

letters, Noordzij identifies two kinds of mark-making: continuous, in which strokes of the pen remain on the page, and interrupted, in which the pen is lifted from the page. Both marks are subdivided by three forms of contrast. The first two, translation and rotation, are written with the broad-edged pen; the third, expansion, with a pointed flexible pen. In translation the angle of the pen is held constant; in rotation the angle of the pen changes; and in expansion contrast is created through the application of pressure. None of these distinctions are new in themselves, but this conceptual matrix goes some way in bridging a gap that has existed between two very different schools of penmanship.

Noordzij then skips the complicated topic of letter anatomy, proposing instead that the word image is the primary visual unit in writing. This oversight is unfortunate, for other recent letter theorists have found simple and effective ways to introduce this subject without being overtly prescriptive. He has much to say about the word image, advocating it as the proper starting point when learning to read and going so far as to suggest that western civilization begins in Ireland in the seventh century with its invention. The text concludes with an interesting explanation of how his theory of writing can be applied to the creation of sans serif letterforms.

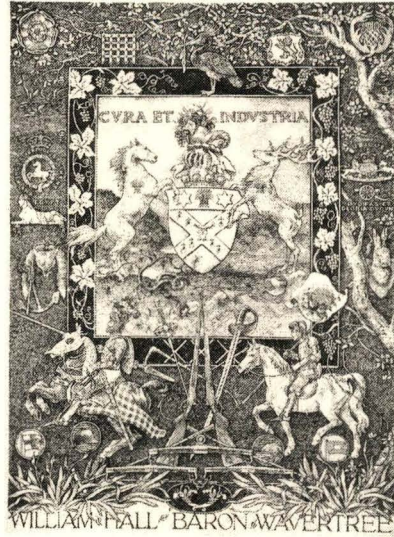
One has the sense that this book will remain within the limited circle of its intended audience. Noordzij assumes too much. He leaves out too much. I find his approach mechanical and limiting rather than expansive. It is as if he is trying to freeze a beautiful living thing. My copy will remain on the shelf in mint condition. Let's hope it becomes a collector's item.

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EX LIBRIS

*Moderation is a fatal thing.
 Nothing succeeds like excess.—Oscar Wilde*



THIS IS THE bookplate of Colonel William Hall Walker, 1st Baron Wavertree (1856–1933), a British businessman, art collector and figure of prominence in the world of Thoroughbred racehorse breeding. In 1900, he established what would soon become a highly successful stud farm, and in 1916 he presented his entire bloodstock to the British government with a view to improving cavalry horses. This gift would become the basis for the National Stud of the United Kingdom. In 1919, Colonel Walker was created 1st Baron Wavertree.

Colonel Walker's bookplate is an exceptional example of the lack of moderation sometimes exhibited by British nobility. A bookplate that is grandiose if not grotesque, it is the attempt of one man to capture all the elements of his existence on a piece of paper measuring 11 by 16 centimetres. Dense with imagery, this bookplate consists of a central framed coat of arms, surrounded by an overcrowding of symbols and figures, including but not limited to a rose, a portcullis, a bird, a small argent escutcheon charged with a lion rampant, a thistle, military insignia, mounted hunting spoils, horse racing emblems and knights on horseback.

The bookplate is part of the Thomas Murray Collection at Rare Books and Special Collections, University of British Columbia.

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