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1930
<i>Lacquered wooden figure</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition, 1926
<i>Laura</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1945
<i>Le Jardin, Chain d'Or</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1941
<i>Les Enfants Vernonnet</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1930
<i>Lord Bennett of Edgbaston</i>	RA 1955
<i>Louba</i>	RBSA, The Hundredth Autumn Exhibition, 1927

<i>Louba</i>	RP 1928
<i>Lucy</i>	RA 1954
<i>Lucy</i>	RA 1965 - posthumous, died 30 Jan 1965 aged 71
<i>Lucy</i>	RP 1947
<i>Lucy</i>	NEAC 1957w
<i>Lydia</i>	RP 1947
<i>Lydia</i>	NEAC 1950s
<i>M. Simon - pencil study</i>	RA 1959
<i>Maggie</i>	NEAC 1952s
<i>Margaret</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1925
<i>Margaret</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1943
<i>Margaret</i>	RA 1951
<i>Margaret</i>	RP 1929
<i>Margaret</i>	RP 1951
<i>Marie</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1940
<i>Marion, Daughter of Mr and Mrd David Keswick</i>	RP 1946
<i>Mary</i>	RBSA, The Spring Exhibition, 1930
<i>Mary</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1944
<i>Mary</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1946
<i>Mary</i>	RA 1957
<i>Mary & Gillian</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1937
<i>Mary and Gillian</i>	ROI October - November 1936

<i>Master Mark Birkett</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1930
<i>Master Nicholas Hicks</i>	RP 1943
<i>Maud</i>	RA 1956
<i>Maudie in Pink</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1920
<i>Maurice</i>	RA 1964 Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Exhibition Autumn 1951
<i>Meditation</i>	NEAC 1950s
<i>Meditation</i>	RA 1960
<i>Mill near Carnac</i>	RA 1956
<i>Millie</i>	NEAC 1951s
<i>Minnie</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1945
<i>Miss Anne Heaton</i>	RP 1950
<i>Miss Anne Heaton</i>	RP 1959
<i>Miss Anne Heaton of the Sadler's Wells</i>	RA 1948
<i>Miss Betty Regal</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1930
<i>Miss Betty Regal</i>	RP 1031
<i>Miss Dorothy Douglas</i>	RP 1930
<i>Miss Greta Fayne</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition, 1927
<i>Miss Kathleen Davies</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1934 Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1944
<i>Miss Matthews</i>	
<i>Miss Nora Luker</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1938

<i>Miss Penelope Pilkington</i>	RA 1961
<i>Miss Phylliss White MA</i>	RP 1934
<i>Miss Phyllis White, M.A.</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1936
<i>Miss Violet Arundel</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1931
<i>Model at rest</i>	RA 1944
<i>Model Resting</i>	RA 1950
<i>Model's Throne</i>	ROI October - November 1940
<i>Model's Throne</i>	RA 1940
<i>Mollie and Stella</i>	RA 1938
<i>Molly</i>	RA 1950
<i>Molly</i>	RA 1961
<i>Mother and Baby</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1944
<i>Mother and baby</i>	RA 1943
<i>Mother and baby</i>	RA 1945
<i>Mother and Child</i>	ROI Summer 1943
<i>Mother and Child</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1945
<i>Mother and child</i>	RA 1931
<i>Mother and child</i>	RA 1941
<i>Mother and child</i>	RA 1944
<i>Mother and Children</i>	Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1944
<i>Mother and Children</i>	Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1946

<i>Mother and Children</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1943
<i>Mother and children</i>	RA 1943
<i>Mr and Mrs Robert H Butler and their daughters</i>	RA 1935
<i>Mr David Cox</i>	RP 1949
<i>Mr G Simon</i>	RP 1958
<i>Mrs Allen Goodway</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1936
<i>Mrs Archer</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1924
<i>Mrs Austin Goodway</i>	RP 1935
<i>Mrs Bridgman</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1921
<i>Mrs Florence L. Owen, Director of Rupert Owen & Co. Ltd</i>	RA 1954
<i>Mrs G Mitchell White</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1922
<i>Mrs George Cohen and Rayner</i>	RA 1948
<i>Mrs Joscelin Rubens</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1923
<i>Mrs Mitchell White</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1922
<i>Mrs Nancy Dickinson</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1937
<i>Mrs Norman Pett</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1921
<i>Mrs Patrick Hall</i>	RP Dec 19 1945 to Jan 20 1946
<i>Mrs Walter Barrow</i>	RBSA, The Hundredth Autumn Exhibition, 1927
<i>Mrs Walter Barrow</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1928
<i>Mrs. H. Jackson in 14th Century Costume</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1936
<i>Nancy</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1948
<i>Nicolette</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1938

<i>Nicolette</i>	ROI October - November 1935
<i>Norman B. Capon, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.P., F.E.C.O.G., Professor Emeritus of Child Health, University of Liverpool</i>	RA 1958 Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1944
<i>Nude</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1943
<i>Nude</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1944
<i>Nude</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1946
<i>Nude</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1946
<i>Nude</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1947
<i>Nude</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1948
<i>Nude</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1948
<i>Nude</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1949
<i>Nude</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1952
<i>Nude</i>	RA 1947
<i>Nude</i>	RA 1954
<i>Nude</i>	RA 1955
<i>Nude</i>	NEAC 1951s
<i>Nude Study</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1937
<i>Nude Study</i>	RA 1951 Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Exhibition Autumn 1951
<i>Nude, 1946</i>	
<i>Nude, 1948</i>	ROI 15 October - 6 November 1948

<i>Nude, 1949</i>	NEAC 1949s
<i>On the Cliffs</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1950
<i>Park Scene</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1942
<i>Patsy</i>	RBSA, Autumn Exhibition 1950
<i>Patsy</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1948
<i>Patsy</i>	RA 1949
<i>Pauline</i>	RA 1960
<i>Peace</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1924
<i>Peace</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1931
<i>Peace</i>	RA 1925
<i>Peace</i>	RA 1930
<i>Peasant's Head</i>	ROI October - November 1939
<i>Peggy</i>	RA 1945
<i>Peggy</i>	RA 1961
<i>Peggy</i>	NEAC 1960w
<i>Peggy and Jean</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1940
<i>Peggy and Jean</i>	RA 1939
<i>Peggy, 1952</i>	RA 1952
<i>Penelope</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1947
<i>Penelope</i>	NEAC 1958w
<i>Peter. Diplomas Work deposited on the artist's election as an Academician.</i>	RA 1956

<i>Petronella</i>	ROI 1933
<i>Petronella</i>	RA 1928
<i>Philip</i>	RP 1947
<i>Philip Rodway Esq</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition, 1927
<i>Phyliss</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1947
<i>Phyllis</i>	RBSA, The Hundredth Autumn Exhibition, 1927
<i>Polly</i>	RA 1953
<i>Portrait</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1924
<i>Portrait</i>	RA 1952
<i>Portrait of a Lady</i>	RA 1965 - posthumous, died 30 Jan 1965 aged 71
<i>Portrait of an Athlete</i>	RP 1961
<i>Portrait of the Artist</i>	RA 1958
<i>Portrait Study</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1926
<i>Pricilla</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1945
<i>Professor Thomas Bodkin</i>	RA 1956
<i>Profile</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1945
<i>R.A. Kirkby, Esq., - presentation portrait.</i>	RA 1949
<i>Repose</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1928
<i>Repose</i>	RP 1930
<i>Resting</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1928
<i>Reverie</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1924
<i>Reverie</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1931

<i>Rhoda</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1946
<i>Right Rev Monsignor L S Emery</i>	RBSA, Autumn Exhibition 1950
<i>Ronnie</i>	ROI 13 - 30 October 1947
<i>Ronnie</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1947
<i>Ruth</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1951
<i>S. Romilly Hall, Esq.</i>	RA 1953
<i>Sally</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1945
<i>Sally</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1948
<i>Sally</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1951
<i>Sarah</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1951
<i>Sarah</i>	NEAC 1953w
<i>School Girl</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1945
<i>Sea-born Thetis</i>	RA 1933
<i>Sea-Born Thetis (By kind permission of Louis Porter, Esq. of Leeds.)</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1935
<i>Siesta</i>	RA 1931
<i>Sketch Portrait of Self</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1923
<i>Smiling Girl</i>	RA 1962
<i>Sphinx</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1922
<i>Stella</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1938
<i>Stella</i>	RA 1951
<i>Stella</i>	RA 1963

<i>Stella</i>	NEAC 1959w
<i>Stella, Daughter of Mr and Mrs David Keswick</i>	RP Dec 19 1945 to Jan 20 1946
<i>Still Life</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1928
<i>Still Life</i>	RA 1954
<i>Still Life</i>	NEAC 1961w
<i>Study</i>	RBSA, The Spring Exhibition 1940
<i>Study</i>	RA 1963
<i>Study - Mother and Child</i>	ROI February - March 1946
<i>Study - Sally</i>	NEAC 1952s
<i>Study for "The Village Madonna"</i>	RA 1936
<i>Study for Peasant in Decoration for Chelmsford County Hall</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1938
<i>Study for Portrait</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1935
<i>Study for Portrait</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1951
<i>Study for Portrait</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1951
<i>Study for Portrait</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1951
<i>Study for Portrait</i>	RP 1951
<i>Study for the Village Madonna</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1935
<i>Study of a girl</i>	RA 1937
<i>Study of a man</i>	RA 1937
<i>Study of Child</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1924
<i>Study of Children</i>	ROI 1933

<i>Study, Boy</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1937
<i>Study: Christine</i>	RA 1952
<i>Summer</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1946
<i>Susan, daughter of Mr and Mrs J.M. Elworthy</i>	RA 1953 Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1947
<i>Suzanne</i>	RA 1948
<i>Suzanne</i>	RA 1958
<i>Suzanne</i>	RP 1948
<i>T.A. Woodcock, Esq., M.A., O.B.E., J.P. Headmaster, Ashby Grammar School</i>	RA 1959
<i>T.H. Hinchliff, Esq., J.P., - presentation portrait</i>	RA 1949
<i>The Armchair</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1947
<i>The Artist's Wife</i>	RA 1950
<i>The Bane</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1934
<i>The Bane</i>	RA 1932
<i>The Barnyard</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1926 Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Spring Exhibition (1) of Oil Paintings & Sculpture 1957
<i>The Black Hat</i>	ROI October - November 1944
<i>The Black Hat</i>	NEAC 1948w
<i>The Bottle</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1923
<i>The Boy</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1922

<i>The Boy</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1924
<i>The Bridge Coat</i>	RP 1928
<i>The Brothers</i>	RBSA, The Hundredth Autumn Exhibition, 1927
<i>The Brothers</i>	RP 1933
<i>The Butcher's Boy</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1923
<i>The Cart</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1924
<i>The Dressing-Room</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1946
<i>The Family</i>	RA 1932
<i>The Family at Polperro</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition 1937
<i>The family at Polperro</i>	RA 1936
<i>The family doctor</i>	RA 1947
<i>The Farmer's Daughter</i>	Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1941
<i>The Farmer's Daughter</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1941
<i>The farmer's daughter</i>	RA 1937
<i>The Gardener</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1923
<i>The Gardener</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1945
<i>The Gardener</i>	Exhibition at Antwerp
<i>The Gate</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition, 1927
<i>The Hay Wain</i>	RBSA, The Hundredth Autumn Exhibition, 1927
<i>The Maidens</i>	RA 1934
<i>The Model's Throne</i>	Royal Birmingham Society of Artists Autumn Exhibition 1941

<i>The Mother</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1921
<i>The Paper Fan: Portrait</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1920
<i>The Philosopher</i>	RWS Autumn Exhibition 1950
<i>The Red and White Hat</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1952
<i>The Rev. Ronald Lunt, M.C., M.A., Chief Master of King Edward's School, Birmingham</i>	RA 1956
<i>The Right Rev. H.C. Montgomery Campbell, M.C., D.D., Bishop of London; Bishop of Guildford, 1949 - 56.</i>	RA 1957
<i>The Rt. Rev. Mons. Leonard S. Emery - presentation portrait</i>	RA 1950
<i>The Schoolboy</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1926
<i>The Shop</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1924
<i>The Shy Girl</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1944
<i>The Sisters</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1926
<i>The Spotted Dress</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1942
<i>The Student</i>	RWS Spring Exhibition 1945
<i>The toilet</i>	RA 1931
<i>The toilet</i>	RA 1936
<i>The Toll House</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1926
<i>The Top of the Hill</i>	RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1926
<i>The Vacation</i>	RBSA Spring Exhibition 1926
<i>The Village Madonna</i>	RBSA, The Autumn Exhibition, 1928
<i>The Village Madonna</i>	RA 1939

Three Boys

ROI October - November 1934

Tilly

RWS Spring Exhibition 1950

Tilly

RP 1950

Two Children

RA 1943

Waiting for the Caravan

RBSA Autumn Exhibition 1923

Waiting for the caravan

RA 1926

Water Baby

RWS Autumn Exhibition 1947

Wendy

RA 1964

died 30 Jan 1965 aged 71

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36a Abercorn Place, St John's Wood, London NW8 9XP.

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