Q14563100

Mark Lloyd / Amber Lamonby-Pennie

Solent University

School of Art, Design & Fashion

MED710: Dissertation

60 Credits

Level 7

20,000 words

Contents

List of Figures and Tables

4

How is Pose used in Photographic Portraits?

Introduction

Pose has been used throughout art history as a device to better represent the subject. Poses often provide extra information to allow the viewer to construct background narratives for the subject, formulating an identity of them based solely on the visual information present in the image. Relying on the pose in this way can manipulate the viewer into reading the image differently from the true representation of the subject. The artist may also have an influence on how the subject is posed, or how they pose themselves, which can conform to or oppose the subject's character.

This dissertation will research how pose is used in portrait photography to represent the subject, and how it has evolved since photography was first used to record someone's likeness. To underpin my research will I use philosopher Jacques Derrida's concept of *Parergon* and relate this to the pose as a device used to reinforce the representation of the subject. I will develop this idea in the context of postdigital semiotics, looking at how convergent cultures influence pose and the viewers' understanding of it in contemporary photography.

My historical research will look at Victorian portrait photography to see how pose was approached and used. As academic John Tagg suggested, early photography 'summoned up a complex historical iconography and elaborate codes of pose and posture readily understood within the societies in which such portrait images had currency' (Tagg 1988). Using devices such as the Physionotrace and portrait painting as influences, how those codes evolved throughout photographic history and visual culture will help in understanding how pose became an important part of portrait images. As Tagg suggests, class and social standing influenced poses in early portrait photography to align with specific social and class markers, linking pose with a person's habitus. Referring to mid-century post-war photography I would hope to see influences of film, fashion and popular culture on the pose and more aspirational poses being formed and discovering how women were represented though the use of pose. Looking at contemporary photography, the role technology and convergent culture has on pose will be key in understanding how pose and the use of pose has developed and confirming how pose is often used in social media in an aspirational or manipulative way. I will also explore if pose in contemporary photography has evolved from outside influences, or if there is a link from early Victorian portrait photography. Despite looking at how pose can represent the subject better, I will also research how pose can be manipulated to form alternate representations, either purposely in an effort to transcend certain social or class boundaries, or more subtly in order to appeal to a specific audience.

Throughout my investigation I will use semiotic analysis to look at pose based on the theories by Roland Barthes, and how poses are 'read' and decoded to help better represent the subject. Barthes wrote that 'pose is not a specifically photographic procedure but it […] derives its effect from the analogical principle at the basis of a photograph' (Barthes 1977). To further my semiotic analysis, I will interview practicing contemporary photographers to help my understanding of how they approach posing their subject and how much influence or direction they give to achieve the desired outcome. This will allow me to discuss the photographers influence in representing the subject.

Using other people's knowledge will be key in my research, but each person's habitus will be considered as their own specific tastes and values will influence them and extends to each photographer, subject and viewer in their involvement in the photograph. My own habitus, formed throughout my life, from parental influences to my own experiences and how I see the world, will influence how I interpret photographs. In viewing and analysing images, my own positionality as a photographer will give me an insight into how much influence the photographer has over the subject and how the subjects are posed. I can compare this against other interviews and critical theory.

I will frame my discussion around specific case studies that will illustrate the varied use of pose and analyse them with critical theory. These case studies will be from each specific era of photography: Victorian and Edwardian photography between 1850 and 1910 will form a basis of my research, looking at how specific codes in portrait photography were formed and understood. Portraits from the 1950's and 1960's will allow me to see the influence of Hollywood and fashion photography on pose, and how this has formed specific gendered poses and how women are represented in portrait photography. For contemporary photography, I will look at photography used on social media websites and how this is used to formulate a representation of the self to others, and how the popularisation of 'selfie culture' feeds back into contemporary society. Contemporary portrait photography will show how pose is used within a postdigital society, and how specific photographic aesthetics are used, such as deadpan and snapshot, to formulate representation though pose. Lastly, I will look at family photographs as a site of representation and memory and discuss how looking at photographs of family members can help create identity of the self and consider my own positionality in viewing and interpreting photographs. I will discuss one of my own portrait photographs and consider my views both as a photographer and a viewer.

Chapter One: Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this dissertation is to look at how representation is formed through pose in portrait photography. To achieve this, I will research the varying ways pose is used in early examples of portrait photography by looking at Victorian and Edwardian portrait photography from the Carisbrooke Castle Museum archive where I volunteer as a researcher. I will use this archive to perform content analysis on a selection of images to build up a database on specific poses to see how people were represented in the past. This will enable me to discover trends and poses that may have been popular but are no longer used, and by comparing my findings with contemporary research, I will be able to see which poses are similar and how the pose is representing the subject shown.

Through interviews with photographers and my own secondary research, I will be able to greater understand the relationship between photographer, subject and viewer and reinforce this with critical theory to consider how pose affects representation in portrait photography. I will look at how technology has influenced photography with the convergent cultures of the internet, social media, email, and how pose is used and received. The mobile phone has arguably been the most influential development in photography, with people able to photograph and share images around the world quickly and easily. This has led to 'selfie culture', but how has this impacted pose and its use in representing the subject?

My final objective is to see if specific aesthetics have changed pose. For example, the lesser use of the photographer's portrait studio, and the greater influence of fashion photography and advertising. As contemporary society is hugely reliant on visual culture to sell us both products and lifestyles, is there a correlation between pose in contemporary photography and wider visual and convergent cultures? Fashion and advertising photography are often biased towards women, so does this have a greater impact on how women decide, be directed by the photographer, or feel they should pose in photographs? Are there specifically gendered poses and would the gender of the photographer influence this to a greater or lesser extent?

Chapter Two: Methodology

My chosen methods of primary research includes interviewing photographers, looking at a series of images though content analysis, and using my own positionality as a photographer. These methods will provide good background information in the formation of pose, and how it can be used in forming a representation of the subject. I will be able to discuss my findings alongside secondary research to inform how pose is used in portrait photography.

I have over 20 years' experience as a photographer, covering many different genres including portrait photography. My positionality is key in how I analyse images based on my own knowledge and experience from photographing people. I try not to direct the subject into any specific pose, allowing them to be as natural as possible in front of the camera. My own style for portraits is to consciously create minimal uncluttered backgrounds, allowing the subject to stand out. While this creates a specific aesthetic that runs throughout my images, it may reflect more of who I am as a photographer than as an aid in representing the subject. This understanding will enable me to look at images objectively from the point of view of a photographer, how much influence they may have had in the construction of the image, and allow me to look at *parergon* within the image and how well this can help form a representation of the subject.

Using content analysis on a photographic archive will produce quantitative data that will enable me to analyse how pose was used in Victorian and Edwardian photography. This data will highlight any patterns or similarities in pose over a wide range of images and time scales. Academic Gillian Rose defines content analysis as 'based on counting the frequency of certain visual elements in a clearly defined population of images, and then analysing those frequencies' (Rose 2016). The archive I have chosen is at Carisbrooke Castle Museum where I am a volunteer. I have created a set of codes that will enable me to analyse poses in the images and record the frequency that each code appears (appendix 2). The codes are split into gender and then decade from 1850 to 1929. This will highlight any differences in pose between men and women and see when particular poses came in and out of fashion. Due to COVID-19, the Museum was closed over the summer when I hoped to perform the analysis. I do have a selection of images from the archive and the Museum website that has enabled me to perform the content analysis. To add to this, I will use images from my own personal archive and images by Isle of Wight photographers Hughes and Mullins that are in the National Portrait Gallery and the Royal Collection archives.

This will allow me to build up a meaningful quantity of images that should reveal how pose has been used.

Interviews will form a key part of my primary research, providing qualitative data from practitioners, allowing me to look at any similarities or differences in their answers. A University ethics form was completed and approved at the start of the project (appendix 1). I will use targeted open questions to focus my line of enquiry into representation and pose in portrait photography. I will conduct the interviews via email, allowing the respondent to answer any questions freely. I have been able to interview two portrait photographers, Clare Hewitt and Jason Alden, who provided some interesting answers that will further my understanding of how they go about photographing people and how representation is formed. Claire Hewitt is a fellow alumnus from Bournemouth Arts University where we both studied commercial photography. She specialises in taking medium and large format portraits and has a purposely slow and methodical process. Claire's editorial work is featured in many publications around the UK where she has photographed politicians, artists and royalty. Her personal work of highly emotive portraits highlights people's complex behaviours and interests (Figure 1).

Figure 1

I know Jason Alden from creating his photography website. He is an international commercial photographer who specialises in portraits for editorial and corporate clients. As a photographer operating in a slightly different field to Clare, his experience in how he goes about photographing for specific clients and how this relates to identity will be key and will provide a good contrast to Clare's work. Both Clare and Jason are experienced portrait photographers, well positioned to answer questions on representation and pose, and explain their working methods in how they go about creating a portrait photograph. These interviews will provide me with a first-hand account of the thought processes that go into creating portraits.

I had contacted historians and curators for their views on portrait photography from a historical and gallery standpoint but did not receive any replies. I account for this due to the closure of institutions from COVID-19. I will use existing interviews with curators as secondary research to cover these areas and allow me to discuss their answers.

Chapter Three: Literary Review

My key background theory is based on Deconstructionist philosopher Jacques Derrida's concept of *parergon,* which he discusses in *Truth in Painting,* critiquing Immanuel Kant's earlier concept. Derrida's *parergon* is based on aesthetics, looking at the addition of objects in art that are not part of the main subject being shown, but their inclusion helps to reinforce the representation of the subject, framing it in a way 'that which is not internal or intrinsic,[…] as an integral part […], to the total representation of the object, but which belongs to it only in an extrinsic way […] as a surplus, and addition, an adjunct […], a supplement' (Derrida 1987). An example of *parergon* that Derrida cites is the inclusion of clothes on a statue which he expands to clothes on a body in paintings. While Derrida makes a good point at describing what his idea of *parergon* is, he does not answer precisely how it functions and instead posits a series of questions for the reader to think about before moving on to two more examples of *parergon*; decorative columns around a building and gilt frames around paintings. Derrida concludes that *parergon* 'can augment the pleasure of taste […], contribute to the proper and intrinsically aesthetic representation if it intervenes *by its form* […] and only by its form' (Ibid). For my investigation, I will use pose in portrait photography as a *parergon*. As there are many ways to pose someone, a single pose in a photograph cannot convey the total representation of the subject but can be used as an addition to frame them. Furthermore, the portrait photograph itself would be unable to represent the whole person and could be seen as a *parergon* in its own right: linked to the subject (as a representation of them), but an external addition, or supplement to frame their own identity or representation.

Academic John Tagg in *The Burden of Representation* opens with a chapter on portraiture and discusses pose as the common link to all portrait photographs and how pose can link to social class. 'Rigid frontality signified the bluntness and 'naturalness' of a culturally unsophisticated class and had a history which predated photography' (Tagg 1988). Tagg links the pose to social class suggesting that pose is an important part of how we understand representation in portrait photography. How the portrait can chart the history of photography and is linked to the commercial application of a photograph to record a likeness in a portrait. While Tagg concentrates on the technological and commercial development of photography, this is intrinsically linked to the democratisation of photography and its use to document and record many different aspects of society. How pose can be used to distinguish different social classes, from aristocratic portraits to those of prison inmates.

Academic Richard Brilliant has written at length on the portrait in his book *Portraiture* and includes theories on the difficulties in representing an individual in painting, sculpture or photography. Brilliant quotes Marcel Proust, stating:

> We are not materially constituted whole, identical for everyone, which each of us can examine like a list of specifications or a testament; our social personality is a creation of other people's thought' (Proust in Brilliant 1997).

That our public personality is formed though other people's perceptions of how they view and see portraits makes the formation of a representation hard for any artist to achieve. What could be a good representation of someone to one person may not be the same for another. Brilliant does talk about pose, quoting Harold Rosenburg, 'The history of portraiture is a gallery of poses, an array of types and styles which codifies the assumptions, biases, and aspirations of the society' (Rosenberg in Brilliant 1997). This reinforces Taggs' idea that ultimately the pose is used as a sign that can signify our place in society. Brilliant notes the role of the artist is an important factor in the creation of an identity, which either aligns with the subject's own idea of self-representation or goes against it. This gives the artist a lot of power in how they go about forming a representation of someone.

Photography curator Audrey Linkman's book *The Victorians: Photographic Portraits* contains detailed descriptions covering the tradition of portraits before photography and the social and artistic climate for portraits that photography entered. Linkman covers the art-theory aspect of photographic portraits, including characterisation of the sitter through expression and pose. She further discusses the commercial application for photography, such as in the Carte de Visite, Cabinet cards and the creation of specific audiences to consume photography. Linkman's section on pose is detailed, and throughout reminds the reader that the context for many Victorian photographic portraits came from portrait painting, and the effort that many photographers went to 'place the camera on a par with the easel' (Linkman 1993), shows that photography in its formative years was constantly trying to be seen as an artform alongside painting.

Academic Steven Burstow in his journal article *The Carte de Visite and Domestic Digital Photography* compares the Victorian Carte de Visite with contemporary digital photography to look at how self-representation is depicted through changing social backgrounds. An example would be how women of a specific class could be depicted to conform to social ideas of how

women should be depicted, however these are often linked to social and class norms as well as the gender of the photographer.

Graham Clarke, editor of *The Portrait in Photography,* has written a chapter on the social typology of the portrait, using the work of August Sander as his case study. Clark suggests that

> 'To look at Sander's portraits then, is to view a social order […] The individual is viewed as a representative figure (of a group, of a profession, of a class) and figures are 'fixed' amidst a series of complex social codes. Identity is, therefore, insistently public' (Clarke 1992).

This again reinforces the views of Richard Brilliant – that public personality, or in this case identity – is formed by the viewer or audience of the photograph. This suggests that we do not have one single identity. As Clarke continues, Sander's work is 'a continuing tension […] between public and private selves; between, in short, a private identity and its definition and representation in a social context' (Ibid). A single portrait photograph cannot wholly represent anyone, only allow the viewer to construct their own idea of who the person is at the instant the photograph was taken, based on the information shown.

Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984) writes about *Habitus*. A theory that describes how someone's tastes and values are formed throughout their life from experiencing specific economic and social markers. These markers can influence how they can understand and experience certain codes that are linked to their own class and social status. Understanding *Habitus* will allow me to situate portrait photographs in differing contexts, for example Victorian portraiture would have been targeted to a specific audience in the same way that contemporary portrait photographs on social media are targeted towards specific groups of people.

Semiotics will be used extensively in my research. In *Mythologies* (1972) Roland Barthes' states 'semiology postulates a relation between two terms, a signifier and a signified. […] and the sign, which is the associative total of the first two terms' (Barthes 1972). Barthes' *Image Music Text* (1977) continues with semiotics and includes a paragraph on the pose. In *Camera Lucida* (2000) Barthes explores representation through a treasured photograph of his mother as a child, using it to critique portrait photography and its relationship between what Barthes terms *studium* and *punctum. Studium* is loosely defined as a general view that the photographer wishes people to see. *Punctum* can disturb this *studium* and is a symbolic agent that breaks this general view but is

specific to the viewer of the photograph and may not be evident in every photograph or for every viewer. Extending semiotics into looking at pose will allow me to decode images to understand specific meanings behind them. For example, specific poses may suggest authority and power, while others submissiveness. Semiotic analysis would be tied into *Habitus*, as decoding such images would be based on my own positionality, understanding and influences.

Chapter Four: Portrait Photography in a Historical Context

Since its invention in the 1830's, the photograph has had the potential to record human likeness. It was not until the technology and chemistry, spurred on by the burgeoning commercial applications, allowed a reasonable exposure time to make a definitive portrait of people. As author Gus Macdonald writes,

> The camera democratized the image and for the first time large numbers of people could afford pictures of themselves. These might show off through dress or stance the sitter's station in life, preserve a semblance of youth, or perhaps help memory to cope with distance or death (Macdonald 1979).

Macdonald highlights the main uses of the portrait; as a site of memory, an idea that is reinforced by John Berger who stated, 'The most popular use of the photograph is as a memento of the absent' (Berger 2013). The memento may mean the loss of one's youth, a family member, or in the case of early photography in America, whole populations of Native Americans. The other use that Macdonald suggests is one of vanity; to show other people who you are. John Tagg wrote that a portrait is 'a sign whose purpose is both the description of an individual and the inscription of social identity' (Tagg 1988). This duality of the portrait image allows us to look at historical portrait images and use both pose and the clothes they are wearing to decode the image, forming an idea of their social identity.

Early Victorian photographic portraiture was based on ideologies that had formed from portrait painting. During the Renaissance, painters were influenced by the 'ideal beauty' of classical Greek sculptures, ideas that continued in the nineteenth century. Portrait painters could subtly modify their sitter's appearance to conform with these classical ideas to produce an idealised version of the subject. 'So the portrait painter's role came to be defined as acquiring a knowledge of the ideal standard of beauty, recognizing where each individual sitter failed to measure up to this standard, and taking the appropriate action' (Linkman 1993). Photography, with its ability to record any defects in the subject in detail, meant that early photographers had to light and pose their subjects to hide these defects and emphasise the parts that were deemed to be attractive. The main way a photographer would have gone about this would be though pose. An article in *The Photographic News* of 1858 states:

> The portrait photographer must in the shortest time possible place his sitter in a natural and graceful position without the least appearance of affection. […] If some features are imperfect, a certain position given to the head may improve the effect. […] The

photographer who understands his art has to hide all the defects, and to show more pre-eminently what is beautiful and perfect. (Wharton Simpson 1858)

Photographer and writer Alfred H. Wall in an article for *The Photographic News* in 1861 on the technology of art as applied to photography, notes at length the 'attitude' or the pose of the subject:

It should give varied outlines, a proper balance of parts, be in keeping with the general expression, and be graceful, easy, unaffected, and characteristic. A graceful attitude will give a degree of beauty to the homeliest man or woman, and render the beautiful more strikingly so. Curved and undulating lines are generally aimed at in choosing the attitude, because of the harmonious and uniform appearance which then unites every part with the whole. Contrast, however, gives vigour, even although it sometimes imply the introduction of an acute angle. It is for this reason we so frequently find the head and body turned in different directions (Wall 1861).

Wall's suggestion that a 'graceful attitude' can improve the overall appearance of the subject, shows that pose and knowing how to pose the subject was a key part of the Victorian photographer's process. Importantly, Wall notes the reason for the head and the body to be in different directions is to give the subject 'contrast', implying an expression of form and dynamism suggesting movement in the picture, which in turn produces a much greater aesthetic response to the portrait. Wall cautions that trying to create movement in this way can lead to the head and body being too different, causing the pose and therefore the image to not be aesthetically pleasing:

In such a case all the beauty of motion is gone, and expression is destroyed, at any rate so far as it is pleasing. When the head is in this position, the eyes should indicate that it was turned to look towards an object situated in that direction, and not merely to affect variety of outline (Ibid).

Wall continues that the pose should reflect the character of the subject, for example not posing an old man in such a way for him to appear spritely and lively, however much it conformed to stereotype. The pose also highlighted more obvious attributes like gender. Academic Susanne Spencer-Wood argues the origin of these gender stereotypes may have formed from male nineteenth century classicists who misinterpreted misogynistic gender ideology from Aristotle's writings. These were uncritically accepted as historic reality to support their own arguments, despite not being universally accepted in wider Victorian society.

Most nineteenth-century scholars were elite men who believed in the superiority of western culture and projected their Victorian separate spheres gender ideology to dichotomize classical cultures into mutually exclusive male-public versus female-domestic spheres (Spencer-Wood in Allison 1999).

This stereotypical view of differing gender identities; female-domestic and male-public, is evident in Victorian photography. Men were posed to conform to a supposed ideology of a strong, dominant, and authoritative public figure who would be able to command attention. Posed with

arms out at angles, legs either crossed or spread apart and accessories such as canes, umbrellas or hats used to occupy empty space to make them appear grander. Women were much more restricted and were only allowed to pose in ways considered feminine. This meant to appear submissive and quiet with hands together or touching the face, and feet never apart:

> Whether standing or seated, women usually kept their arms closely confined to the body. Their hands, whether clasped together or touching their face, suggest containment, quiescence and passivity. Men, by contrast are allowed greater assurance and assertiveness (Linkman 1993).

That poses were gendered in Victorian photography is also discussed by Stephen Burstow who considers how women were sometimes depicted in a domestic interior, often undertaking 'feminine tasks' such as flower arranging or embroidery (Figure 3), arguing that these images 'create a heightened sense of intimacy for the viewer, as the subject is observed engaging in a private activity, rather than presenting themself to the camera' (Burstow 2016). This suggests a show of intimacy would have a correlation with the function of the portrait, and photographs such as these were probably for private viewing, intended to be given to a loved one or placed in a family album. While the historical context of images such as these were commonplace in Victorian and Edwardian photography, purposely creating such gendered portraits in contemporary photography would likely question the photographer's intentions.

Despite this gendering, it was usually the photographer who was ultimately in control of how the subject was posed. This raises an interesting point in how the photographer arrived at a specific pose for each subject and thus making them complicit in the formation of a representation of that person. According to Linkman, the photographer used subtle and careful direction of how the subject naturally held themselves following the traditions of portrait painters. There was an influence of class emulation in pose, as Linkman sates: 'the qualities which found favour were clearly those 'natural' to people of the highest social rank whose manners were regarded as models for the rest to emulate' (Linkman 1993). This suggests that the photographer would direct their subjects to pose in such a way that would seem to elevate the social rank of the sitter to achieve a more aesthetic image. This idea is reflected by Tagg, who notes that the growing middle classes were the main target in the commercialisation of photography and the use of pose was a great attractor. 'The bourgeois figures in mid-nineteenth-century polyphoto images aped the mannerisms of eighteenth-century painted portraits and coveted their prestige' (Tagg 1988). The aspiring middle-classes were able to emulate poses seen in eighteenth century portrait painting, a media which had been the preserve of the upper classes who would have been able to commission

such artworks, but with the more affordable portrait photograph, the middle classes and even the working classes could afford to have their portrait taken.

Figure 2

Figure 2 is a photograph from the Carisbrooke Castle Museum of a sub-genre of Victorian portrait photography called 'Hidden Mother'. The subject in the photograph is the baby, but due to the long exposure times required in early photography the mother was often included in the image to keep the baby as still as possible. Child mortality was high during the Victorian era and photographs of dead children, often posed to be asleep, were not uncommon. As these children did not move, the long exposure times needed did not matter. The inclusion of the mother to hold a child would then denote that the child was alive and needed to be held to keep it still. While hidden mother portraits appear strange to contemporary viewers, they show that specific visual codes in photography were still being formed. For a Victorian audience, the incongruity of the mother shown under a covering would not have appeared so strange. Photographer Linda Fregni

Nagler comments 'The mothers seem to have been aiming to create an intimate bond between the child and the viewer, rather than between themselves and the child' (Nagler in Hughes 2013). This image can be used as an example of *parergon*. The subject is the baby and the mother is supplemental to the image, but she is intrinsically linked to the baby, framing it, helping to form a representation.

Figure 3**Error! Reference source not found.** is a photograph by Gustav Mullins taken around 1910, showing a full-length pose of a woman arranging flowers. This image conforms to ideas that Wall proposed, with the head turned off the axis of the body and undertaking a 'feminine activity' such that Stephen Burstow mentioned, to suggest dynamism and intimacy to the intended viewer.

Figure 3

The pose in the photograph is very formal, and the activity obviously staged in the photographer's studio. Looking at *parergon* in purely Derridean terms, the form of the image - how the woman

is posed, what she is wearing how she is interacting with the flowers - contributes to the aesthetics of the image. One that is exceptionally clean and minimal with no additional elements to interfere with it. This could be considered a well-constructed image that one would expect from an experienced portrait photographer. Using the image as an example and expanding *parergon* into representation, everything that makes up the form of the image can also contribute to the formation of the representation of the subject. The woman has a gold bracelet and a ring on her middle finger, suggesting she is unmarried. Her clothes, for the period the photograph was taken, suggest she is middle-class, which seems to be reflected in the style of the table and vase. Her eyes are looking at the camera in a different orientation to her head, a practice that Wall had cautioned against. This makes the overall pose appear unnatural and staged, as if she is taking direction from the photographer which could suggest that she is not wholly comfortable in front of the camera. My reading of the photograph is of a young woman around 20, who could be having a portrait taken for her parents to find her suitors, the flower arranging would indicate not only femininity but also domesticity. We do not know who the woman in the photograph is, but by using *parergon* the photograph frames a representation of her, even if it is a staged one, based on how she appears in the photograph.

Early photography took inspiration from portrait painting and other media used to record a likeness, but the ability to duplicate the harsh realities of life meant that it was not considered a tool that would be able to flatter and produce an ideal of beauty based on classical ideas. However, being a cheaper form of representation to painting opened portrait photography to more social classes, which meant that pose and fashion became key indicators to show class and status. As the higher classes were considered worthy of emulation, poses were chosen to make the subject appear to be of a higher social standing. Gender ideals became prevalent in early photography with women unable to express themselves fully though pose, instead having to conform to specific ideas of femininity rather than power or status, which was only reserved for men.

Chapter Five: Portrait Photography from the Carisbrooke Castle Museum Archive

Carisbrooke Castle Museum holds over 35,000 objects relating to the History of the Isle of Wight. Of these, 12,000 are photographs including many portrait photographs ranging from Carte de Visites, through to cabinet cards, post cards and family albums. The first photography studios opened on the Island in 1852, but most of the portrait photography in the archive dates from the 1860's. There were many portrait studios operating on the Island, reaching a peak of 53 between 1900-1909 (Turley 2001).
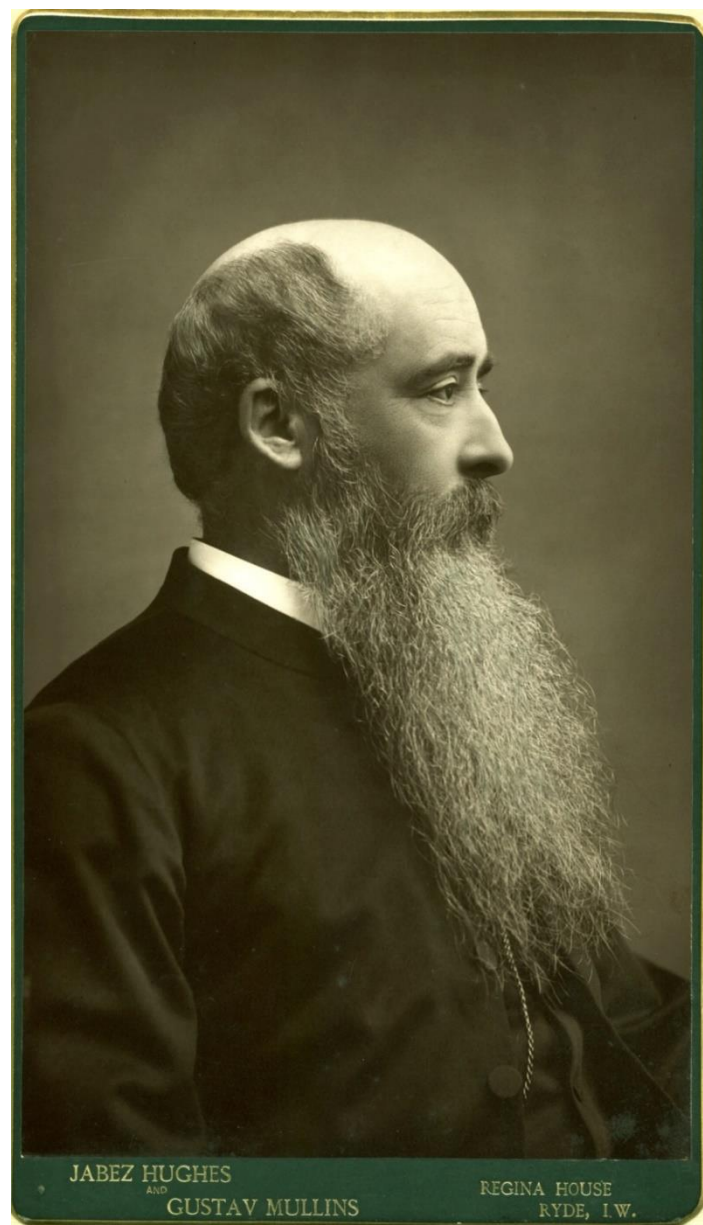

Figure 4

Figure 4 is a portrait photograph by Jabez Hughes and Gustav Mullins. I have dated this photograph to 1883/84 based on Mullins' name appearing on the picture equally to Hughes. Hughes was sole proprietor with Mullins as his assistant. Mullins became a partner in 1883 and Hughes died in 1884. Prior to 1883 images were signed 'Jabez Hughes and Mullins', after this 'Hughes and Mullins'. They operated a high-class establishment in Ryde on the Isle of Wight and became famous for their photos of Queen Victoria and her family.

The image shows the profile of a man with a long white beard, facing to the right of the image. This pose is rare as there are few other photographs in the archive with a similar pose. The side-on pose shares its look with pre-photographic portraits made using a physiognotrace, which traced the outline profile of the sitter's facial features in to produce a realistic likeness, or a silhouette cut from black paper. More familiarly, the side-on profile is used for portraits on coinage and stamps. This could increase the impression of the man being more important than he may already be. His body is turned towards the camera slightly more than his face, with his left arm visible, possibly resting on an arm of a chair or in a support, that was often used to hold people in specific poses, and his right arm hanging down by his side. The complication of this pose, and both the technical and aesthetic result, suggests that the man was directed into this pose by the photographer, which is quite precise and not a completely natural pose to hold. Graham Clarke writes:

> Portraits are full of visual codes in which social identity and position at once establish significance and declare status: clothes, of course, but equally rings and medals; the merest detail is often a sign of a collective code affirming significance (Clarke 1992).

The clothes, a black jacket with large buttons, a waistcoat with the gold chain of a pocket watch, do have a significance and suggest that the man is of a high social standing, perhaps a town official or business man who is used to holding attention and is therefore shown in a striking and demanding pose. The prestigiousness of Hughes and Mullins' photography business would have attracted the upper and wealthy middle classes to sittings. They were highly regarded photographers, attaining a Royal Warrant in 1885 and patronised by many members of the English, Russian and German royal families.

In comparison to other portraits being taken on the Isle of Wight around the same time (see Figure 6) the Hughes and Mullins photograph appears to have more in common with eminent Portrait photographs by Felix Nadar or Etienne Carjat. As Roger Cardinal states, Nadar had:

an impeccable commitment to head on shots of people placed before entirely neutral backgrounds and with an absolute minimum of furniture. As for their sombre formal dress, one might almost suppose that Nadar let it be known he would tolerate no sitter turning up in frivolous garb (Cardinal in Clarke 1992).

In their photographs, Hughes and Mullins do favour more neutral backgrounds especially in images after around the late 1870's (see Figure 5). This has a way of directing attention onto the subject, making them stand out and reducing any extra details that could detract from an overall representation of the subject. The only visual cues that allow the viewer to form a representation of the subject come from the signs that make up the *parergon* of pose.
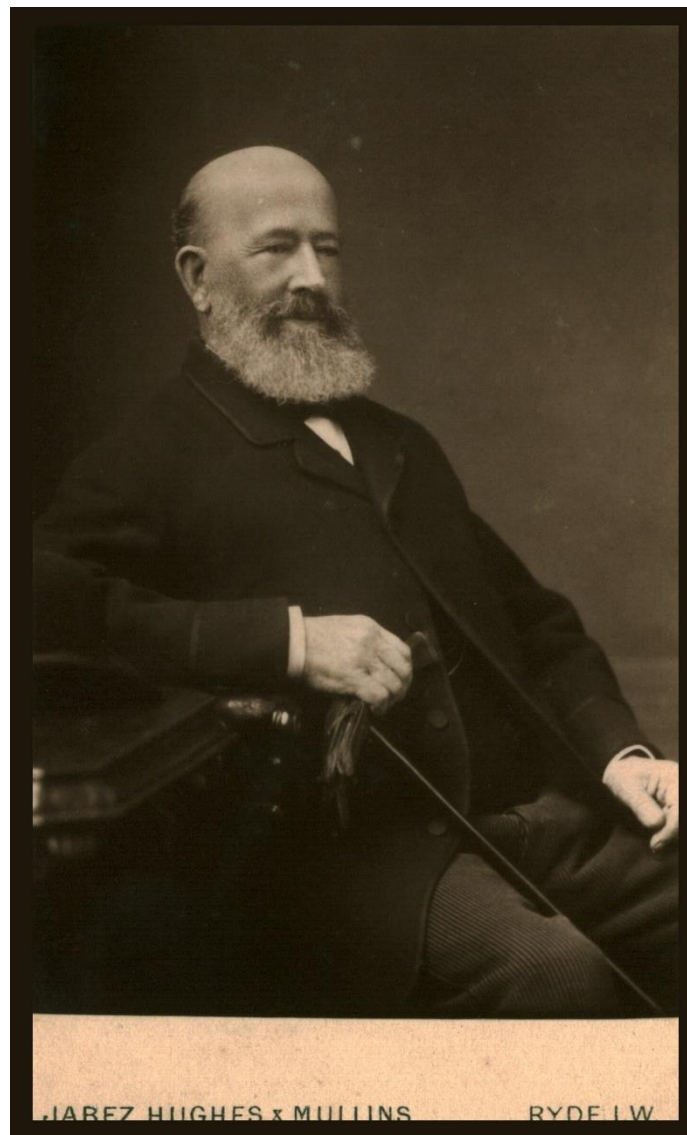
Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 6 is a photograph by Brading and Cantelo of Newport, taken around 1870-1880 which makes it contemporary with Hughes and Mullins. An interesting point is that in this partnership, Cantelo is a Miss Ellen Cantelo, one of the many female photographers working on the Island. But like Hughes and Mullins, we are unable to tell which photographer took the picture. Unlike the commanding and authoritative poses in Figure 4 and Figure 5, the seated man has been photographed set back in the studio, and despite him looking like a tall man in the chair, how the photograph has been composed makes him appear smaller in the image. This allows more of the floor, painted background, curtain, and table with book and what could be a stereoscopic viewer on it to dominate. The man is seated in a three-quarter pose, with his hands in his lap, staring out of frame to the right of the photographer. This pose appears very submissive and awkward as if he is unused to being photographed or directed. The man is not sitting in the same plane as the

chair and is sitting more upright causing his waistcoat to bulge at the top. This may be due to the stand that is holding his head in place, the base of which can just be seen behind the chair leg. Stands were used a lot in early portrait photography to keep the subject still for the duration of the exposure. High class establishments like Hughes and Mullins would have stands and braces more strategically hidden behind curtains. Unlike the dark, formal qualities of the Hughes and Mullins pictures with their impeccable dress, this image appears much less formal and cluttered which is reflected in the man's suit which is a lighter colour with a noticeable weave and unpolished, tarnished shoes, suggesting the man is probably of middling social standing and class, possibly a tradesman or worker such as a gardener.

To analyse poses in greater detail, I created a table to record different aspects of pose in studio portraits from the Carisbrooke Castle Archive (appendix 2). As previously mentioned, I was unable to visit the archive, so used images from the Museum website alongside images by Isle of Wight photographers Hughes and Mullins from the National Gallery and Royal Collection Archives, and included my own family portraits and portrait photography collection alongside images from a book on Isle of Wight photographers by Raymond Turley. This will give me qualitative data that I can use to analyse pose from over 200 images that I analysed. The table has been split into two, male and female to highlight any gender differences in poses used, and by date to see if there are any poses that come in or out of vogue. The main categories are the proportion of the body that is shown, from full-length to just the head and shoulders, whether they are seated or standing, to the position of the body and the head, side-profile to straight at the camera and if they are looking at the camera. I excluded images of children, groups and those of Queen Victoria, as she would have been the one directing herself. I analysed 105 images of men, and 100 of women, dated between 1850 and 1920.

My initial findings show a bias towards images taken between 1860-1869 which may be due to the natural frequency of the images I had chosen from each archive. Being able to analyse just the Carisbrooke Castle Museum archive and including a lot more images may have evened out the results across the date range. Despite this, looking at the findings within each decade has produced some interesting results. In the 1860's portraits of men either standing or sitting were nearly equal, yet for women there are slightly more shown standing (56%). For both men and women, nearly all the images, regardless of them standing or sitting, showed the body full length, 84% for women, 91% for men. In the 1870's full body portraits of women had fallen to 40%. This was still the most popular way of depicting women, with the rest being three-quarter, half, quarter length, or

head and shoulders poses. I think this could be in part due to fashion, wanting to show off the dresses as a display of fashion would be linked to social status. Men in the 1870's were being shown more from the knees up (three-quarter length), with 58% of men sitting in the 1870's of which 37.5% were shown knees-up and only 20% shown full length.

To analyse the position of the head and body in relation to the camera, I split up the profiles to the following: 1) side-on, 2) quarter profile, where the eye furthest from the camera could just be seen, 3) half profile, where the head or body was at a 45° angle to the camera, 4) a three quarter profile, where the nose would be just inside the cheek, 5) a 7/8th profile which was not quite straight-on to the camera, with a definite dominant side to their posture, and finally 6) the direct straight-on pose. Unusually some of the women's poses showed their back to the camera, so this was added to the analysis. Subdividing the profiles from the more traditional side, three-quarter and straight on poses allowed more subtle posing to be recorded. I also noted which direction the body and face were looking in relation to the viewer, and if the head and body were aligned in the same profile or if there was a distinct difference between them. Lastly, I recorded if the subject was looking directly at the camera.

For men, the position of the body generally favoured the half-profile and three-quarter profile in the 1860's, which continued to the 1890's. Other profiles, even the straight on profile which Tagg has suggested was used more to document the lower classes, were being used just as much. The only profile that is not popular is the side-on profile, with only three portraits out of 105 using this profile. For women's portraits in the 1860's and 1870's, the side profile is being used a lot more, but there is a definite bias towards the half and three-quarter profile. Table 1 shows the percentage of half and three-quarter profiles used in analysed portrait images based on gender and decade.

	1860-69	1870-79	1880-89	1890-99	1900-09	
Men	48%	37.50%	50%	62%	42%	
Women	46.10%	48%	26%	66.60%	20%	

Table 1

This shows that a half or three-quarter body position was common throughout the time period analysed, and that a slight turn away from the camera does create a more aesthetically pleasing

look by giving the subject more depth. This confirms advice given by photographers such as Alfred Wall in the 1860's. Further analysis of body position in portraits through art history could be conducted to pinpoint when this turn away from the viewer started to be used, as it appears to be a very established pose by the 1860's so must have been a part of visual culture through portrait painting pre-photography.

The position of the face was also divided into the same position categories for the body. What is interesting is that in some cases, the positioning of the head does not correlate with the position of the body. For example, women between 1880-89 are shown with 26% of body position being half or three-quarter profile. Their head position is 42% of the same profiles, suggesting their head and body positions were often showing different orientations.

The position of men's heads to their bodies is similar, suggesting that men were not often directed to position their heads too far from the axis of the body (Table 2). This again confirms Wall's instructions to position the head and body on slightly different axis to create a more aesthetic pose. Despite this, there were still a lot of portraits taken with the head and body in the same direction, showing that posing in practice would have been more dependent on the subject rather than conforming to a specific theory.

	1860-69	1870-79	1880-89	1890-99	1900-09
Men					
1/2 profile	11.40%	12.50%			14.20%
3/4 profile	31%	37%	36.36%	25%	14.20%
Total	**42.4%**	**49.5%**	**36.36%**	**25%**	**28.40%**
Women					
1/2 profile	10.25%	24%	10.50%		20%
3/4 profile	25.60%	30%	31.50%	33.30%	
Total	**35.85%**	**54%**	**42%**	**33.30%**	**20%**

Table 2

This analysis shows the head position appears to be a lot more nuanced, and the resulting images may have been the result of trying many different positions to find the most pleasing and, unlike body position, what head position worked for one person, may not work for another.

The clearest results I got came from the direction of the body and the head which show a distinct bias towards portraits facing the left of the picture as the viewer looks at them, showing their left cheek, especially in the early decades of the 1860's and 1870's. This continued for women throughout the timescale analysed (Table 3), but for men, the direction appears to become less important after 1879, with a higher percentage of men facing right in the 1880's (Table 4).

	1860-69	1870-79	1880-89	1890-99	1900-09
Women	**39**	**25**	**19**	**9**	**5**
Face/Left	43%	52%	57%	77.7%	60%
Face/Right	43%	36%	21%	22.2%	
Face/Centre	12.8%	12%	21%		40%
Body/Left	48%	56%	57%	66.6%	60%
Body/Right	33.3%	28%	21%		20%
Body/Centre	15.4%	12%	21%	22.2%	

Table 3

	1860-69	1870-79	1880-89	1890-99	1900-09
Men	**35**	**24**	**22**	**8**	**7**
Face/Left	62%	54%	31.81%	50%	14.2%
Face/Right	20%	33.3%	52%	37.5%	14.2%
Face/Centre	17.14%	8.3%	22.7%	12.5%	42.8%
Body/Left	65%	50%	40.9%	37.5%	42.8%
Body/Right	20%	33.3%	40.9%	50%	28.5%
Body/Centre	20%	16.6%	18.11%	12.5%	42.8%

Table 4

This analysis can be summarised to cover portraits from all decades and exclude those where the face was centred. This shows a clear left-bias in turning the face to the side, but importantly no significant gender bias. Male portraits were just as likely to face the left of the frame as female portraits (Table 5).

	Men/85	Women/86
Face/left	61%	60%
Face/right	39%	38%

Table 5

This bias in left facing portraits has been studied before, and my research aligns with previous findings. The reason for this bias in portraits appears to relate to the expression of emotions. As academics Michael Nicholls *et al* suggest in their 2002 study of face direction in portraits, their findings,

> demonstrated that models, when posing for a portrait, turn their left cheek when expressing emotion. The present study demonstrates that asymmetries in posing behaviour have a significant impact on an observer's impression of a portrait (Nicholls *et al* 2002).

The showing of the left-cheek in many of the portraits analysed may also hint at their purpose. As showing the left-cheek is linked to expressing emotion, portraits such as these may have been taken for family members, whereas poses shown with the right cheek would be to show power, control, and authority. It is worth noting that the man in Figure 4 was right facing, and the portrait appears much more dominating. While this conclusion would generally favour men showing the right cheek over women in Victorian portraiture, it may allude to an equal balance of power in how men and women want themselves to be represented in a portrait photograph. This stems from an unconscious decision on the part of the sitter over the photographer. People who are in control and can demonstrate this, even subtly, would be posed in photographs that reinforce this persona with their right cheek showing.

Chapter Six: Post-War Portrait Photography and Female Poses

The pose in Victorian and Edwardian photography was an important part of the composition and understanding of the person in the photograph, highlighting and often raising the subject's social status. The influences for these poses came from a range of pre-photographic sources, although painting, with which early photography was seen to be the lesser artform, was the dominant influence. Painting has a long history with well-worn ideas of aesthetic beauty influenced by classical antiquity and the strive to show the 'ideal'. Photography during the inter-war years became a lot more democratised, helped by the rise of the personal camera with Kodak's 'Brownie' initially launched in 1900, which led to less formal poses as the photographer and audience were often family members, therefore there was less of a need for formalities and certain class-based poses.

I consider the post-Second World War era a turning point in how differing ways to pose were formed and used in portrait photography. There was a shift away from the underpinning theories that painting had given early portrait photography, with greater influences from a wider visual culture shaping how portrait photography was undertaken. For example, the influence of films on the general population, the gradual increased in private television ownership, fashion photography aspirational magazines and burgeoning globalisation with easier travel to other countries, especially America, and its social influence on the UK.

Some of the memorable visual culture during the Second World War was the recruitment or propaganda poster, used on both sides of the Atlantic as well as Germany and Russia. The definition of a poster, as cited by Maurice Rickards is,

> a separate sheet, affixed to an existing surface. […] it must embody a message, a mere decorative image is not enough. Thirdly, it must be *publicly displayed*. Finally, it must have been mass produced (Adams and Dart Cited in Rickards 1971).

Academic Rebecca Lewis argues that a poster must be in the public domain and act as a tool for communication, transferring information from one agent (such as a government) to another (the public) in such a way that they can easily understand and act upon. The poster artist is the mediator in this communication, however,

> the artist needs to remember that the poster was not to be used for self-expression as so much art is, but to perform a purpose, that of the manufacturer, or government in this case, who has a product to sell, or an idea to propagate (Lewis 2004).

In 1939 a poster design for the Women's Land Army was rejected because it did not focus enough on the women in the image. As this was to appeal to women to join up, a new design 'was altered from an illustration of three girls working a plough, to one depicting just one, entirely replacing the man's role' (Ibid) (Figure 7). However, Lewis continues that many Women's Land Army posters formed an idealised image of a pastoral landscape with women not undertaking particularly tough or arduous work.

Figure 7

While the depiction of women in the Women's Land Army posters may have conformed to a stereotype of how women should be seen, other posters show women in much more powerful and respected roles, even if they were still not allowed to perform the same jobs as the men, and the poses reflect this.

Figure 8

Figure 8 is a poster from 1941 recruiting for the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. While women were not allowed to fly in combat, the poster shows a uniformed Women in the foreground, depicted taller and more dominant than the pilot, suggesting this is a more superior or important role. They are both standing to attention, looking out of frame towards the sky. They are both shown in a three-quarter pose, considered to be the most flattering pose for both men and women, but interestingly the view point is low so the viewer is looking up at them. This subtle angle of view could signify that to join the WAAF would mean that people would look up to you, elevating your social standing from those around you. Despite the man being a pilot with helmet and breathing apparatus, it is the woman who is shown in uniform, a show of smartness, conformality and a command of respect. While a composite image, (the pilot image was used in another poster) (Imperial War Museum n.d.) they are photographs of the woman and pilot, rather than illustrations

which makes the poster appear more authentic. As it is a real woman shown, (even if it was a model dressed up), the use of a photograph rather than an illustration allows women to see themselves as a member of the WAAF. I also think this has a wider appeal. Depicting women in a pose that would be respected, and the national public siting of recruitment posters, would directly influence the women who saw them. Posters like these appear to counter the gendered poses that Steven Burstow talks about in Victorian and Edwardian photography (see Figure 3) and could have a more positive influence on how women see themselves. Encouraging women to feel they are able to carry themselves in a more normalised and less gendered way in portrait photography generally.

An important aspect of visual culture that would have influenced pose in the post-war period, especially poses of women, is through fashion. After years of austerity during the War, fashion houses re-opened and moved away from the close-fitting boxy outlines of pre-war fashion to more feminine silhouettes showing off smaller waists with long flowing skirts. This new style was typified with Christian Dior's 1947 '*New Look*' collection which set the standard for fashion in the Post-War era. With this new fashion came new ways of posing which directly influenced how fashion images were consumed. This in turn could influence the pose in portrait photography as it offered women ways of seeing how other women were posing in a wider public sphere. As sociologist and academic Elizabeth Wissinger states;

> Fashion, photography, and consumerism surged to a new crescendo in the post-war economic boom. Magazines not only distributed ideas and information aimed at selling fashion, they also created audiences for it (Wissinger 2015).

Some poses shown in fashion magazines in the immediate post-war period included poses that showed the body turned towards the camera, but the model's head turned away from the camera in profile, with the camera placed at eye-level. This pose prevented the model being the main focus of the image, directing attention to the clothes instead, as can be seen in covers for *Vogue* (Figure 9 & Figure 10). However, by the late 1950's the pose had started to shift, with models shown increasingly looking at the camera, with a greater emphasis on the face which suggested the model was now inferior to the viewer. The poses depicted started to move away from traditional, formal poses to informal, relaxed poses. This shift also marked a change in how the model was seen. Not just an object to sell clothes, but someone who was able to inspire women, and project an aspiration that other women would want to emulate and buy into.
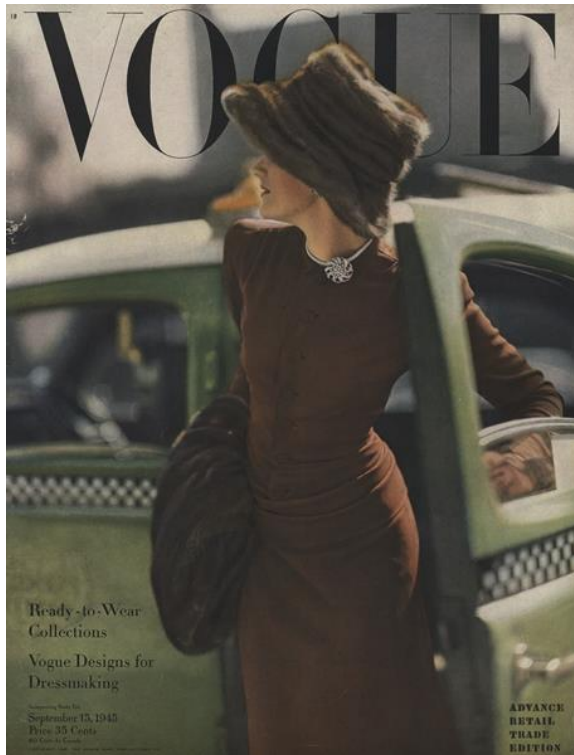
Figure 9

Figure 10

As fashion as a commodity became more prevalent, it was the fashion model who became the most important part of marketing the garments. Academic Felice McDowell comments:

> The rising status and recognition afforded to the photographic fashion model can be witnessed in the spread of media that coincided with her depiction as a 'celebrity figure' and with an increase in the circulation of her image. This was yet another aspect of growth in mass media and consumer, or popular, culture that began to take shape in the mid-to-late 1950s (McDowell 2017).

McDowell states that the rise in this popular culture and spread of media depicting the 'model girl' played an important part in levelling class distinctions in the 1950's. These new fashion models were not the debutantes or socialites who had previously graced fashion houses in the inter-war period, but ordinary everyday girls who, dressed in the latest fashions, could not only appeal to a mass audience as part of the emerging capitalist society, but also cross social boundaries. As Wissinger continues; 'No longer the denizens of the demimonde, occupying a class only slightly better than a chorus girl, fashion models became the apotheosis of high class and style' (Wissinger 2015). This universal idolisation for the fashion model stemmed from the fashion shoot, using photographs rather than sketches to illustrate fashion magazines.

> The history of the fashion shoot, […] illustrates a gradual shift away from a highly scripted performances elicited by tight control of the model toward a more free-form exchange prompting the model to bring the unexpected to the transaction (Ibid).

This 'free-form exchange' allowed the model a lot more control in how they acted in front of the camera. Sometimes being given a scenario by the photographer to act out, which introduces the photographers influence on pose in fashion magazines, other times being left to formulate their own poses based on how they feel or think the clothes should look. This undirected form of natural expression would have fed back to the audience, in turn influencing how many women would then pose for domestic photographic portraits. However, fashion photography is a staged event and the poses, however natural, are no more real than the situation that is being presented in the picture. A carefully formulated simulation to sell the clothes though an aspiration, one which was usually gendered and played to preconceived ideals of how men and women acted socially. Sociologist Erving Goffman wrote that 'Commercial photographs, of course, involve carefully performed poses, presented in the style of being "only natural." But it is argued that actual gender expressions are artful poses, too' (Goffman 1976). Goffman's ideas suggest that there is a form of ritualization that relates to how gender is displayed in commercial photography, which not only parallels but influences real life. For example, a scientist could be posed looking down a microscope - one act of many that a scientist could do in their everyday work - which becomes a cliched representation of how scientists are perceived by the public. Goffman continues: 'Whether we pose for a picture or execute an actual ritual action, what we are presenting is a commercial, an ideal representation under the auspices of its characterizing the way things really are' (Ibid). This can be extended to fashion photography where the female model is posing in such a way to represent herself in an ideal aspect of a woman's life, which women looking at the picture can then aspire to. Goffman is suggesting that advertising photography is presenting what he terms a 'hyper-ritualisazion' of how men and women believe themselves to be 'naturally' seen through pose, which in turn influences how the consumers of these images then feel they should be seen and act.

Given the rise of consumer culture in the economic boom in the 1950's, it is easy to see how advertising, especially fashion advertising aimed more towards women, ultimately influenced how women saw themselves. Portraits of women in the 1950's had changed dramatically since the gendered poses of the Victorian era as women were now shown in photographs posing how they wanted to, not how they were expected to, as societal norms shifted. As Goffman suggests commercial photography was a reflection on society, if a hyper-idealized one. As society changed, so did the poses in portrait photography.

Richard Avedon

Fashion and portrait photographer Richard Avedon started his career in 1944 and quickly became a respected and sought-after photographer. In 1953 Avedon was commissioned to photograph socialite Marella Agnelli by Diana Vreeland, then editor of *Harper's Bazaar* (Figure 11).

Figure 11

Contrary to the usual fashion photography as depicted on the covers of *Vogue*, with the head in profile and the body turned towards the camera, the portrait of Agnelli has her body in profile, and her head towards the camera looking straight at the viewer. This pose instantly draws the viewer into looking at the face, forming a connection to her, and making it easy to recognise this was a picture of someone, rather than a picture to sell clothes. By the early 1950's, Avedon was using lighting inspired by the Hollywood glamour photography of the 1920's and 30's, such as images by Cecil Beaton (Figure 12), with poses to produce high-contrast abstract portraits. Curator Carol Squires noted these 'were made to convey an array of positive qualities in the women he photographed, from contemporary ideas of beauty to the poetics of artistic talent' (Squires in Ahmed 2018). This way of photographing reminds me of some of the Victorian portraits by Nadar or Carjat with clean backgrounds and strong lighting to highlight the facial features and because they were photographing predominantly male subjects, using strong poses.

Figure 12

Avedon's image is extraordinarily strong. The shadow on the left of the body contrasts with the near-white of the right, and both contrast with the mid-grey background. The simplicity of the pose and lighting, along with the manipulation of the chest to blend it into the background. The angle of the arm and pleats of the dress, fluidity of the shadow from the arm though the neck all draw attention straight to the eyes. The angle of the right arm is held in an unnatural position, which, along with the precision in separation on the left side of the face between the highlight of the light and the deep shadow of the nose suggest that Agnelli was heavily directed into this pose. Journalist Osman Ahmed comments the picture of 'Agnelli epitomises a beauty that transcends fashion' (Ibid). In 1954, Christian Dior said he was inspired by the photo to create his 'H-silhouette'. Despite taken a year after Agnelli married the richest man in Italy, Avedon contested that her fame in high society was because of his photographs of her. While on one hand this could suggest an arrogance from Avedon, he was a skilled photographer who knew how to pose women to achieve a specific look.

Another famous Avedon portrait was taken in 1957 of Marilyn Monroe (Figure 13). Monroe was already a household name by 1957 with a successful film career and a well-known and overt public persona. Avedon's image is in complete contrast to the public perception of her. In the picture Monroe is sat appearing worried and scared. Her sequined dress alludes to her movie star status, glittering under the studio lights, but her expression is one of someone deep in thought. Avedon's head-on pose is not flattering, John Tagg notes that in the Victorian era,

> the head-on view had become the accepted format of the popular amateur snapshot, but also of photographic documents like prison records and social surveys in which this code of social inferiority reframed the meaning of representations of the objects of supervision or reform (Tagg 1988).

While Tagg was discussing the head on pose in Victorian photography, I think much of what he discusses holds true for portrait photography from any era. This pose is still used in official documents such as passports, driving licences, or even police mugshots.

Avedon's picture of Monroe is a descriptive pose, more able to show the viewer who the real person is. It seems an approachable image. Compared to the portrait of Marella Agnelli, with its sculptural curves, dramatic lighting, and very precise pose, the Monroe image seems very flat and undynamic. It is not lit by any specific lighting; the light on her is soft and natural, from above and slightly to the left. The angle the photograph has been taken is slightly above Monroe, looking down onto her suggesting that the viewer is more dominant. The biggest draw to this image is

Monroe's expression. Her body is square to the camera, but her head is slightly turned to the right. Her eyes are looking further to the right and down off camera with a blank expression in them. Her slightly parted lips hint that she is about to say something. This creates a charged and dynamic portrait as if there is some expectation of what happens next.

Figure 13

This image can be looked at though Barthes' ideas of *studium/punctum.* Barthes describes the *studium* as a 'very wide field of unconcerned desire, of various interest, of inconsequential taste' (Barthes 2000), but it has been critisised as a 'fundamentally weak' (Bate in Elkins 2007) concept in *Camera Lucida* that doesn't adequately explain *studium* in relation to time. My interpretation of *studium* in relation to portrait photography would be the photographer's intention to photograph a person, at a specific time, in a specific location, framing and posing the subject according to the

photographer's aesthetic choices. In the Monroe image, the *studium* could be her sequined dress, perfectly coiffured hair, the plain background, her position in the frame, with a slightly slumped square-on pose, all of which make up the portrait of Monroe. Barthes' defines *punctum* as a 'sting, speck, cut, little hole […] that accident that pricks me' (Barthes 2000). While Barthes' definition of *punctum* is also vague, I think that Barthes intends the *punctum* to be a part of the image that was not intended by the photographer which arrests the viewer, making them see a detail or particular sign (linking this to semiotics) that gives the picture, or subject, an additional meaning to it. I see Monroe's expression as the *punctum* that penetrates the *studium*. Academic Sharon Sliwinski calls the *punctum* more than a specific detail that the viewer notices but is 'the very means by which photography makes the ineffable actually *appear*' (Sliwinski in Elkins 2007). I agree with Sliwinski, but contend that not every photograph may contain *punctum* that the viewer is able to interpret, whereas every photograph would be subject to *studium,* as this would be the photographers influence in the picture, rather than the viewers interpretation.

My interpretation of *parergon* in relation to representation could fit in with Barthes' *studium/punctum* within portrait photography. *Studium,* using Barthes description, can be taken to mean the wide field view that the photographer intended to capture of a person at a specific time. *Parergon* can be used to frame who they are and allow the viewer to form a representation of them by how they pose along with the small signs in the image that can be read though semiotic analysis. The *punctum*, depending on the viewer, can add to the *parergon*, reinforcing the viewers understanding of that person. In Avedon's Monroe image, her expression to me as the viewer is the *punctum*, as is shows a different representation of her from the one I am familiar with, that Avedon did not plan or set up, that makes me stop and look closer at the picture. Unlike other famous images of Monroe, she is not playing up to the camera or has been directed by Avedon into this pose. Avedon noted that for this photoshoot:

> For hours she danced and sang and flirted and did this thing that's—she did Marilyn Monroe. And then there was the inevitable drop. And when the night was over and the white wine was over and the dancing was over, she sat in the corner like a child, with everything gone. I saw her sitting quietly without expression on her face, and I walked towards her but I wouldn't photograph her without her knowledge of it. And as I came with the camera, I saw that she was not saying no (Avedon 2002).

By not directing Monroe into a pose to create a new representation of her or a version the public already knows about, and just waiting for her to drop her guard, Avedon has taken a photograph that is considered the most honest photograph of Marilyn Monroe. The cultural legacy of Monroe that still prevalent in contemporary culture is that of an archetypal celebrity movie star with a

known troubled private life. The photograph that Avedon took is of a worried and scared woman. Perhaps it is more a portrait of Norma Jeane Mortenson than it is of Marilyn Monroe.

In his introduction to Avedon's book, writer Harold Rosenburg suggests that despite photography being able to reproduce different images that show the same representation of someone, as they are so familiar, these images do not contribute any more to our understanding of that person:

> The moral principle of photographic portraiture is respect for the identity of the subject. Such respect does not come naturally in a medium that can without effort produce countless unrelated likenesses of the same object (Rosenberg in Avedon 1976).

My view is that the photographer has a moral obligation to not just respect who the subject is, but to show them as they think they should be seen, not necessarily how the public or the subject themselves would expect to be seen. In this case, a much greater representation of who the person is, the *parergon*, such as with the Marilyn Monroe portrait, will show through. This idea does assign the photographer with a lot of power. It is the skill of the photographer to be able to understand who the person is and to get this across without overly influencing them, that I believe is the key to a successful portrait.

Portrait photography had started to diverge away from certain gender ideals before the Second World War, however I think the biggest shift in pose on portrait photography came from the influence of visual culture after the war. As fashion became an aspirational commodity, rather than a necessity, marketed at all social classes in order to sell clothes, commercial photography influenced many women with visions of how they could see themselves. The influence of fashion and the importance of the fashion model in turn led to a celebrity culture of people who were looked up to, not because of their class or social standing, but from their own personality. In contrast to Victorian portraits where men and women were expected to pose in particular ways, post-war photography, as far as pose was concerned, allowed women to be more powerful. There were still some ideas that had continued from Victorian photography, the use of dramatic lighting to evoke a specific mood for example, the photographer was often still the person who directed the subject. However, in the case of Avedon's Marilyn Monroe portrait there are times when no direction could produce a more powerful portrait.

The Gaze

Concepts surrounding the Gaze were put forward by philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Jacques Derrida and 'plays a central role in theories of looking and spectatorship' (Sturken and Cartwright 2009), which can form relationships of power between the person viewing the image, and the subject depicted in the image. Academics Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright explain that the power relation between the viewer and the subject often conform to that which is different, which is often set at the level of the viewers cultural and social background. Psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan further developed gaze theory around his idea of an infant recognising themselves in a mirror for the first time, and thus becoming self-aware as to who it is looking back at them. As academic Henry Kripps continues, 'a gaze must also precipitate anxiety […] which, in turn, transforms the viewer's look into a self-directed, passive 'being looked at'' (Kripps 2010). Lacan further developed his theory to situate the object as the site of the gaze, and how it makes the viewer observe it. While Lacan suggested that any object could have the power to instil the gaze in a viewer, it was film theory where Lacanian gaze theory took hold, looking at the relationship between the subject - as an actor on screen - and the viewer. It is though film theory that the gaze became linked to the gender of the viewer, becoming known as the male gaze.

Figure 14

In the history of art, paintings were generally aimed towards a male audience, mostly due to the commodity of art than any particularly gendered sexual stereotypes. This produced many paintings of the female nude, posed with their bodies on display as objects to satisfy the often male patron. Figure 14 was painted by Titian for the Duke of Urbino as a gift to his wife and represents an allegory of marriage (Uffizi n.d). While originally a private gift, the image is now on public display and so the audience and context for the picture has changed. Within cultural studies, how people look at the image with regards to spectatorship, can engage in the gaze.

Writer and filmmaker Laura Mulvey used psychoanalysis to discuss the gendering of the spectator and gaze in relation to cinema, arguing that pleasure in looking has always been split between male/active and female/passive and that women in mainstream film were coded through a 'dominant patriarchal order' (Mulvey 1975). Although the basis of gaze is linked to the sexuality of the viewer, more contemporary theories on gaze have considered female viewers taking pleasure in looking at men or women, and likewise men taking pleasure in looking at men, regardless of their sexuality. 'Pleasure and identification are not dictated by one's biological sex, or even by one's sexuality' (Sturken and Cartwright 2009). Gaze theory places understanding and discourse about art and photography within visual realms that allow greater social commentary to take place, albeit from a primarily Western-centric viewpoint. It is an attempt to make visible the invisible power relationship between the viewer or spectator, and the 'other' in the image.

Academic Lucia Ruggerone discusses gender representation in fashion photography, noting that during the 1960's fashion models were more independent and self-confident. In the 1970's the depiction of women shifted to show them more ambiguous, emotionally detached, and posed more seductively. By the late 1980's the model was often partially nude with the focus of the image being predominantly on her, rather than the clothes, with the model placed in sexually provocative poses (Crane 1999). Ruggerone's analysis suggests the fashion photography, despite being directed predominantly at women, operates under the 'male gaze' that Mulvey suggests.

> This can be explained in part by the fact that, in the history of fashion photography, male photographers have dominated. In this case, the personality of the 'artist', and especially his sexual orientation (be it hetero or homosexual), has played an important role in the creation of the images, downplaying and sometimes disregarding the fact that the pictures are mainly consumed by women (Ruggerone 2006).

This influence by fashion (and advertising) photography highlights a distorted view of how women think they should be seen in photographs. As John Berger states 'The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female' (Berger 1972). This presents a hegemonic version of how

women are shown in fashion photography, emphasising sexuality in often demeaning poses, and depicting women as objects of desire. Academic Diana Crane suggests there is an age bias, with older women seeing this hegemonic view as demeaning, and younger women and teenagers as a sign of empowerment with the women shown in control of their sexuality (Crane 1999). In her study of fashion photography, Crane interviewed participants after showing them fashion and advertising images from *Vogue*. Crane's conclusions from questions on pose showed that all the participants were aware that poses were formed in order to sell clothes and did not covey any aspects of realism. The participants were more critical of poses that were over sexualised or demeaning, unless this was countered by more positive signs in the image. Crane concluded the study,

> suggests that women respond critically to the fashion press in part because these magazine express tensions and contradictions of a conflicted hegemony and in part because traditional values of perceptions of personal demeanour […] and modernist conceptions of social identity continue to shape women's perceptions of post-modern culture (Ibid).

While the 'male gaze' has been subjected to critical scrutiny for its simplistic description of objectifying women, contemporary theories consider more fluid gender identities of both the spectator and the subject, as well as race, class, social and generational differences. It also highlights that people who are more aware of social factors can understand that fashion photography presents a simulation of real life, rather than a reflection of it. While the idea of any specific gaze is now more blurred, looking at past photographs, especially early fashion photographs where the photographer was often male, one must consider how this impacted on the specific poses of the female models. As Ruggerone states, 'fashion advertisements present objectified female bodies, shown as objects of sexual desire, or portrayed in vulnerable and passive poses' (Ruggerone 2006). McDowell concludes that the formation of the pose is a result of the interaction between the photographer and the model, 'In this sense the pose and act/action of posing, as performed by the fashion model, is a process, practice and product that emerges from between the photographer/model relationship' (McDowell 2017). It is important to consider the influence the photographer has on pose along with their gender, as they may be asserting a dominance, even subconsciously, into how women should pose to appeal to certain fantasies. For example, posed lying on a bed looking suggestively at the viewer. This could then be read in the image by looking at the semiotics of the image and note how certain poses can carry specific meanings.

Chapter Seven: Contemporary Photography and Social Media

In the late 1990's the biggest shift in how photography was used and consumed since its invention occurred with the popularisation of digital photography. Before this, images were recorded onto a light sensitive medium such as a glass plate or film which required time and skill to develop and process into a tangible object. Digital photography uses an electronic sensor to record information, and digital storage to save the image allowing instant feedback on the LCD screen. This digitisation of the image allows people with computers and graphics software to manipulate the image, easily altering many different elements.

> Anyone with a digital camera, home computer, and a cable can download images not only to print them out as they are but also to copy them into programs in which they can be edited, enhanced, corrected, and manipulated to alter composition, framing, colour, and combinations of elements and scenes (Sturken and Cartwright 2009).

While many of these manipulation practices existed with analogue photography, Figure 15 shows an example of image manipulation from the 1880's where the woman's waist has been made slimmer. Digital photography allows image manipulation to become easier. For example, adding and removing people, backgrounds, and other elements from a picture, and merging many separate images to create a digital collage. This encourages the creation of new forms of media that only exist in a digital world across its many separate online platforms. Media academic Henry Jenkins termed this Convergence Culture, which he defines as 'the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want' (Jenkins 2006). The digital camera, computer and online photo sharing though dedicated websites like *Flickr*, or email, converged to produce the digital photography we have today. This itself converged in the late 2000's with the mobile phone and apps specifically built to take and share photos with a mobile device, without the need for a computer.

Our social lives are dominated by the digital world with instant messaging from friends, online banking, online shopping and streaming services for music, radio, TV and film. Photography and how we consume images are now a small part of our much larger postdigital world. Contemporary portrait photography is situated in this postdigital world, dominated by images from online advertising, pictures sent by email, social media, to the collection of family photographs on our phones.

Figure 15

Living in a postdigital world has a direct influence on how we take, understand, and consume photography. In the Victorian era, it was only professional photographers or affluent amateurs who took photographs. In the post-war years more people could take up photography as a hobby and enjoy it apart from amateur and professional photographers. I would argue that photography today, now converged with mobile phones, allows everyone the ability to take and share photos without the need of dedicated camera. This means that photography has become truly democratic, accessible by everyone. Many people who have grown up in a postdigital society may not even consider themselves a 'photographer' in the traditional sense, but they use photography to record and document different aspects of their life as a digital extension of their own memory. While John Berger wrote that the photograph was used as a 'memento of the absent' (Berger 2013), I believe he was alluding to photographs of people. I think this could be expanded to include absent memories, those memories that require an image to be recalled. We are increasingly using photography to record less meaningful aspects of our lives that can be easily forgotten. Contrary

to this, Barthes suggests 'not only is the photograph never, in essence, a memory, […] it actually blocks memory, quickly becomes a counter-memory' (Barthes 2000). According to Barthes, using photographs to replace memories removes the dynamic and unpredictability quality of a memory with that of a fixed historical record. With the fluid nature of digital photography, this fixed historical record is open to manipulation, and the sheer number of images that the non-photographer person creates may go against Barthes' idea of photography as counter-memory. Analogue photographs were tangible objects that were valued by what they connotated. For example, a deceased family member, whereas today, 'A digital photo or song has value for what it is, but also for what you can do with it' (Zimmerman cited in Greengard 2012). Academic John Zimmerman suggests that a digital photograph has an increased social value based on the ability for it to be shared and commented on online, and I would also argue for its ability to be manipulated to form counter-narratives.

Social Media

Today, one of the largest repositories for digital photographs is the social media platform Facebook founded in 2004. In April 2019, Facebook claimed to have over 2.5 billion users per month (Omnicore.com), with 350 million photos uploaded every day (Ibid). Facebook allows people to view and see photos their friends have shared and comment on them. Facebook and other social media platforms such as Instagram have replaced the family photo album as the traditional outlet of domestic photography and allowed a much wider audience access to view it (Le Moignan *et al* 2017). Domestic photography was usually private in nature, photographs of the family that were only intended to be seen by other family members or close friends. Given this wider audience, Facebook users now carefully curate what is uploaded to produce specific narratives of how they want other people to see them. Academics Priya Kumar and Sarita Schoenebeck, writing on family photography being uploaded to Facebook state, 'family pictures portray limited, structured depictions of the way people want their lives to appear' (Kumar & Schoenebeck 2015). This curation of images disrupts how we want ourselves to appear to others online, manipulating our own representation. Erving Goffman stated how important social interaction is for getting other people to understand who you are, and how different agents influence and manipulate (intentionally or unintentionally) the people around them to influence them in some way. 'When an individual appears in the presence of others, there will usually be some reason for him to mobilize his activity so that it will convey an impression to others which it is in his interests to convey' (Goffman 1969). While written long before Facebook existed,

Goffman's ideas still hold true in the online world. People interact with each other though their social media profiles with which photographs are a particularly important tool for conveying an impression of themselves to others. It is in the user's own interest to conform to how people expect them to appear, with the reward to be accepted by new friends, or to keep to a curated status quo among current friends. Facebook positioned itself as a social media platform with sharing of content at its core, but it has become a personal archive of people's lives, as academic Amber Cushing suggests:

> People not only view a Facebook account as a digital possession, they look at it as a digital storage locker for their lives. It's a place where they are able to put things they want to retain and where they can reflect on their identity (Cushing in Greengard 2012).

This reflection of identity means that people can edit how their past appears to others. A linier narrative no longer exists as photos can be deleted, or old images posted as recent. Writer and academic Miriam Hirsh suggests that 'Photographs are fragments of stories, never stories in themselves' (Hirsch 1997). It is these self-curated fragments of specific narratives in our lives that make up the singular postdigital narrative of who we want others to think we are. Our online persona may only be a small part of our own real-life personality, but it may be more important as it appeals to a larger audience.

As contemporary society is also a postdigital society, with many of us living a large part of our lives though a digital presence, forming any single representation through portrait photography is much harder to achieve. Photography curator and author Phillip Prodger was asked about identity in portrait photography in an interview for the website Lensculture. Prodger stated 'Identity is not a fixed thing, and no person is one-dimensional, so the idea that a single photograph can stand in for the totality of a person is a polite fiction at best' (Prodger in Lensculture, n.d). I agree with Prodger that a person's identity is in a constant state of flux, altering and changing based on life experiences. How the viewer of an image forms a representation of the subject though their pose would change throughout the subject's life, but Prodger contends that meaning can still be found within portrait photography. He goes on to explain that what makes a portrait interesting is that it depicts an exact representation of that person, their verisimilitude, taken at a specific time, in a specific space.

> There are two areas in which photography distinguishes itself from other media: verisimilitude […], and the capacity to capture discrete slices of time. Verisimilitude is an important question unto itself […] For me, the bigger question is the relationship to time. Combine verisimilitude and time, and you get something really interesting (Ibid).

That a photograph captures a thin slice of time is obvious but is somehow overlooked with portrait photography. Avedon's Monroe image may have been captured within a few seconds of him noticing her expression. Holding a pose allows the photographer more time to create a representation or capture a likeness. Such as the ones that Victorian photographers went to great lengths to form with the use of clamps and stands to hold the body still in time. But the resulting image, even a digital one could be considered outdated as the photograph only records how that person looked at that instant. I interviewed editorial photographer Jason Alden (appendix 3) who also agreed that 'photographic portraits are more about an interaction in time' (Alden in Osborne 2020), so the portrait at its simplest is just a visual record of the interaction between a photographer and their subject.

Figure 16

Jason Alden is an award-winning commercial photographer (Figure 16) who works for many national and international clients. I asked him if he arrives for a photoshoot with a preconceived idea of how to pose the subject, or if there are other factors involved. Alden replied that for some editorial shoots where there is an art director involved, both the pose and location have already been decided beforehand. This would limit how much the person being photographed is able to

show a side of their personality, and any representation in that image would conform to what the public would already know about them. However, newspaper shoots are a lot less structured, and there is a lot more room for the photographer to work with the subject to achieve a desired outcome.

Next, I asked if he thought it was possible to show representation in a portrait and if this depended on how well known the person was. He replied that public figures do have an angle of how they want the public to continue to see them, but most people will subconsciously have a preconceived idea of how they want to be shown. 'People are image savvy now, they know what they like because they physically 'like' it and that sticks - whether they want it to or not' (Ibid). That people are now much more aware of a wider visual culture that influences them is not a new idea, but in a postdigital society that is visually saturated with images it is harder to not be influenced by images from advertising or social media. On this influence on the portrait, Alden noted,

> Trends in portraiture shift; editorially I've seen it over the past 10 years there has been a move to a more natural looking portrait, less heavy lighting, with a more lifestyle vibe. I can totally see that being an influence from social media that has rippled down through art, photography, and film. (Ibid)

Alden's insight into real world portraiture reveals that posing someone is not always straightforward. While there is often a public perception which is maintained for some subjects, there are many more outside influences that can affect how poses are formed and used. It was interesting to discover that Alden considers that social media is much more of an influence on both photographers and their subjects. This has parallels with Erving Goffman's theories of 'hyper-ritualisazion', except that instead of advertising forming an idealized view of society that is then disseminated and reproduced by that society. It is social media that is being used by people to form what they think is an 'ideal' - by curating what images they show - which then influences the wider traditional media, including advertising.

I think Alden's comment that there is a shift towards more natural looking lifestyle images being influenced from social media comes from an aesthetic of 'amateur' or 'snapshot' photography that is posted to social media sites. These 'snapshots' are of people on holiday, enjoying themselves, or celebrating a family event, and not especially posing in a way that looks obviously posed. These images are what people are used to seeing on social media, so our visual culture has changed in response to these lifestyle images. This theory is backed up by academics Jonas Colliander and Ben Marder (2018) who found that brands who advertised on Instagram using the

snapshot aesthetic were much more likely to gain followers than brands that stuck to the traditional studio aesthetic.

> It appears that within social media, consumers resonate with brands that abide by the decorum of the media, which is discussed by prior research as informal, light-weight and phatic. […] As hypothesized based on aesthetics theory, the results support that within social media a snapshot aesthetic carries greater meaning for the consumers which they are able to translate more fluently (Colliander & Marder 2018).

Jason Alden suggested the simpler, more natural looking photographs that rely more on natural light and concentrate on the subject have become more prevalent in editorial photography in the last decade.

Another photographer I interviewed was Clare Hewitt, (appendix 4) who specialises in editorial portraits. I asked Clare what she thought the function of portrait photography was. Her reply was that it should be truthful, representative, and integral, making the photographer understand they are responsible for producing the effect of the overall image. Clare mentioned her way of approaching a portrait is to remove background elements until it is just the person on their own. Clare uses medium and large format cameras for her portraits which creates a purposeful disconnect between her and the subject, who is not directed into any specific pose, allowing them to be themselves. Figure 17 is Clare's portrait of singer Charlotte Church which I feel has a certain aesthetic similar to Victorian portraiture. For example, the clean, uncluttered background, the swathe of curtain, with the armchair at an angle. Large and medium format cameras produce a shallow depth of field, which separates the subject from the background, allowing them to stand out. This is helped too by Church's reddish blonde hair providing colour to an otherwise muted palette. Like Jason Alden, Clare thinks of a portrait session as an exchange, and the photograph the reflection on that exchange, depicting the subject at that particular moment in time.

> There is definitely an exchange between myself and the subject, sometimes more noticeably than others. I want the portrait to be a reflection of that exchange, but I mainly want to depict the person as they are in that moment (Hewitt in Osborne 2020).

The overriding theme in both photographers' answers is trying to depict a truthful representation of the subject with as minimal impact from the photographer's own influences as possible. This shows that they are both acutely aware of the power that the photographer has in forming a representation, and how little they want to interfere in how the subject is seen and understood by an audience.

Figure 17

Selfies

Social media is a carefully curated simulation of real life, showing an idealised representation that feeds back into influencing our own lives, how people are depicted and posed in photographs on social media should influence domestic portrait photography. However, it should be noted that traditional family albums have always been carefully curated. As Le Moignan *et al* state, 'Albums typically represent a romanticized, sanitized and relentlessly upbeat view of family life, where the sun always shines and children are impeccably well-behaved' (Le Moignan *et al* 2017). The construction of the family album offline conforms to well-worn social conventions which have moved into the online world, the differences are that the audience for these images has grown, and the content of the images has changed. Where the family album contained images of children's firsts, birthdays, weddings, and family anniversaries, and move online and the ease of digital photography has resulted in documenting everyday banality. This is highlighted in Le Moignan *et al,* who note that a paradox arises where the more banal and mundane the image, the more its likely to be shared online.

The 'selfie' - a spontaneous self-portrait taken on a digital device and uploaded to a social media site - has become ubiquitous with contemporary portrait photography as a way of showing self-representation (Figure 18). I contend that despite being a digital image, the selfie is 'disposable' and is not meant to be a fixed representation. It is rather a transitory image that may have more historical value. Who we were, rather than who we are. This idea is reinforced by theorist Alise Tifentale, who suggests that the selfie is a product of convergent culture.

> Selfies make us aware about a particular method of self-fashioning and communication that is historically time-specific in the sense that it could materialize only in the moment when several technologies have reached a certain level of development and accessibility (Tifentale n.d).

Tifentale's analysis of the selfie as a product of convergence also separates the selfie from traditional self-portraiture, where the act of sharing is an integral part of what makes a selfie a selfie. Social theorist Conrad David Murray comments that the selfie has been popularised as 'an expression of narcissism and self-loathing – or even as a consequence of profound loneliness' (Murray 2015), often unfairly directed at young women in their mid-teens to mid-twenties. Murray continues that selfie culture is publicly seen as a negative result of a consumer society where there is too much value placed on personality, and most criticisms levelled at the selfie focus primarily on personality flaws.
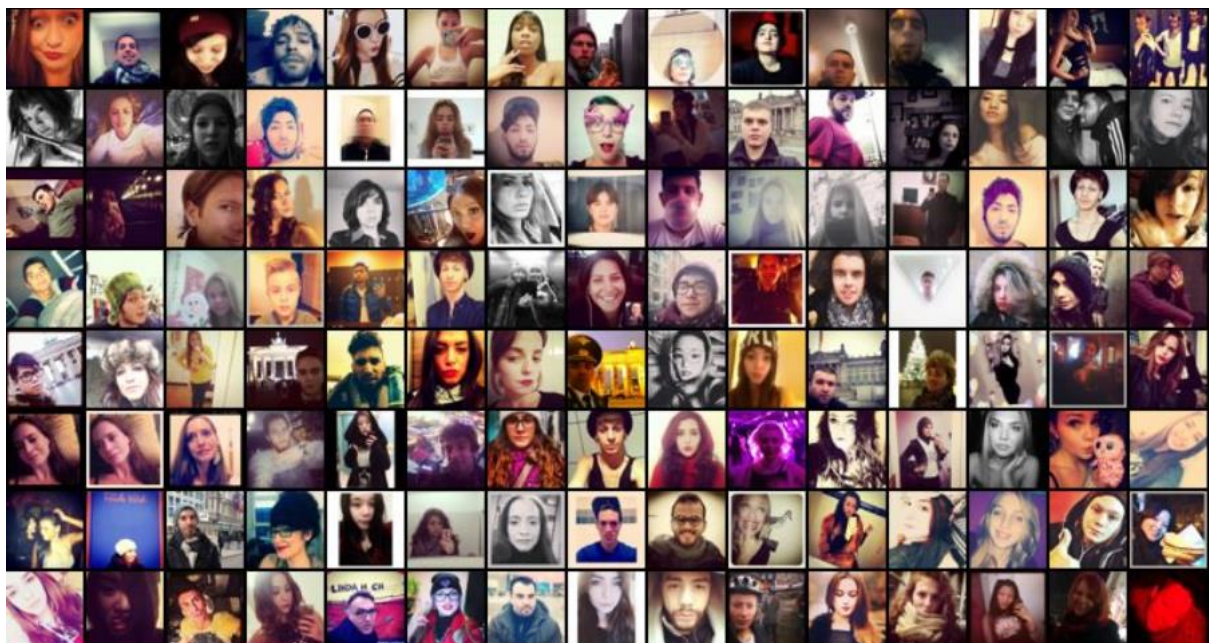

Figure 18

The selfie is a postdigital extension of the self-portrait, but one that gives the user much greater control over how their image is taken, edited and shared, including how and where it is shared.

Psychologist Annukka Lindell states that because of this control, poses are very carefully choreographed and selected to find the best one before it is posted, and many photographs are taken to find the right one to show. Lindell's analysis into pose in selfies highlighted a bias towards portraits showing the left cheek more than the right, which was also discovered in traditional painting and photographic portraits. This aligns with previous studies such as Nicholls' 2002 analysis into the bias of the left side of the face that was discussed in chapter five. Lindell's analysis of the left cheek appearing to be more emotionally expressive, was accounted for by the left side of the face being controlled by the emotion-dominant right brain hemisphere. As Lindell concludes, 'viewers perceive models in left cheek poses as more emotionally expressive and open than identical models in right cheek poses' (Lindell 2017). This highlights a psychological reason for how people pose themselves in selfies and wider portrait photography to unconsciously appeal to the viewer.

Online data analysis of the selfie has been constructed through the website *Selfie City* that collected data on 3800 selfies from cities such as Bangkok, Berlin, New York, Sao Paulo and Moscow (Figure 18). Their findings show that more women post selfies than men, and that women have more extreme poses, with the average amount of head tilt 50% higher than men, at 12.3° vs 8.2° (Selfiecity.net). Heads tilted to the side may indicate a self-awareness, as head tilt is often an a non-verbal indicator of attractiveness and trustworthiness (Krumhuber *at al* 2006), suggesting that women who want to appear more attractive may tilt their head in portraits or selfies.

Art historian and critic Jean-François Chevrier, writing in the mid-1980's, stated 'every self-portrait, even the simplest and least staged, is the portrait of another.' (Chevrier in Tifentale n.d) This shows how self-representation is mediated through societal norms and conventions so much that self-portraits become portraits of 'another'. Self-portraits are influenced by how we see ourselves though society, which then feedback into other peoples' self-portraits. This visual feedback is similar to Goffman's theory of advertising photography being influenced by society which is in turn influences advertising photography. Selfies and self-portraits end up contributing to a wider visual culture. Rather than being a narcissistic form of self-expression, they can be used, often by women, to take back control of their own image from the over sexualization of contemporary capitalist culture. As Conrad Murray concludes the use of the selfie could be an emancipation of how we form representations of ourselves:

> Perhaps it is in the young woman's representational contending with the most dehumanizing conditions of late capitalism, that they are able to envision themselves anew and to transcend the depreciatory vision that is so often imposed upon them (Murray 2015).

I agree with Murray's analysis of the selfie, it has formed from and is influenced by society. But I feel it is not the selfie that needs to change, but society itself. Using selfies as a form of self-representation aligns with Academic Richard Brilliant, who explains the exchange that a viewer experiances when looking at a portrait of someone. Usually it is the photographer who acts as a mediator between the subject and the image of them (Brilliant 1997), but in self-portraits and selfies, it is the subject who is also the photographer. In other words, the portrait and therefore the representation of that person is unmediated which can allow for the creation of a more truthful representation, but also one that may be exaggerating certain parts of their persona.

Using *parergon* to analyse the many poses used in Selfies produces an interesting outcome. As a postdigital form of self-portraiture, how people pose will depend on the audience and how they want to represent themselves for that audience. The act of posting selfies is usually confined to extraverts and social exhibitionists, with women posting more selfies than men (Sorokowska *et al* 2016). How the pose is used in selfies is quite subtle and is often limited to the head, which concludes that *parergon* could be determined though facial expression and head movements alone. Previous studies have linked the left side of the face to emotion (Lindell 2017, Nicholls *et al* 2002), and the angle of the head to perceived attractiveness (Krumhuber *at al* 2006). For selfies, *parergon* is the subtle head movements that allow the viewer to subconsciously form a representation of the person's attractiveness, trustworthiness, or if they are more emotionally focused. Concepts that would be extremely hard to convey though traditional means but are able to be depicted though subtleties in pose and be decoded subconsciously. Selfies are exaggerated form of representation as they are linked to how the person in the photograph sees themselves, rather than the photographer.

Rineke Dijkstra

Rineke Dijkstra is a contemporary Dutch portrait photographer who photographs adolescents as they transition into adulthood, producing images that appear to have both an air of uncomfortability and familiarity to them, as the viewer can empathise with the subjects. Many of Dijkstra's portraits conform to a deadpan aesthetic, which writer and curator Charlotte Cotton defines as 'a cool, detached and keenly sharp type of photography' (Cotton 2014). It uses a more objective subject-oriented approach without any obvious influences by the photographer on how the viewer should interpret the images. Writer Aron Vinegar goes further, calling deadpan photography 'an approach to photographic presentation that is devoid of subjective emotion or

affect' (Vinegar 2009). I believe the detached mode of deadpan photography changes the viewer of the image into an observer and allows them to construct their own views on the images.

Between 1992 and 1996, Dijkstra took a series of photographs titled *The Bathers* of young people emerging from the sea onto the beach taken on locations in Europe and America (Figure 19, Figure 21). Using the deadpan aesthetic, each portrait has been constructed with the subject shown full-length, with the sea behind them. The photograph is titled with the location of the photograph and the date it was taken, rather than who is in the photograph. This anonymity allows the formation of new narratives by the viewer/observer as to who is represented in the photographs.

Figure 19

Figure 19 shows a young girl in a yellow bathing costume on a beach at Kolobrzeg, Poland. The curved pose that the girl is holding has similarities to Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, standing with her head to one side, weight on one leg, and her arm resting on her other leg. We do not know if

she was asked to pose this way, however looking at other poses in the same series this was probably her own subconscious choice rather than being directed. She has been photographed square on to the camera, a pose that could be considered unflattering and harshly documentative. As John Tagg notes, the head-on portrait was often used in social surveys, where 'this code of social inferiority framed the meaning of representations' (Tag 1988). The head-on portrait gives the image a documentary feel, recording who the person was, rather than who the person is. The picture has been artificially lit like fashion photographs, with a diffuse flash making the subject stand out from the background, revealing the overcast grey sky behind her. The girl's pose appears quizzical but quite self-assured as if she is comfortable posing in front of the camera. Her expression is blank, but her head tilted to one side makes her appears thoughtful and, as previously noted, is also an indicator of self-awareness. The camera's viewpoint is lower than the subject, so the viewer is looking up at her, a compositional choice that runs throughout the series of portraits. This lower viewpoint does not demean the subjects, especially as they are young people, and gives them a more commanding demeanour that suggests the viewer should respect them. Lecturer and writer Julian Stallabrass comments on deadpan portraiture such as Dijkstra's saying 'The subject remains still before the lens, showing little or no activity other than self-presentation. The subject's awareness of the camera is a manifest theme of the picture, and this is demonstrated by the way the eyes meet the lens' (Stallabrass 2007).

Stallabrass compares Dijkstra to Avedon, who sought out 'others' to photograph. Avedon wrote 'I am observing how he moves, reacts, expressions that cross his face so that, in making the portrait, I can heighten through instruction what he does naturally, what he is' (Avedon in Stallabrass 2007). Avedon's style of portraiture for his '*In the American West*' portraits were taken in muted light with a plain white background to draw the viewer into concentrating solely on the subject. Figure 20 is an example of Avedon's *In the American West* portraits, and depicts a young man holding a strange hunched pose, with his shirt pulled over his neck, revealing his torso and cigarette packs tucked into the front of his jeans. His chin is dropped, and he is staring intently at the camera. This does not appear to be a pose that the subject would have adopted naturally, suggesting that Avedon's influence was to make him appear stranger, or look tougher than he is. While not considered 'deadpan', Avedon's style of photography shows that using a minimal background means that nearly all the interpretation in the photograph comes from how the subject has been posed.
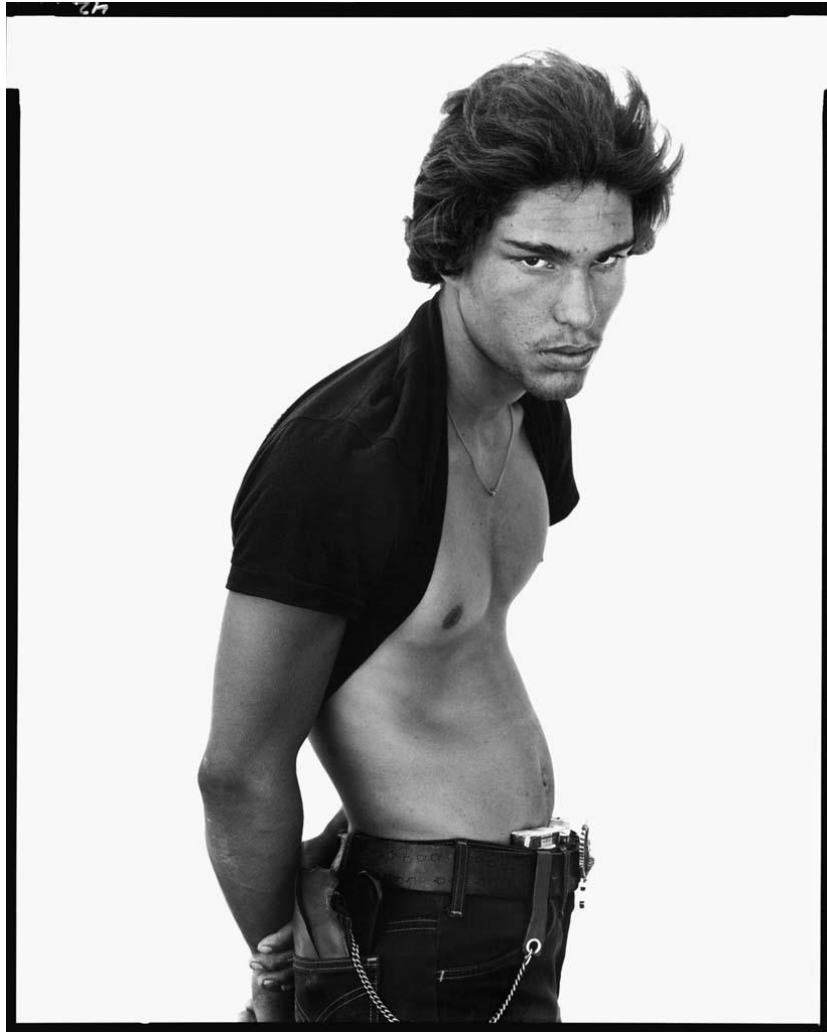
Figure 20

The deadpan aesthetic of photography puts the subject firmly as the focus of the image and allows them to pose how they feel best represents them. However, this also allows the photographer more control in suggesting how they should pose in order to produce a specific look. However, unlike Avedon, Dijkstra does not direct her subjects into any pose, but she does choose them, in a way editing potential candidates before she even takes a photograph of them. In *The Bathers* series of photographs, the main element that stands out is the pose. Dijkstra noticed that the pose varied depending on the country she is photographing in. Compared to Eastern European countries, in America people were a lot more self-conscious, perhaps more aware of their own self-image, which shows though in the way they pose. Figure 21, taken in South Carolina, America, shows a girl in a peach bikini, with rings on her fingers and a necklace, suggesting a knowledge of fashion, holding back her long frizzy blonde hair. Although similar in pose to Figure 19, her shoulders are turned slightly away from the camera and her legs are firmly together suggesting that she is not too comfortable about the encounter. This comes across in her expression in which she is staring directly at the camera, almost aware of who could be staring back at her. This could be an example

of Lacanian Gaze. The girl in the image displays a self-awareness that not only is the camera looking at her, but also the viewer of the resulting photograph. This creates an anxiety in her pose, which comes across as showing her as very shy and self-conscious creating tension, making the image slightly uncomfortable to view. She does not appear to have the same comfort in her photo being taken as the girl in Figure 19, whose swimming costume and appearance may be less fashionable in comparison, but whose pose is much more confident and self-assured.

Figure 21

The apparent simplicity in the deadpan aesthetic of Dijkstra's work means that the subjects can present themselves as they are. As both Alden and Hewitt discussed in their interviews, to them portraiture is an encounter. Dijkstra's photographs are a record of her encounter with young people at an instant in time at a specific location. The only information the viewer can use to form a

representation of the subjects is their pose and the location the image was taken. Stallabrass notes that Dijkstra's anonymous portraits, taken with deadpan aesthetic with minimal surroundings, may appear to conform to certain ethnographic style photographs that have long since been critisised for their use in classification and control of 'the other'.

However, unlike the ethnographic photographs of the Victorian era with their colonial subtext, the ethnographic undertones in Dijkstra's work are levelled due to the stylistic choice of the deadpan aesthetic and the fact the subjects are predominantly Western. This creates a dialogue that may show the subject as a reflection of the viewer, who can identify as 'other'. Cotton highlights that any realities or truths that show in deadpan photography 'revolve around very subtle signs of how people react to being photographed; the observations artists make about how their subjects address the camera and the photographer in front of them' (Cotton 2014). As Avedon commented that his portraits say more about him, Dijkstra has said that *The Bathers* series act more like a self-portrait (Dijkstra in Stallabrass 2007). This could be interpreted that each portrait reflects who Rineke Dijkstra is more than it reveals who the person in front of the camera is, one that could be reinforced by the anonymity of her subjects.

Figure 22 is a portrait photograph taken by me of Heather Cooper, an author living on the Isle of Wight, for her author profile in her debut novel. For this portrait, the publisher had given a brief as to what they wanted, which amounted to a head and shoulders shot against a clean background. I know Heather well, so approaching the shot I wanted to produce a portrait that fulfilled the brief that also fitted into my overall aesthetic for clean, minimal photography. Discussing the photograph with Heather beforehand, I wanted to use natural light, so my primary consideration was how best to utilise the light coming into the room. Heather's flat faces north, and the adjacent building gives a soft reflected light into it. I used a silver reflector on the left and below Heather to lift the shadows and reduce the contrast. Once the light was suitable, I was able to direct Heather into a general position, sitting on a chair turned slightly towards the window. Like Clare Hewitt, I did not direct Heather into any specific pose, instead we talked and as Heather became more comfortable in front of the camera, I tripped the shutter when Heather naturally posed herself. This I believe gives the portrait a much more personal quality to it, as the influence of the photographer is used beforehand in siting the location for the portrait and manipulating the light. The subject is then allowed to pose themselves in order to convey their own personality rather than the photographer's idea of it.

Figure 22

Like Clare Hewitt and Jason Alden, my portrait of Heather is a record of an encounter. As the photographer, I hope my influence in the photograph is minimal. At the time the image was taken, I was not too concerned with small details as the overall aesthetics were more important at the time. Looking at the photograph a couple of years later as a viewer, I notice Heather's pearl earring, necklace and red lipstick emphasising her smile and providing a splash of colour within a muted palette. All these small parts that make up the photograph, along with how Heather is posing, create a representation of who is the subject. This is formed by my own habitus and understanding of the visual cues that make up a representation of her. As Marianne Hirsch states, 'Between the viewer and the recorded object, the viewer encounters, and/or projects, a screen made up of dominant mythologies and preconceptions that shapes the representation' (Hirsch 1997). As a viewer I have a different interpretation of an image to that as a photographer. As the photographer I was there to record a likeness of Heather at a specific time, in a specific location that reflected who I know Heather to be, but also one that aligned with a brief from the publishers. Subsequently viewing the picture, it is difficult to separate myself from being there or knowing

the subject, but taking it at face value, and ignoring the knowledge of the brief and the lighting, I do see a portrait that forms an accurate representation of Heather.

I see the *parergon* in this image as the small visual cues, the earring, the lipstick, the smile, and slight tilt of the head. They are all supplemental to the image, another portrait could contain none of these, and may not form a representation in the same way, but they are intrinsically linked to Heather, and allow the viewer to construct a representation of the identity of her. The pose is probably the most important visual cue, subtle shifts in expression or head tilts can be picked up and read by the viewer, allowing them to form a representation.

Contemporary photography is hugely influenced by social media and the formation of pose and how pose is used is also subjected to the interpretation of wider visual culture. Certain aesthetics such as the snapshot aesthetic have found a home in sites such as Instagram, influencing how commercial photography operates to appeal to users, emulating their own domestic, everyday photography. How we pose in this type of photograph is still a reflection on who we are, but as the photograph now has greater value as a social tool, more importance is given to nuances such as head tilt and direction. The stripped back, detached aesthetic of deadpan photography with anonymous subjects fits into our postdigital society, can link back to the stripped back studio portraits of the mid-19th century exaggerating a person's standing in society. The current mass of contemporary portrait photographs that document 21st century life, from family photos to selfies, are closer to showing who we are at this specific point in time, ready to be replaced by ever more photographs in order to capture a more truthful representation of who we think we are.

Chapter Eight: Finding Representation in Portraits

Since its invention one of the main uses of the portrait photograph that has continued is to record the family. Material photograph albums have converged with the internet to produce online photography sites that can archive our family photographs and share them with distant relatives. The personal photographic record of who we were can help create a representation of ourselves though family portrait photographs. As author and academic Marianne Hirsch comments, 'photographs provide perhaps even more than usual some illusion of continuity over time and space' (Hirsch 1997). This illusion of continuity is what draws me to my own family photographs and is why we want to treasure them. Being able to see our ancestors and link them directly to us gives family photographs a power to see ourselves and who we are in the picture.

Figure 23

Figure 23 is a family photograph of my paternal Great Uncle, Leslie Osborne. Leslie is shown in his Salvation Army uniform but is holding a casual pose with one hand in his pocket and weight on one leg. He is looking directly at the camera with an expressionless face, but his pose denotes

a relaxed attitude. The background appears to be a garden, suggesting that the photograph has been planned rather than as quick snapshot. Leslie was born in 1913 and was killed by a tram in London in 1931. This image is the only one of him as a young man, taken when he was around 17 or 18, and reminds me of my Grandfather who was born in 1921. Family photographs can help form our own identity, but unless recorded with who the person is and where it was taken can often leave photographs displaced, allowing for counter-narratives to form. If it were not for the family history about Leslie, this could be any member of my family who were all in the Salvation army until the 1930's. My Grandfather was ten when Leslie was killed, and to my knowledge never spoke of his brother. Looking at this image we can see the depiction of a real person rather than a recalled memory or story. Academic Celia Lury suggests that the photographic frame, frames not only the person, but their pose which acts as a vehicle that belongs to the individual (Lury 1998). This idea is similar to my theory of *parergon*, using the pose as a frame that can form a representation of the individual. Looking at Figure 23 I can get a glimpse of who Leslie Osborne was, and by doing so a greater understanding of my own family, and in turn myself.

That family photographs can allow us to find out more about ourselves, could consider them as a form of self-portrait, each one building up a more in-depth representation of ourselves. Considering family photographs as self-portraits Hirsch writes 'Just as the family picture can be read as a self-portrait, so the self-portrait always includes the other (Hirsch 1997). Hirsch not only considers family photography as a form of self-portrait, but the self-portrait as part of a wider body of photographs that make up a greater representation of our own place within the family. These photographs themselves then keep the continuity of family photography though time.

Discussing the photographs relation to time, Roland Barthes wrote:

> What founds the nature of photography is the pose. […] looking at a photograph I inevitably include in my scrutiny the thought of that instant, however brief, in which a real thing happened to be motionless in front of the eye (Barthes 2000).

Barthes ties the pose to the photograph as an important part of not only understanding who is in the photograph, but also to the nature of the photograph itself. A pose needs to only last a split second, but through a photograph it can last forever, outlasting the person in the image, and be the sole sign used to form a representation of the subject. Hirsch states 'As we pose, we assume particular masks; as we read photographs, we project particular masks, particular ideological frames, onto the images' (Hirsch 1997). Hirsch is suggesting that in posing for a photograph, we assume a mask to hide or pronounce what aspect of our personality we want people to see in the

photograph. This extends to the reading of the photograph, in that we read photographs with preconceived ideas of how to interpret them based on our habitus. For example, my personal connection to the photo of my Great Uncle**Error! Reference source not found.** will influence my reading of it compared to someone who only sees a young man in a garden. Hirsch extends the mask metaphor to the photographer who has the power to conceal, or mask, things in the image, in much the same way that Victorian photographers would pose the subject or light them to hide defects. Barthes wrote 'since every photograph is a contingent (and thereby outside of meaning), Photography cannot signify (aim at a generality) except by assuming a mask' (Barthes 2000). This is to say that to understand meaning in a photograph, we can use the metaphor of a mask to both read any signs in the image. Richard Brilliant continues the mask metaphor, suggesting that the photographer uses a mask in the form of a series of 'formulaic expressions, whose content is diluted by property' (Brilliant 1997) that can be used to signify how the person can look. For example, strong and assertive, or relaxed and friendly. By using well-worn and understood forms of expression enabled the portrait photographer to hide the subject in 'a mask of convention' (Ibid). Brilliant continues to explain how literal masks are used as an object in rituals by tribal communities to take on the form of another being. In portrait photography, the masks are figurative, but can still allow the subject to take on a specific persona or conceal something that they do not want other people to see.

This concealment could mean to hide a past tragedy, for example it may be harder to read loss though a photograph unless there are other signs in the image that can connoted this. During the Victorian era it was expected that widows should wear mourning dress throughout the time they were supposed to mourn their husbands. This can help in the interpretation of the photograph using clothes, as well as pose, to visualise a concept such as a death in the family. I believe the mask analogy is an important idea in understanding representation in portrait photographs, however it may often be the mask that the viewer sees in the photograph, leading to their interpretation of the person being incorrect. As Brilliant concludes,

> The emergence of the subject revealed in the portrait must take into account the fact that self-effacement behind the mask is consistent with the social nature of men and women, all of whom (re)present themselves in public (Ibid).

Figure 24 is a photograph of my Great-Great Grandmother, Emily Osborne, taken in the 1890's. What draws me to this photograph is not only the family connection, but that it is one of the oldest photographs I have of a family member allowing me the ability to see a direct ancestor and the family resemblance.

Figure 24

Emily is sat in a slightly awkward pose, leaning to her right, with her arm resting on the bench. Her body is turned slightly to face the left, but her face is square on to the camera, looking directly at the viewer. Her expression appears slightly sad but proud, with a slight tilt of her head to the left. She is wearing all black except for a broach, and her wedding ring is shown prominently on her clenched fist. Her husband Henry died in 1893, which may account for the black dress being mourning dress and could date the photograph to between 1893 and 1895, considering the two-year mourning period for a husband in the Victorian era. Unlike Leslie, nothing is known about Emily so there is no memory of her within the family, only her existence through her portrait photograph, and what we can read into the photograph. Essayist Susan Sontag commented 'All

Photographs are *memento mori*. […] Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt' (Sontag 1977). I contend that while Sontag's comment that photographs can be reminders of death, they are more commonly used as a reminder of who has lived, supporting John Berger's use of them as a reminder of someone's absence (Berger 2013).

Richard Brilliant discusses a dichotomy that arises thought looking at portrait photographs, especially of family members, that while they clearly show who the person in the photograph is, they may not represent fully how people understand that person to be. The portrait ends up creating a new representation of them that does not fit with how they appeared in real life. 'The reception given to a portrait by the viewer […] conflicts with the normative function of a representation to produce something clearly distinct and distant from the person represented' (Brilliant 1997). It is because of this problem that anonymous family photographs, especially of people from a distant memory or postmemory, are often assigned to people based the viewers interpretation of the picture aligning with a specific memory, regardless of whether the person in the picture is actually the person recalled.

Like selfies, collecting family photography is about creating a representation of the self. It would be possible to remove photographs from a family album that did not fit into a personal narrative of how one wants to be reminded of certain memories. As discussed in chapter seven, digital photography furthers this by its ease of manipulation, with the ability to remove or add people into images, creating new narratives and false memories. However, this is a simplistic view considering contemporary digital photography in the same way as older analogue photography. Academic Jose Van Dijck argues that contemporary society has shifted the function of photography away from a site of memory, to one as a formation of personal identity, highlighting the

> significant shift from personal photography being bound up with memory and commemoration towards pictures as a form of identity formation; cameras are used less for the remembrance of family life and more for the affirmation of personhood and personal bonds (Van Dijck 2008).

This shift in the function of photography means that photography has more value as a tool to aid in the representation of the self. This can be seen though photographs such as selfies, posting up images on social media, self-portraits, and the act of having portrait photographs taken. Many people have school photos of their children, which could be seen as a site of memory - my children

were young once and went to this school - but through Van Dijck's theory, it could be more a personal affirmation of being a parent and the bond to your children that make up a representation of who you are. Van Dijck's theory can explain the apparent need for people to document their lives constantly on social media, using photography to show other people who they are and who they know to create a self-mediated representation of themselves.

Through family photographs we aim to create an identity of ourselves. The narratives that can form from seeing our ancestors in photographs can be called postmemory. Marianne Hirsch defines postmemory as a form of memory that is not recalled, but though its connection with an object 'is mediated […] through an imaginative investment and creation' (Hirsch 1997), suggesting people form a memory of something they did not experience first-hand, but by growing up around dominant narratives passed down from other generations. Family photographs can provide these direct links to the past and 'represent what has been' (Ibid). Looking at the photographs of my ancestors, I can use their pose to discover the *parergon,* enabling me to construct an identity of them that through postmemory can help me understand my own identity. That a photograph is a record of an encounter holds to John Berger's 'memento of the absent' (Berger 2013). It is not necessarily the person in the photograph who is absent, but the encounter, the record of them at that particular moment in time that is fixed in the photograph.

Portraits are an encounter fixed in time, and how the subject is posed applies only for that instant, what photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson called 'The Decisive Moment', 'the moment when form briefly takes on an essential meaning' (Lury 1998), this could be taken to read when the pose of the subject best represents who they are at that particular moment. It is the skill of the photographer to catch this 'decisive moment', but this may only be one fleeting moment in many. All portrait photography may form slightly different representations if they were taken on a different day or in a different location, as the subject may be influenced by these and pose differently. A different representation would record if they were ill or had just received good or bad news. Portrait photography is a document of a person in a slice of time, while *parergon* in portrait photography can help form a representation at a specific time, it cannot reveal the identity of anyone. Phillip Prodger stated 'Identity is constantly in flux. […] Who we are is indefinable and unmeasurable' (Prodger in Lensculture n.d).

Conclusion

Pose is an important part of displaying who we are in portrait photographs and can help the viewer from a greater understanding of who that person is. The act of taking a portrait photograph takes a small amount of time but has the power of fixing that representation forever. Pose allows us to alter how we come across to the viewer, but this is a two-way conversation with the photographer as they are complicit in deciding exactly when to take the photo, and may have influenced how the person in front of the camera acts. How pose is used has been influenced by many different aspects of popular visual culture. The biggest influence, especially on how women pose, has been fashion photography. This has created poses that have emphasised female sexuality to market consumer goods, although there is a universal acknowledgement these poses are formulated to create a simulated ideal and are not real.

In Victorian photography, the portrait photograph was directed by the photographer who had to formulate how best to photograph someone that would conform to how the subject thought they wanted to be seen. Often by posing them in a way that raised their social standing and conformed to a gendered stereotype. With contemporary portrait photography, people are a lot more aware of the value of images. What they can say about a person, and where they are viewed, which is usually now online or through a digital device. This has given the portrait photograph new meaning as a way of mediating our own identity in a postdigital world.

The photographer has a duty to record the subject in such a way as to reveal something new about that person which can add to a total representation of them, such as with Richard Avedon's portrait of Marylin Monroe (Figure 13). However, many portrait photographs may reveal more who the photographer is than it shows who the subject is. This may come from the photographer's style, or how they go about posing the subject that aligns more with their own aesthetic tastes than an attempt at representing the subject. Selfies remove the photographer and allows the subject to pose and control the photograph, in effect creating a better representation of themselves, but one that can be subject to even greater influences from social media.

Portrait photography cannot convey a total representation of the subject. Our personality changes throughout our lives based on our experiences, careers, where we live, or who we associate with. From my interviews, a portrait photograph has been defined as a record of an encounter between

the photographer and the subject at a specific point in time. It would not be possible to capture all the life experiences that make up our identity in a single image, but it is possible to use the pose in portrait photography to understand who the subject was at that particular moment in time, in the presence of that particular photographer.

Using the concept of *parergon* as a way of thinking about how pose is used in portrait photography to frame a representation of the subject is helpful, however this would only hold true for that individual portrait. *Parergon* may not be evident in all portrait photographs and may be useful as an extension of Barthes concept of *studium* and *punctum,* providing greater visual analysis to help understand the representation of the person in the photograph. However, one must be aware of the concept of masks that can hide certain elements that make up a representation of someone, as though this mask the viewer can form an incorrect assumption. Masks can signify how someone appears as much as they can conceal it.

Portrait photographs are transient objects depicting a person at a specific moment in time. Pose is used at a tool to aid in the representation of the subject, but like the photograph itself, relies on a secondary agent to interpret it. The viewer relies on decoding signs and signals in the photograph, including subconscious ones from the subtle variations in facial gestures that can constitute pose. Where the photograph is viewed, our relationship to the subject, and our own habitus are all factors in how we understand the use of pose to form a greater understanding of the subject in portrait photography.

[19,384]

Image References:

ALDEN, J., (n.d) *Ken Livingston* [digital image] Available from:
http://www.jasonalden.com/site/index.php/portrait-photographer/ Accessed
22/07/2020

AVEDON, R., 1953 *Marella Agnelli, New York, December 16, 1953* [digital image] Available
from: https://www.avedonfoundation.org/the-work Accessed 23/07/2020

AVEDON, R., 1957 *Marilyn Monroe, actress, New York City, May 6, 1957* [digital image]
Available from: https://www.avedonfoundation.org/the-work Accessed 23/07/2020

AVEDON, R., 1980 *Juan Patricio Lobado, Carney, Rocky Ford, Colorado, August 23 1980*
[digital image] Available from: https://independent-photo.com/news/richard-avedon-
the-american-west Accessed 04/08/2020

BEATON, C., 1929. *Nancy Beaton as a Shooting Star for the Galaxy Ball, 1929* [digital image]
Available from:
https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2017/may/10/early-work-cecil-
beaton-photography-beetles-and-huxley-in-pictures Accessed 06/08/2020

BRADING & CANTELO, c1880. *Photograph of a man sitting.* [photograph] At: Carisbrooke
Castle Museum (NETCC:2016.778)

DIJKSTRA, R., 1992. *Kolobrzeg, Poland, July 26 1992.* [digital image] Available from:
https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/display/rineke-dijkstra Accessed
04/08/2020

DIJKSTRA, R., 1992 *Hilton Head Island, S.C., USA, June 24, 1992* [digital image] Available
from: https://publicdelivery.org/rineke-dijkstra-beach-portraits/ Accessed
04/08/2020

KIRK, W, U., c.1890. *Hidden mother with baby* [photograph] At: At: Carisbrooke Castle
Museum (NETCC:2016.438)

HEWITT, C., (n.d) *Charlotte Church, The Independent Magazine.* [digital image] Available
from https://clarehewitt.co.uk Accessed 22/07/2020

HEWITT, C., (n.d) *Untitled.* [digital image] Available from https://clarehewitt.co.uk Accessed
22/07/2020

HUGHES, J., & G. MULLINS, c1881. *Photograph of a woman.* [photograph] At: Carisbrooke
Castle Museum (NETCC:2016.614)

HUGHES, J., & G. MULLINS, c1880. *Seated Man with a Cane.* [photograph] At: Carisbrooke
Castle Museum (NETCC:2016.589)

HUGHES, J., & G. MULLINS, c1880. *Woman with image manipulation* [photograph] At: Carisbrooke Castle Museum (NETCC:2016.614)

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM (n.d) *Women's Land Army Poster.* [digital image] Available from: https://media.iwm.org.uk/ciim5/192/766/large_000000.jpg Accessed 14/07/2020

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM (n.d) *Serve in the WAAF with the men who fly.* [digital image] Available from: https://media.iwm.org.uk/ciim5/142/707/large_000000.jpg Accessed 14/07/2020

MULLINS, G., c.1909. *Woman with flowers* [photograph] At: Carisbrooke Castle Museum (NETCC:2016.624)

OSBORNE, M., 2018. *Heather Cooper, Author* [digital image] Authors Archive

OSBORNE, M., (n.d) *Leslie Osborne c.1930* [digital image] Authors Archive

OSBORNE, M., (n.d) *Emily Osborne b.1849* [digital image] Authors Archive

SELFIECITY. (n.d) *Screenshot of Selfies.* [digital image] Available from http://selfiecity.net/ Accessed 18/08/2020

TITIAN, 1538. *Venus of Urbino.* [digital image] available from: https://www.visituffizi.org/artworks/venus-of-urbino-by-titian/ Accessed 06/08/2020

VOGUE, 1945. *Vogue cover, September 1945.* [digital image] Available from https://archive.vogue.com/issue/19450915 Accessed 15/07/2020

VOGUE, 1946. *Vogue cover, March 1946.* [digital image] Available from https://archive.vogue.com/issue/19450915 Accessed 15/07/2020

Bibliography

AVEDON, R., & H. ROSENBERG, 1976. *Portraits.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux

AVEDON, R., M. M. HAMBOURG, & M. FINEMAN 2002. *Richard Avedon portraits*. New York: Harry N. Abrams/Metropolitan Museum of Art

AHMED, O., 2018. *The 1950s Richard Avedon Portrait Which Helped Define Modern Beauty* [online]. Available from: https://www.anothermag.com/art-photography/11117/the-1950s-richard-avedon-portrait-which-helped-define-modern-beauty Accessed 22/07/2020

ALLISON, P. M., (ed) 1999. *The Archaeology of Household Activities.* London/New York: Routledge

ATKINSON, D. et al., 2005. *Cultural Geography: a critical dictionary of key concepts*. London: I.B. Tauris

BARTHES, R., 1972. *Mythologies.* New York: Noonday Press

BARTHES, R. & S. HEATH, 1977. *Image, Music, Text: Essays selected and translated by S Heath*. Fontana

BARTHES, R. & R. HOWARD, 2000. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. London: Vintage

BENJAMIN, W., 1999. *Selected Writings Vol 2. 1927-1934*. Cambridge MA/London: Harvard University Press

BERGER, J., 1978. *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin

BERGER, J. & G. DYER, 2013. *Understanding a Photograph*. London: Penguin

BRILLIANT, R., 1991. *Portraiture.* London: Reaktion

BOURDIEU, P., 1979. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge

BURGIN, V., 1982. *Thinking Photography*. Basingstoke: Macmillan

BURSTOW, S., 2016. *The Carte De Visite and Domestic Digital Photography in Photographies Vol 9:3. 287-305* [online] Available from: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17540763.2016.1202309 Accessed 05/05/2020

CLANCY, S. M., & S. J. DOLLINGER, 1993. Photographic depictions of the self: Gender and age differences in social connectedness. *Sex Roles* 29, 477–495 (1993)

CLARKE, G., 1992. *The Portrait in Photography*. London: Reaktion

COLLIANDER, J & B, MARDER, 2018. 'Snap happy' brands: Increasing publicity effectiveness through a snapshot aesthetic when marketing a brand on Instagram. In *Computers in Human Behavior* Volume 78, January 2018, Pages 34-43.

COTTON, C., 2014. *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*, 3rd ed. London: Thames & Hudson

CRANE, D. 1999. Gender and Hegemony in Fashion Magazines. *The Sociological Quarterly, 40(4),*

DERRIDA, J., 1987. *The Truth in Painting Translated by G. Bennington and I. McLeod*. London/Chicago: University of Chicago Press

DURDEN, M. & C. RICHARDSON, (eds) 2000. *Face On: Photography as Social Exchange*. London: Black Dog Publishing

DYHOUSE, C., 2011. *Glamour: Women, History, Feminism.* London: Zed Books

EDWARDS, E. & J. HEART, 2004. *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*. London/New York: Routledge

EILERAAS, K., 2003. Reframing the Colonial Gaze: Photography, Ownership, and Feminist Resistance. *MLN, 118*(4), 807-840.

ELKINS, J., 2007. *Photography Theory*. London/New York: Routledge Accessed 11/08/2020

FESTER, J., 2014. Constructing the sexual self: Wolfgang Tillmans's portraiture and BUTT magazine. *Visual culture & gender.*, 9

FLUSSER, V., 2007. *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, 3rd ed. London: Reaktion

FORRESTER, M., 2000. *Psychology of the Image*. London/New York: Routledge

GOFFMAN, E., 1969. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Great Britain: The Penguin Press

GOFFMAN, E., 1976. *Gender Advertisements.* London: Macmillan.

GORDON, E. & G. NAIR, 2003. *Public Lives: Women, Family, and Society in Victorian Britain.* New Haven/ London: Yale University Press

GRANT, J., 2011. *Kant's Critique of Judgement: Lecture 1* [podcast] 15th March 2011 Available from: http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/4-kants-critique-judgement-lecture-1 Accessed 16/05/2020

GREENGARD, S., 2012. Digitally Possessed. *Communications of the ACM,* May 2012, Vol. 55 No. 5, Pages 14-16

HIRSCH, M., 1997. *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*. Harvard: Harvard University Press

HUGHES, K., 2013. *Early Victorian family portraits and the disappearing mother* [online] Available from: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/photography/10475137/Early-Victorian-family-portraits-and-the-disappearing-mother.html Accessed 6/08/2020

JENKINS, H., 2006 *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide.* New York: NYU Press.

KRIPPS, H., 2010. The Politics of the Gaze: Foucault, Lacan and Žižek, *Culture Unbound*, Vol 2, 2010: 91–102 [online] Available from: https://doi.org/10.3384/cu.2000.1525.102691 Accessed 21/08/2020

KRUMHUBER, E., A. MANSTEAD, & A. KAPPAS, 2006. Temporal Aspects of Facial Displays in Person and Expression Perception: The Effects of Smile Dynamics, Head-tilt, and Gender. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior, 31(1),* 39-56.

KUMAR, P., & S. SCHOENEBECK, 2015. *The Modern Day Baby Book: Enacting Good Mothering and Stewarding Privacy on Facebook*

LAKOFF, R. T. & R. L. SCHERR 1984 *Face Value: The Politics of Beauty.* Boston/London: Routledge

LE MOIGNAN, E., *et al,* 2017. Has Instagram Fundamentally Altered the 'Family Snapshot'? in *CHI '17: Proceedings of the 2017 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* May 2017 Pages 4935–4947

LENSCULTURE, n.d. *Fleeting Truths: Thoughts on portrait photography*. [online] Available from: https://www.lensculture.com/articles/national-portrait-gallery-fleeting-truths-thoughts-on-portrait-photography Accessed 11/06/2020

LEWIS, R., 2004. *The Planning, Design and Reception of British Home Front Propaganda Posters of the Second World War.* [online] Available from: https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/618883/1/LEWIS%20_X_%20Full%20Draft%20-%20Vol%201%202004%208%2015.pdf Accessed 14/07/2020

LINDELL, A. K., 2017. Consistently Showing Your Best Side? Intra-individual Consistency in #Selfie Pose Orientation. In *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol 8, Feb 2017.

LINKMAN, A., 1993. *The Victorians: Photographic Portraits*. London: Tauris Parke Books

LURY, C., 1998. *Prosthetic Culture: Photography, Memory and Identity*. London/New York: Routledge

MACDONALD, G., 1979. *Camera, Victorian Eyew*itness. London: Batsford

MCDOWELL, F., "I know I am posing"... Feeling the Pose in Post-war Fashion Modeling, *Fashion Theory*, Volume 21, Issue 2, pp. 157–17.

MILLS, J., 1984. Self-posed behaviours of females and males in photographs. *Sex Roles, 10(8),* 633-637 (1984).

MULVEY, L., 1975. *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* [online] Available from: http://www.luxonline.org.uk/articles/visual_pleasure_and_narrative_cinema(printversion).html Accessed 03/08/2020

MURRAY, D. C., 2015. Notes to self: the visual culture of selfies in the age of social media in *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 2015 Vol. 18, No. 6, 490 – 516.

NICKLES, S., 2002. More Is Better: Mass Consumption, Gender, and Class Identity in Postwar America. *American Quarterly, 54*(4), 581-622.

NICHOLLS, M.E.R., *et al,* 2002. The effect of left and right poses on the expression of facial emotion, *Neuropsychologia,* Volume 40, Issue 10, 2002, Pages 1662-1665,

OMNICORE, 2020. *Facebook by the Numbers: Stats, Demographics & Fun Facts.* [website] Available from: https://www.omnicoreagency.com/facebook-statistics/ Accessed 27/07/2020

OPEN UNIVERSITY, 2016. *Picturing the Family.* Milton Keynes: Open University

OTTA, E., 1999. Sex Differences over age groups in self-posed smiling in photographs in *Psychological Reports* 83(3 Pt 1):907-13

RAGAN, J.M. 1982. Gender displays in portrait photographs. *Sex Roles* 8, 33–43 (1982)

ROSE, G., 2016. *Visual Methodologies*, 4th ed. London: Sage

ROSE, J., *et al,* 2012. Face it: The Impact of Gender on Social Media Images in Communication Quaterly 60 (5)

RUGGERONE, L., 2006 The simulated (fictitious) body: The production of women's images in fashion photography in *Poetics* Volume 34, Issue 6, December 2006, Pages 354-369

RICKARDS, M., 1971. *The Rise and Fall of the Poster*. New York: McGraw-Hill

SARVAS, R., & D. FROHLICH, 2011. *From Snapshots to Social Media – The Changing Picture of Domestic Photography.* London/New York: Springer

SELFIECITY n.d, *Selfiecity.* Available from http://selfiecity.net/ Accessed 03/08/2020

SONTAG, S., 1979. *On Photography*. London: Penguin

SOROKOWSKA, A., *et al*, 2016 Selfies and personality: Who posts self-portrait photographs? *Personality and Individual Differences,* Volume 90, 2016, Pages 119-123.

STAINTON ROGERS, W., 2011. *Social Psychology*. 2nd ed. New York: Open University Press

STALLABRASS, J., 2007. What's in a Face? Blankness and Significance in Contemporary Art Photography in *October* Vol. 122 (Fall, 2007), pp. 71-90

STURKIN, M. & L. CARTWRIGHT, 2009. *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press

TAGG, J., 1988. *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*. Basingstoke: Macmillan

TIFENTALE, A., (n.d) *The Selfie: Making sense of the "Masturbation of Self-Image" and the "Virtual Mini-Me"* [online] Available from:

http://d25rsf93iwlmgu.cloudfront.net/downloads/Tifentale_Alise_Selfiecity.pdf Accessed 04/08/2020

TINKLER, P., 2013. *Using Photographs in Social and Historical Research*. London: Sage

TRACHTENBERG, A., (ed) 1980. *Classic Essays on Photography*. Connecticut: Leete's Island Books

TURLY, R. V., 2001. *Isle of Wight Photographers 1840-1940*. Southampton: University of Southampton Libraries

UFIZZI, n.d. *Venus of Urbino by Titian* [online] available from:

https://www.visituffizi.org/artworks/venus-of-urbino-by-titian/ Accessed 06/08/2020

VAN DIJCK, J., 2008. Digital photography: communication, identity, memory, *Visual Communication*, 7(1), pp. 57–76.

VINEGAR, A. 2009, Ed Ruscha, Heidegger, and Deadpan Photography in *Art History*, 32: 852-873.

WALL, A. H., 1861. The technology of art as applied to photography in *The Photographic News*, vol.5, no.131, 8th March, pp. 109–110.

WELLS, L., 2009. *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, 5th ed. London/New York: Routledge

WHARTON SIMPSON, G., (ed) 1861, *The Photographic News.* Vol 5, 20th Sept, pp. 448-449

WISSINGER, E., 2015. *This Year's Model: Fashion, Media, and the Making of Glamour.* New York: NYU Press

ZHAO, X., *et al*, 2013. The Many Faces of Facebook: Experiencing Social Media as Performance, Exhibition, and Personal Archive. In *CHI '13: Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* April 2013, pp 1–10

Appendices

Appendix 1: University Ethics Form

Ethical clearance for research and innovation projects

Project status

Status
⬤⬤🟢 Approved

Actions

Date	Who	Action	Comments
09:51:00 17 June 2020	Amber Lamonby-Pennie	Supervisor approved	
15:26:00 15 June 2020	Michael Osborne	Principal investigator submitted	

Ethics release checklist (ERC)

Project details

Project name: Master's Dissertation

Principal investigator: Michael Osborne

School: School of Art, Design and Fashion

Level: Postgraduate

Course: Critical Creative Practice

Unit code: MED710

Supervisor name: Amber Lamonby-Pennie

Other investigators:

Appendix 2: Content Analysis from Carisbrooke Castle Museum Archive

Category	Sub Category	1850-59	1860-69	1870-79	1880-89	1890-99	1900-09	1910-19	1920-29	
Sex	**Male**	**4**	**35**	**24**	**23**	**8**	**7**	**3**	**1**	**105**
Pose	Standing	1	18	6	5		3		1	
	Sitting	3	17	14	16	5	4	2		
	Unknown			4	2	3		1		
Body Position	Side-on profile		2		1					
	Quarter profile	1	3	5	2	1	1			
	Half-Profile	1	9	4	3	3	1	1		
	Three-quarter profile	1	8	5	8	2	2			
	7/8 Profile	1	5	6	5	2		2		
	Straight-on		7	4	4	1	2		1	
Body	Full Length	2	32	5	6		3		1	
	3/4 length (Knees up)	1	1	9	5	3	1			
	Half length (Waist up)			2	2	1	1	1		
	1/4 length (Chest up)	1	2	4	7	3	2	2		
	Head and Shoulders only			3	3	1				
Face	Side-on profile	1	1	1	1					
	Quarter profile		5	1	4	1				
	Half-Profile	1	4	3			1			
	Three-quarter profile		11	9	9	3	1			
	7/8 Profile	2	8	8	4	3	2	1		
	Straight-on		6	2	5	1	3	2	1	**20**
Position	Body facing left	2	23	12	9	3	3	2		
	Body facing right	2	7	8	9	4	2	1		
	Face facing left	2	22	13	8	4	2	1		**52**
	Face facing right	2	7	8	11	3	2			**33**
	Head and body same direction	3	21	11	12	1	3		1	
	Head and body different directions	1	5	11	8	4	2	1		
	Eyes at Camera	2	12	8	6	5	4	2	1	
Other	Stands/supports visible				1					
	Arms Crossed	1	2							
Activity	Reading		1	2						
	Writing									
	Other									

Sex	Female	2	39	25	19	9	5	1		100
Pose	Standing	2	22	12	7	1	2			
	Sitting		17	11	5	3	3	1		
	Unknown			2	7	5				
Body	Full Length	2	32	10	3		3			
	3/4 length (Knees up)		4	7	8	3	1			
	Half length (Waist up)		1	6	2	1	1			
	1/4 length (Chest up)		1	2	5	3		1		
	Head and Shoulders only		1		1	2				
Body Position	Side-on profile	1	4	4	1	1				
	Quarter profile	1	5	1	2	1	1			
	Half-Profile		10	10	2	2	1	1		
	Three-quarter profile		8	2	3	1				
	7/8 Profile		6	5	7	1	3			
	Straight-on		6	3	4	2				
	Back facing		1			1				
Face	Side-on profile	1	8	1	2	1				
	Quarter profile		4	2		2				
	Half-Profile		4	6	2		1			
	Three-quarter profile		10	9	6	3		1		
	7/8 Profile	1	8	4	5	3	2			
	Straight-on		5	3	4		2			**14**
Position	Body facing left	2	19	14	11	6	4			
	Body facing right		13	8	4		1	1		
	Face facing left	2	17	13	11	7	3			**53**
	Face facing right		17	9	4	2		1		**33**
	Head and body same direction	1	23	15	7	5	3			
	Head and body different directions	1	14	10	8	1		1		
	Eyes at camera	1	6	6	5	1	4	1		
Other	Stands/supports visible									
	Hidden Mother				1					
Activity	Reading		5	1						
	Writing									
	Flower arranging						1			
	Other									

Appendix 3: Email interview with photographer Jason Alden

When you're commissioned to take a portrait of someone, do you arrive with a preconceived idea on how you could pose them based on what you know of the person already, or is it more collaborative with them (or art directors) suggesting ideas?

Initially yes. In an art directed shoot (GQ etc) celebrity portraits are normally boarded prior to the shoot, this includes styling and the pose/location. Newspaper portraits are generally a lot less planned, a location might have been selected to suit the story. Having a location will generally feed into my consciousness and I'll have a few ideas before the shoot. I also look at previous shoots with the subject to see what has worked and how far you can push them, sometimes these old images will be from the same location that I'm shooting in - but that would make be avoid repeating them (better resale). My usual approach is to shoot something that I've planned to start with and then see how the shoot develops - I like to think I'm reactive to the encounter.

Something I genuinely try to do is set up a location, arrange it/light it and then just ask the subject to step in - I see what happens. If it works I roll with it, if not, I might use it as a warm up or just try and encourage them to push a little further

Do you think it is possible for a portrait photograph to show a true representation of someone, or will the subject always play up to a specific persona - especially if they are a public figure - that they want people to see. Would the portrait confirm what the public already understands about that person, or is there room to show a different side to them?

I'd say it depends on the person. Public figures will definitely have an angle, but I think most people will subconsciously have a way of being that they consider to be more attractive - more ... them! I think it'd take a very special person to truly give everything in a one off meeting with a photographer. There's a lot going on in one of those meetings - the psychology is mad, you're judging them and trying to manage a room, they are trying to get across an idea they have about themselves and all that whilst balancing light and shifting F-stops... it's hard! You're asking the subject to give so much and to trust you. Honestly, I think the portraits where the sitter is at ease and doesn't have agenda (as innocent as that might be) are very few and are becoming fewer.

People are image savvy now, they know what they like because they physically "like" it and that sticks - weather they want it to or not.

*** you should read Blink - by Malcolm Gladwell, it's all about how people act on instinct in seconds - I read it years ago and it had a profound effect on my practise.

There's never enough time on an editorial portrait, arriving with an idea is a necessity so you can make sure it works. Often if someone is promoting a film etc, you'll be one of five photographers shooting the same person in the same space (usually a hotel) on the same day. I like to talk to the PRs before the shoot and find out what anyone else has done so I can try to avoid it, that helps keep the subject fresh and means my images will be different. Often you'll arrive knowing that you aren't going to have any time, there's no chance of digging out an introspective moment; it's often best to go in having something setup and just hit them with a barrage of conversation. My portrait of David Cameron was done in about 20 seconds!

Do you feel that it's easier to photograph someone who you've photographed before, or do you think it's best to keep a distance from the subject in order not to influence how they can come across in the portrait?

I think it's harder, I know it shouldn't be. I've never had great success when revisiting a portrait, they're always better first time. There are exceptions but that only comes after you really know someone.

Richard Avedon said that his portraits were more about him than the people he took. Do you think this is a problem with portrait photography generally, and would self-portraits be more representative, or does photography as a medium prohibit ever allowing a wider-representation to come through?

I've heard that quote and it's true of a lot of contemporary photography. Photographic portraits are more about an interaction in time so yes "the medium is the message" (Marshall McLuhan) especially in a formal/organised portrait,

Lastly, what are your influences in deciding how to pose people? Do you use references from photo-history, painting, other contemporary photography, film, tv or other media? How

important are other media influences on contemporary photographic portraiture, or is the influence more the wider social society and how people expect people to be depicted?

All of those, I save stuff, have a private pinterest board. The idea is that I collect images and ideas that I like and can incorporate into what I do creatively.

Media affects both the photographer's approach and the subject's preconceived vision for their portrait. Trends in portraiture shift; editorially I've seen it over the past 10 years there has been a move to a more natural looking portrait, less heavy lighting, with a more lifestyle vibe. I can totally see that being an influence from social media that has rippled down through art, photography and film. We look at so many images now, ask any 12 year old to pose for a photo and they'll know what to do, they tune into their hero's and emulate them, so yes totally. Wider society and media feed directly into the approach and what is expected.

Appendix 4: Email interview with photographer Clare Hewitt

What draws you to portrait photography as a photographer?

I'm interested in the way people are, in observing people as they are naturally. It sounds strange to admit this, but when I was younger I used to come home from school and tell my mum and brother about how different people ate their lunch in the school hall. I remember sitting and watching people and observing their differences and similarities. I find those observations fascinating and beautiful. When I lived in London I used to sit on the Tube and ask myself who I'd photograph if I had to choose one person from the carriage. I find the simpler the portrait set up, the better. Whenever I envisage shooting a portrait I imagine removing more and more of the surroundings, until it is just the person, as their self, left. Richard Avedon said, "You can't evoke an expression that doesn't come out of the life of the person." I love this idea, that we carry everything we've experienced within us, and it's possible for it to be recalled, intentionally or not, within a portrait.

What do you feel the function of portrait photography is?

I think photographers are becoming more aware of their responsibility in representing others, and rightly so. Maybe we are at a turning point. It is really important to ask ourselves if we are being truthful in representation, and if we have the 'right' to make the portraits and projects we are interested in making. Gem Fletcher's interview with Alice Mann in her podcast *The Messy Truth* offers some interesting perspectives on this. With this in mind, I think the function of portrait (and all photography) is changing to encompass greater responsibility for the stories we tell and how we choose to tell them. In which case, the function of portrait photography *should* be to be truthful, representative, and to demonstrate integrity. I think there is a long way to go to reach this aim though.

A lot of your work is very calm and tranquil, do you feel this is due to the relationship between the sitter and yourself? Does getting to know the sitter (even briefly) produce better portraits, or is it better to remain at a distance to stay objective, letting the sitter's personality come though?

Commissioned work is different to personal work here, because you might only have a few minutes with a stranger, and you have to try to show something of them. If it's a commission I try

to research the person I'm photographing as much as possible beforehand, mainly watching interviews and trying to have an understanding of their mannerisms/character beforehand. I try to imagine how I would feel on the other side of the camera, being observed. I also only really use medium and large format cameras, so I either look down into the camera, or I'm under a sheet. I'm not looking directly at the subject, and I think this influences their behaviour. It is also a slow process, and there's a break when the film needs to be changed. I don't really direct, as I said previously, I just like the way a person is. I love twin lens cameras because you never lose the person to the shutter; you see every moment and can ask the subject to hold on to that if it's interesting.

Personal projects are different, because often it's somebody that I know or have developed a relationship with, and so there's a much more comfortable dynamic, where the space between the lens and the subject diminishes somehow.

When you're taking someone's portrait, how conscious are you of your influence in the photograph? Avedon's portraits are often known for being as much about him as the people he photographed. Is there anything you try and do to reduce this to create an objective view, and how much do you think this matters to produce the resulting image?

There is definitely an exchange between myself and the subject, sometimes more noticeably than others. I want the portrait to be a reflection of that exchange, but I mainly want to depict the person as they are in that moment. Also, my aesthetic choices are present.

To get a better understanding of the sitter, do you see the portrait as creating an affinity between them and viewer with the photographer as a 'mediator' of their likeness/personality?

I don't think I see the photographer as a mediator. The viewer will bring their own experiences to any image, and so there is no element of control there on the photographer's part. Rather, the portrait should be a depiction of the subject in that moment. Humans are such multi-faceted beings. We all have the capacity to love, kill, be jealous, be compassionate, etc. etc., and so what the viewer brings to the image is as important as what the subject and the photographer portray or depict. There can only really be personal interpretation.

While technology has democratised portrait photography in the last 20 years (social media, selfies, sharing), do you feel this is to the detriment to the appreciation of the portrait as an artform, and how has this affected its function?

I don't think it is detrimental, I think there is room for it all. Artists have always used advances in technology and science to progress their own practice. Something I have noticed in my own interest in image making, as digital photography becomes more prolific, is a stronger desire to seek out traditional methods and experiment with them in a contemporary context. I have recently built 24 pinhole cameras and placed them in a community of 12 oak trees in order to build a portrait of the trees over a year, utilising long exposures on large format film. I have seen a lot of traditional methods being experimented with during lockdown, in addition to new technologies enabling online portrait commissions, etc. I think new technology contributes to the appreciation of portraiture as an artform, but equally, understanding the methods that have gone before to get us here is equally as important.

The visual codes of early Victorian photography came from portrait painting. Are visual codes as important in contemporary photography to get a better impression of the person being photographed, or has our visual language evolved where codes are more subtle, more obvious, or are they even needed at all?

I think visual codes are as important as ever. If anything, I think we need to question those codes and ask ourselves what they mean to us, why, and how they affect what we see. Sometimes codes and semiotics can become so engrained that our viewpoints become inevitable. Deconstructing and questioning those codes should be an ongoing process, both for image makers and audiences.