Different Girls:

performances of adolescence in contemporary photographic portraits

Catherine Mary Grant

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Abstract

This study considers five contemporary women artists whose work focuses on the adolescent model. Framed by the trend for large-scale colour photography, the depiction of adolescence was a recurring theme in the mid- to late-1990s. The artists – Sarah Jones, Anna Gaskell, Collier Schorr, Hellen van Meene and Amy Adler – are examined through their engagement with the history of the photographic portrait, with the room-sized space in front of the camera theorised as a performance space in which the identifications of the photographer, model and viewer are staged. Adolescence as a cultural and psychic identity is explored through psychoanalytic concepts of hysteria, sibling relations and narcissism, examining the performances of adolescence as disrupting heteronormative presentations of female identity and sexuality. The 'queerness' of adolescence and the potential this allows in the construction of alternative viewing positions and identifications is a concern that runs throughout the study.

In each chapter the contemporary work is considered alongside examples from the history of the photographic portrait. The conventions of studio portraiture developed in the mid- to late-nineteenth century through the commercial carte-de-visite photograph, experimental amateur photography and scientific applications of photography form key points of dialogue with these contemporary stagings. The figure of the adolescent girl focuses attention on narratives of anxiety around uncontrollable sexuality, one that can be seen in the work of artists, writers, psychoanalysts and filmmakers, from the favourite hysteric at the Salpêtrière, Augustine, to Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita. Broader issues around the photographic portrait are also considered in relation to these performances: the ambiguous presence of the model as a subject or object; the effect of repetition and ideas of performativity on the portrait's traditional aim to present an individual subjectivity; and dialogues with postmodern ideas of appropriation and authorship in the quotations from historical sources. By considering this work primarily through a history of the photographic portrait, the depiction of the adolescent model can be contextualised as part of an ongoing critical engagement with the conventions of presenting a performance for the camera.

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This study is dedicated to the memory of Brenda Little, 1944-2002. As the children's librarian at Ryde Library on the Isle of Wight, she was a part of my childhood and adolescence, until I graduated to the 'Adult' section. From my perspective as a child, she seemed to rule over her domain in a way akin to a fairytale queen, decreeing what was good and what was bad in the realm of children's literature. Her love of books and her spinsterish eccentricities seemed exotic to this regular attendee of her weekly story-times. After retiring in 1998, Brenda became more and more reclusive. Her death in 2002 didn't make much sense to those who knew her, but I think it probably made sense to Brenda.

'Who are *you*?' said the Caterpillar.

This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, 'I-I hardly

know, sir, just at present – at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must

have changed several times since then.'

'What do you mean by that?' said the Caterpillar sternly. 'Explain yourself!'

'I can't explain *myself*, I'm afraid, sir,' said Alice, 'because I am not myself, you see.'[1]

In 1864 Lewis Carroll gave the manuscript of a story to one of his child-friends, the 12-year-old Alice

Liddell. "Alice's Adventures Under Ground" formed the basis of the well-known children's book *Alice's*

Adventures in Wonderland. First told to Alice and her sisters in 1862, Carroll's nonsensical tale of a young

girl who falls down a rabbit hole into a magical universe literalises many of the transformations of puberty.

In the manuscript Lewis Carroll sent to Alice Liddell, he pasted a photograph he had taken of her when

she was seven (fig. 2.7). Alice's different selves – the imaginary version of herself as told by Lewis Carroll,

the photographs of her taken by Carroll when she was six and seven, the young adolescent who received

the manuscript – form a matrix of identities that are echoed by the different selves of Lewis Carroll himself.

From the serious Oxford don, Charles Dodgson, a lecturer in mathematics, difficult and reserved, to the

best selling author Lewis Carroll, to the professed innocent befriender of little girls and the photographer of

eminent Victorians, the identities performed by Carroll/Dodgson range from a pioneer of photographic

portraiture to a wily paedophile. Carroll's fascination with little girls was part of a wider 'cult of the child', in

which children – little girls in particular – were seen to symbolise all that was innocent and pure. Carroll's

photographs, like his stories, complicate this symbolism with a sexualisation of the girl-child that to

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[1] Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), London: Penguin, 1994, pp. 53-54.

contemporary eyes can seem predatory rather than sentimental. His portraits of girls from the late 1850s to the 1870s are the performances of the 'little sisters' of the adolescent models that form the focus of this study, highlighting some of the concerns that recur through the discussion of the photographic portrait: the role of the photographer in constructing the identity presented, the presentation of photographs in series so as to highlight the differences and nuances between the images; the voyeuristic gaze and the position of the viewer in relation to the performance being presented; the relationship of fantasy and reality in the performance photographed.

Carroll's interest in photography began in the mid-nineteenth century during a time in which the amateur photographer could set up a photographic practice without necessarily being an inventor of or experimenter with the multitude of photographic processes that characterised the early decades of photography.[2] The wet collodion process brought down the exposure time of the photograph from a number of minutes to a number of seconds, with the precious, unique images generated by the daguerreotype superseded by the glass negative, from which numerous prints could be made onto paper, without the softness and lengthy exposure times that characterised early paper negative processes such as the calotype. The rise of upper-class amateur photographers who experimented with the photographic medium for their own amusement took place alongside the commercialisation of the photographic portrait, with the conventions of studio portraiture being standardised and popularised by the small format photographic portrait, the carte-de-visite. By 1859, the carte-de-visite photograph became phenomenally popular in Europe, starting a craze for collecting images of friends, relatives, actresses, politicians, writers and royalty. Patented by AAE Disdéri in 1854, the simple idea of exposing numerous portraits on one glass negative, thus cutting down the cost of an individual portrait, generated a photographic image based on the size of a calling card (3 ½ by 2 ½ inches) that could be also be mass produced and sold cheaply. With the popularity of the carte-de-visite the conventions of the commercial photographic portrait were quickly established, building on a vocabulary from paintings of aristocracy and religious figures as well as

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[2] For a discussion of amateur photographers in the 1850s and 1860s see Grace Seiberling with Carolyn Bloore, *Amateurs, Photography, and the mid-Victorian Imagination*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

contemporary fashion illustration.[3] Drawing on this iconography, the constraints of the photographic process also shaped the emerging standards of the studio portrait, with the props, poses and composition aimed at creating a sympathetic, aspirational portrait of the sitter. As Elizabeth Anne McCauley states:

> A survey of carte production from 1857 to 1870 reveals the qualities considered typical of cartes: they include a full-length pose (although Carjat and others produced three-quarter views), an artificial backdrop and accessories, a calm facial expression, central placement of the figure(s), slightly overhead and frontal lighting, an interior setting, very contemporary and stylish clothing, and often a casual disposition of the limbs and torso.[4]

The carte-de-visite became a format for the emerging middle classes to perform their identities for the camera, and then place them next to their favourite actress, writer or member of royalty in the pages of their photograph album. The photographer's studio became a stage for codified presentations of identity, a cultural fantasy photographed as reality.

The popularity of the carte-de-visite heralded the industrialisation of the photographic process, the transition of the photograph from the realm of the unique print to ubiquitous object. As many commentators have explored, the widespread appeal of photographic portraiture took place on many levels, contributing to the visual codes and dissemination of concepts such as celebrity, as well as a newly emerging middle class identity.[5] The conventions of the Victorian photographic portrait provide an important precedent for the contemporary work considered in this study, as this period was a time of experimentation and consolidation in photographic portraiture. The domination of the posed, frontal portrait as a signifier of identity, and as an exploratory space for art photography, was weakened with the introduction of film in 1884 and the invention of the Kodak camera in 1888, making cameras available to a much wider public, and transferring the documentation of identity (in part) from the studio to the snapshot.[6]

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[3] For a more in-depth discussion of these precedents see Elizabeth Anne McCauley, *AAE Disdéri and the Carte-de-Visite Portrait Photograph*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985, and Gisèle Freund, *Photography and Society*, Richard Dunn, Yong-Hee Last, Megan Marshall and Andrea Perera trans., London: Gordon Fraser, 1980. Originally published as *Photographie et Société*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1974.

[4] McCauley, *AAE Disdéri and the Carte-de-Visite Portrait Photograph*, p. 137.

[5] See, for example, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "The Legs of the Countess", *October* 39, Winter 1986, pp. 65-108.

[6] For an in-depth study of the rise of photography in the nineteenth century in relation to the middle classes and the development of photographic portraiture see Gisèle Freund, *Photography and Society* and John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*, Houndmills: Macmillian, 1988.

The period from the late 1850s to the late 1880s was a time in which the industrialisation of the photographic process continued alongside technical experimentation, debates around classification and the activities of an influential group of upper-class amateurs. The photographic portrait was simultaneously explored as a site through which the emerging middle classes could define themselves, emulating the aristocratic tradition of portrait painting, an experimental space for the composition of photographic art works that drew on histories of portraiture, still lives and genre painting, and as a classificatory tool in criminal and medical institutions. The possibilities embodied by the room-sized space in front of the camera fixed to its tripod, the depth of field extending no more than a few metres in front of the lens, are echoed in the performances photographed by the five artists who form the basis of this study: the New York based artists Anna Gaskell and Collier Schorr, the British artist Sarah Jones, the Los Angeles based artist Amy Adler, and the Dutch artist Hellen van Meene.

The work of these particular artists is presented in this study against the predominance of photographs of adolescence in contemporary art in the mid- to late-1990s. The fact that numerous women artists were choosing to make photographic works using adolescent models is evident from a number of group shows that showcased the trend for narrative photography at this time, characterised by a use of large-scale, seductive colour photography referencing cinema and popular culture. A number of museum and gallery exhibitions tried to summarise this work, which had become visible internationally in the mid-1990s, including *Sightings: The New Photographic Art*, at the ICA, London in 1998; *Stills: Emerging Photography in the 1990s*, at the Walker Art Center Gallery in 1998; and *Unheimlich: Uncanny*, at the Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland, 1999.[7] However, the theme of adolescence and its depiction predominantly by women artists was brought to centre stage with the relatively modest gallery show in New York *Another Girl, Another Planet*, 1999, at Lawrence Rubin Greenberg Van Doren Fine Art, which was co-curated by

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[7] *Sightings: New Directions in Photographic Art*, ICA, London, 1998 included Sharon Lockhart, Jorg Sässe, Anna Gaskell, Elisa Sighicelli, Sarah Dobai, Miles Coolridge, Rineke Dijkstra, Esko Männikö, Rut Blees Luxemburg, Jennifer Bornstein, Paul Seawright, Hannah Starkey, Olafur Eliasson, Annika von Hausswolf and Florence Paradeis. *Stills: Emerging Photography in the 1990s*, Walker Art Center, 1998 included Julie Becker, Jeff Burton, Miles Coolridge, Thomas Demand, Anna Gaskell, Sharon Lockhart, Sam Taylor Wood. *Unheimlich: Uncanny*, at the Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland, 1999 included Vanessa Beecroft, Anna Gaskell, Dana Hoey, Natacha Lesueur and Wendy McMurdo. A couple of years later, two big photography shows in London – *Settings and Players*, White Cube and *I am a Camera*, Saatchi Gallery – attempted to situate this 'new photographic work', but received a lukewarm critical reception.

the artist Gregory Crewdson. Though modest, the exhibition has become iconic as its focus on the

adolescent girl created a large amount of critical attention, in part due to the fact that the show was almost

a women only exhibition (out of the 13 artists, only one was male), exacerbated by the 'incestuous' nature

of the line up: six of the photographers had studied with Crewdson on his MFA program at Yale, many of

them very recent graduates.[8] The exhibition was described as "The it show" and brought to a head a

general discontent with the popularity of young artists who used large-scale colour photography in a

loosely narrative style. At first the work was praised and then vilified, with the artists being merged with

their art, as if they were the adolescents alongside their subjects.[9] The slightly derogatory terms 'girl art' or

'girl photographers' became shorthand for a wide range of photographic practice, with numerous features

appearing in the art press, newspapers and fashion magazines.[10] The fact that female artists were making

colour photography about adolescent girls created a critical context that often flattened the diversity of the

individual artists, and the fact that their subject matter often expanded far beyond simply picturing

adolescence.

This exhibition focused attention on a theme that had been running through the trend of narrative

photography in the mid-1990s that could be found in a disparate selection of American and European

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[8] The artists in *Another Girl, Another Planet* who were graduates of the Yale MFA were: Justine Kurland, Katy Grannan, Malerie Marder, Jenny Gage, Dana Hoey and Gabriel Brandt. A later article on some of the artists associated with the exhibition frames its conception as a more ad hoc affair than the machiavellian positioning of the show and its curator implied by critics at the time: "It was a scramble, but they did it. With only a few weeks to plan, new gallerist Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn and artist Gregory Crewdson dashed around New York City on a studio-visit marathon, quickly assembling work by thirteen artists from six countries for the second show at what was then called Lawrence Rubin Greenberg Van Doren Fine Art. Four years later, *Another Girl, Another Planet* has become one of the most talked about photography exhibitions of the past decade. Critics have described it as 'instantly historic', the 'it show' of the moment, establishing a movement of 'it photography'. As the legend grew, the show became the art exhibition equivalent of Woodstock – everyone claimed to have knowledge of it, even if they hadn't actually seen it." Merrily Kerr, "Breaking Up is Hard to Do: 'Girl' Photographers Fight Back", *Flash Art*, October 2003, pp. 82-85; p. 82.
[9] See, for example, A M Homes, "Hot Shots", *Harper's Bazaar*, February 2000, where the six artists featured were photographed by Catherine Opie, and discussed in hyperbolic terms. This article and the backlash against these artists are discussed in Phyllis Tuchman, "Variety Photoplays", *Art in America*, vol. 90, no. 6, June 2002, pp. 6-15.
[10] A selection of articles from this period that focus on the depiction of adolescence in narrative photography include: Howard Halle, "Next Wave: Four Emerging Photographers", *Art on Paper*, March-April 1998, pp. 32-37; Katy Siegel, "Another Girl, Another Planet", *Artforum*, vol. 38, no. 1, September 1999, p. 161; Lucy Soutter, "Dial 'P' for Panties: Narrative Photography in the 1990s", *Afterimage*, vol. 27, no. 4, January/February 2000, pp. 9-12; Rynn Williams, "Generation Y: The Art of Identity from the Women of Yale", *American Photo*, July/August 2000, pp. 44-46; Homes, "Hot Shots"; Nancy Princethal, "Body Count: Recent Photographs of Women by Women, and Some Precedents", *Artext*, no. 72, February-April 2001, pp. 64-71; Domenick Ammirati, "Real Life and Elsewhere: Adolescence, Suburbia and the Ghastly Visage of the Bourgeoise", *Modern Painters*, Summer 2001, pp. 88-90; Tuchman, "Variety Photoplays"; Joy Press, "Girl Crazy: this fall, the female adolescent rules the art world", American *Vogue*, September 2002, pp.486; 488.

artists. My decision not to focus on the artists that took part in this exhibition, or on graduates of Crewdson's Yale program (named 'Generation Y' by one critic)[11] is due to my reading of the depiction of adolescence in photography being a wider phenomena. Only one of the artists featured in this study was in the exhibition – the British artist Sarah Jones.[12] One of the questions that initially provoked this study was a very general one: why did a range of young, female artists in the 1990s decide to take the adolescent girl as their subject matter? From an assessment of the exhibitions and critical coverage of this work, it soon become clear that it would have been limiting to examine this as a trend that emerged from a particular location or institutional background, as would have been the case in a study of Crewdson's students. Instead, what became more provocative was the relationship of this work to the history of photographic portraiture, something that is often ignored in the critical literature in favour of a filmic or painterly lineage. I became interested particularly in work that took the room-sized space of the photographic portrait as both its physical and conceptual parameters, and this led me to consider the performance that occurs in the image between the model, photographer and viewer. My criteria for selecting the artists in this study came from a desire to explore the different configurations of these performances for the camera, considering the different influences of studio portraiture, documentary photography and other commercial and subcultural styles of photography from fashion to pornography. To narrow down what it was in certain artists' work that was of particular interest to me, I focused on work in series, with a group of models, rather than each portrait being of a separate person.[13] This focus on the repetition of performances for the camera came from a concern with the relation of this work to postmodern theories around appropriation, seriality and the status of the copy, which allows for an exploration of the fragmentation of identity in this photographic work. Therefore, artists who focus on individual models, drawing on a documentary model of portraiture, such as Rineke Dijkstra and Katy Grannan have been excluded, as have artists who create scenes that enlarge the space of the image beyond that of the typical studio portrait to a more cinematic frame, such as Justine Kurland, Annika von

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[11] Williams, "Generation Y: The Art of Identity from the Women of Yale".

[12] The exhibition catalogue reproduced a work by Anna Gaskell, along with single works by Annika von Hausswolff and Rineke Dijkstra, which operated as precursors to the selection of the lesser known artists' work.

[13] These criteria form a loose focus – most of the artists also make photographs of individual models, alongside repetitive collaborative practices. Each of the artists can be seen to exceed the criteria in ways that produce productive differences that are explored through the study.

Hausswolff and Hannah Starkey.[14] Whilst there are crossovers in the concerns of these artists with those discussed here, the room-sized encounter referenced by the space of the studio portrait, and the differently imagined performances of the models in front of the camera form the basis of this study's concerns. Rather than focusing on a particular nationality, the five artists are from Western Europe and America, reflecting the international presence of this work.

One of the dominant themes in the criticism of 'girl art' was the characterisation of the work as generically seductive images of adolescence, taken by young, attractive women artists.[15] The age range of the artists included in this study indicate the relative youth of the artists at the height of the popularity of narrative photography in the late 1990s, with Hellen van Meene being the youngest, born in 1972 in Alkmaar, the Netherlands and Sarah Jones the oldest, born in London in 1959.[16] Most of the artists were in their late 20s and early 30s during the period that forms the focus of discussion: 1995-2002. This age range provides a temporal relationship to their models that is not quite that of being their contemporary, or quite at the age at which they figure as maternal (except perhaps for Jones), although this shifts depending on the individual dynamic set up by the artist. The chapters in this study consider the different resonances that this work provokes with the history of photographic portraiture, featuring a cast of adolescent models drawn from scientific photography, amateur portraiture, surrealist art, gothic literature, horror movies and women's film and literature. Alongside the models are the photographers, authors and narrators of these performances, whose presence allows for a reading of the contemporary artists' position to their work that does not simply collapse the work into a kind of self-portraiture. The adolescent girl provokes narratives of

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[14] Of course, the artists mentioned here all have rich artistic practices that could provide parallel discussions on these issues discussed in this study. In terms of collaboration, Rineke Dijkstra has worked on a series of portraits of a young girl, Almerisa, taken in 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002 and 2003, but here the passing of age is the focus of the series, rather than a repetitive performance. Her famous beach portraits and nightclub images are taken using a documentary strategy, photographing each model for a single image. The work of Kurland and Starkey often employ large groups of models, so that the engagement between the photographer and the model is no longer one of the focal points of the photographs, again emphasising the cinematic space of their work.

[15] As already mentioned, in the article "Hot Shots" the selection of women artists profiled in the review are photographed vamping it up for the camera, looking like a selection of glamorous socialites, collapsing their own identities with those of their models, seemingly playing with these criticisms.

[16] Collier Schorr was born in 1963 in New York; Amy Adler was born in 1966 in New York and Anna Gaskell was born in 1969 in Des Moines, Iowa. A factor that has linked these artists' work is their emergence from art school at the same time – 1995-1996, except for Collier Schorr: Adler in 1995 with an MFA from UCLA, Gaskell from Yale with an MFA in 1995, Jones from Goldsmiths College, London in 1996 with an MA, and Hellen van Meene from Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam in 1996. Collier Schorr graduated from the School of Visual Arts, New York in 1986, and turned to photography in the early 1990s after working in multimedia.

sexual desire, voyeurism, hysteria, nostalgia, horror, and psychic disturbances – both supernatural and psychological. For this group of artists to return to the adolescent as their central subject matter proposes some symbolic attraction that is in dialogue with constructions of femininity in photography and with feminist theorisations around the depiction of the attractive female body. If there is a process of identification with the adolescent model, then the artists can be seen to present their work as the 'bad daughters' of their feminist predecessors, denying an easily readable critique of voyeuristic modes of looking and the theorisation of the 'male gaze'.[17] If there is a process of identification with this voyeuristic position traditionally ascribed to the male artist, then this work is also a performative act that tries on for size these forbidden modes of looking. If lateral relations are brought into this process, then perhaps these positions can also be rethought as a performative space in which the model and the photographer present themselves to the viewer. This is an imaginative space in which to both nostalgically identify with the adolescent body as well as to desire it, so that the model does not become the Other to the artist (who is also an Other in terms of being a woman), instead there is an exploration of agency that is not predicated on sexual difference. Rather the power dynamic is one that finds its best explanation in queer modes of identification and sibling relations. Before considering the theoretical implications of these modes further, I want to consider the reception of this work in the art press during the late 1990s and early 2000s.

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> Forget female agency, appropriation of the gaze, and just about every kind of overt theorising associated with feminist auto-portraiture. Nostalgia and sentimental historicizing, fantasy, both benign and malevolent, and plain wishful thinking have replaced more direct forms of observation, analysis, and expression.[18]

This quote comes from the opening paragraph of an article entitled "Body Count: Recent Photographs of Women by Women, and Some Precedents". The author, Nancy Princethal, stages this negative

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[17] See the classic essays by Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", *Screen* 16.3, Autumn 1975, pp. 6-18, and Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator", *Screen* 23.3-4, September-October 1982, pp. 74-87, for the construction of gendered spectorship positions that have influenced feminist theory during the 1980s and 1990s.
[18] Princethal, "Body Count: Recent Photographs of Women by Women, and Some Precedents", p. 66.

interpretation of the work before going on to counter it with her own history of the work, placing it in relation with the performance art of 1970s feminists such as Lynda Benglis, Hannah Wilke and Carolee Schneemann. Her statement sums up the critical backlash that was expressed at this time, and is taken up in Lucy Soutter's article, "Dial P for Panties: Narrative Photography in the 1990s", with her characterisation of the work as 'panty photography' getting right down to the problematic status of the work for many commentators.[19] Even the semi-appreciative article on this work by Katy Siegel in *Artforum* first rehearses the many problems that have been conceived of this work, and the pull quote reads as follows: "The photos apply not so much the new math of postfeminism (hotness = self-empowerment) as what we might call postrealism."[20] At the heart of even this sympathetic framing of the work is a discomfort with the ways in which the work can be read as pornography, or fashion, or simply misogynistic, seductive images of attractive, young women. Rather than a postmodern playing with discourses and quotations, here it appears that the content and style of these images threaten any potential criticality. As Soutter frames it:

> Thus critics tended to overlook the fact that postmodern photography was more expensively produced and packaged than any previously existing manifestation of the medium and also that much of it had a tremendous libidinal charge. In part, the current group of young photographers can be seen as toying with the sex and violence that was so often repressed in early postmodern criticism and as using ambiguous, disturbing images to resist any particular politicised reading.[21]

Soutter positions the work within three photographic lineages, that of the personalised, anti-humanist tradition of documentary photography characterised by the 1967 *New Documents* show curated by John Szarkowski; secondly, the conceptual photographic practices of artists such as Ed Ruscha and Elinor Antin; and thirdly, the postmodern practices of artists such as Richard Prince, Sherrie Levine and Jeff Wall. At the heart of her discussion is a consideration of the role of narrative in photography, considering the ways in which the contemporary work endangers itself by not having an easily readable critical frame or 'voice', as would be possible in literature.

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[19] "As a photographer, an art historian and a feminist, I have been bothered for some time by a particular strand of contemporary photography. It started as a joke: I had seen so many quasi-narrative art photographs of half-dressed young women that I began referring to them as their own genre, 'panty photography'." Soutter, "Dial P for Panties", p. 9.
[20] Siegel, "Another Girl, Another Planet", p. 161.
[21] Soutter, "Dial P for Panties", p. 9.

What comes through reading the critical essays on this work in the art press and the catalogue essays from exhibitions of narrative photography is the problem that many of the writers – whether 'for' or 'against' the trend – had in framing the work critically. In many of the catalogues for both group and individual exhibitions, critical essays are often sidelined or dispensed with entirely in favour of fictional texts. The use of fiction to frame this work is one that is repeated as if it provides a way of avoiding the difficult questions brought up by analysing the work in a critical, art historical context. In the *Another Girl, Another Planet* catalogue, the writer A M Homes presents a story that has apparently been 'inspired' by a number of the images. The narrative is a kind of Bret Easton Ellis style tale of a beautiful, wealthy, adolescent girl doing not a lot: she floats on a raft in her pool, her boyfriend comes by, her mother and father are around, her sister is shouting at someone on speaker phone. The narrative circulates around neurosis and emptiness, with her sister saying:

> I speak in a language that is unfamiliar to you. I am pushing at an invisible wall, a Plexiglas frame. I am in a box, under glass. Suffocating. In dreams. In heat. I am in my imagination. My name is Jenny or Alix. I am Grace, Hope, Constance and Honor. I am Deborah and Jamie, and Yvette. My name is the name of a million people. I am one of a million.[22]

As the girl sits outside, she sees a coyote that talks to her, its shape shifting between a man, a woman, a duck and a racoon. The story ends with an earthquake tremor setting off a small tidal wave in the pool. The elements in this story point to the unease that many critics find in the work of the artists featured in the exhibition, the fine edge between evoking narratives filled with portent and a feeling that the images are simply pretty, but vacuous. The boyfriend says at one point: "You rub off on me. I pick you up like you are silly putty and I am a comic strip", to which the girl replies, "I am more malleable than I like to admit."[23] This line between full and empty, fantasy and reality, is also explored in the fictional text commissioned for the ICA's *Sightings* catalogue. The story again consists of an adolescent girl going through a variety of mundane activities (reading, watching television) that have slightly sinister overtones. The narrative fragments open with the girl reading the section at the front of a book that proclaims any resemblance to

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[22] A M Homes, "Raft in Water (Floating)", *Another Girl, Another Planet*, New York: Lawrence Rubin Greenberg Van Doren Fine Art, 1999, p. 6.
[23] Ibid.

actual persons, places or events is purely fictional.[24] These texts, which rely on the atmosphere of

uncanny trashiness, recall the movies that much of the criticism focuses on as being the source material

for this narrative photography, films that have a horror or teen subject, a genre of primarily American

cinema in which the uncanny side of suburbia is revealed.[25]

This uncertainty around the work that can be found within the critical texts in magazines or catalogues' use

of fictional texts is at odds with the celebratory tone of the critical essays or introductions that do feature in

exhibition catalogues. Of course, these texts are meant to promote the work, but there is something

inflated in the tone of this 'new movement' that the authors would like to ascribe to the work, without being

able to convincingly describe its parameters. For instance, the introduction to the *Sightings* catalogue:

> Presenting a diverse selection of artists, *Sightings* unveils a significant moment within
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> contemporary photographic art. Often resisting classification, these artists are united by their
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> scrupulously pre-meditated explorations of life…. It is about the love of the image and about visual
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> seduction, yet it also involves some complex strategies for analysing the nature of the individual,
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> the landscape, or the photographic image itself.[26]

What these "complex strategies" might be are not explored in detail, but the defining characteristic of this

work is summed up by the deployment of the term "the directorial mode", a category of photographic

practice defined by AD Coleman in a 1976 *Artforum* article.[27] The way in which "the directorial mode" has

been employed has focused more on the connections of these photographers to a film director in the

staging of the photographic scene, rather than the definition that Coleman described. In his article,

Coleman explored photography's relationship to realism and art, which is held in tension by "[t]he

assumption has been that the photograph is, and should properly remain, an accurate, reliable

transcription."[28] The essay proposes an antagonistic history between documentary photography, and what

is termed 'art' photography – where the hand of the photographer in constructing the scene is made

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[24] Simon Morrissey, "The End is the Beginning is the End", *Sightings: New Photographic Art,* London: ICA, 1998, np.
[25] Some examples could include 1970s films such as *Carrie*, *Children of the Corn*, the work of Alfred Hitchcock, David Lynch and David Cronenberg.
[26] Tim Dawson and Emma Dexter, introduction to *Sightings: New Photographic Art*, London: ICA, 1998, np.
[27] AD Coleman, "The Directorial Mode: Notes Toward a Definition", *Artforum*, vol. 15, September 1976, pp. 55-61, reprinted in AD Coleman, *Light Readings*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 246-257.
[28] Ibid., pp. 246; 249.

evident, and he explores how often this kind of 'art' photography will use the techniques of documentary photography: "Such falsified 'documents' may at first glance evoke the same act of faith as those at the opposite end of the scale, but they don't require the permanent sustaining of it; all they ask is the suspension of disbelief. This mode I would define as the *directorial*."[29] This mode covers a wide range of photographic practice, as Coleman's second definition makes clear:

> *The substantial distinction, then, is between treating the external world as a given, to be altered only through photographic means (point of view, framing, printing, etc) en route to the final image, or rather as raw material, to be itself manipulated as much as desired prior to the exposure of the negative.*[30]

Included in Coleman's examples of directorial photography are the fictionalised narratives presented in stereographic photographs in the mid-nineteenth century, the work of Henry Peach Robinson, OG Rejlander and Julia Margaret Cameron in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, alongside the work of Duane Michals, Pierre Molinier, Ralph Eugene Meatyard, to name just a few of his examples, in the 1960s and 70s. The directorial mode, then, covers everything from the movement of one element in a supposedly documentary photograph to enhance the composition, to baroque composite images.[31] Perhaps this wide range of examples can account for some of the problems that critics and curators had in trying to define the 'new photographic art' using the directorial mode. The implicit relationship to the film director in much of the criticism is made explicit in the catalogue text for *Stills: Emerging Photography in the 1990s*, where the curator situates these artists as a third generation of conceptual artists who use photography, saying how "each of these artists explores a Hollywood backlot mentality either through the filmlike mise-en-scène of constructed or found 'sets' or by approaching their photographs as films and directing their subjects as actors." This fairly narrow set of terms is then broadened and made fuzzy by the explanation of the work "pushing photography beyond its traditional parameters into a realm where beauty and form mingle effortlessly with concept and narrative to produce a provocative blurring of the artificial and the

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[29] Ibid., p. 251.
[30] Ibid., p. 251.
[31] "There is an extensive tradition of directorial photography as such. But directorial activity also plays a part in other modes as well. I would suggest that the arranging of objects and/or people in front of the lens is essentially directorial. Thus I would include most studio work, still lifes, and posed nudes, as well as formal portraiture, among the varieties of photographic imagery which contain directorial elements." Ibid., p. 251.

real."[32] This explanation, whilst making a distinction between photography made in a documentary or reportage tradition, does not adequately explain the seductive quality that characterises this 'new photographic art'. By focusing on the staged nature of the work, this framing also ignores the diversity of approaches covered by the artists umbrellaed under the term, which range from the documentary practices of artists such as Rineke Dijkstra, Katy Grannan and Jennifer Bornstein to the fabricated sets of Thomas Demand. In the group of artists seen as working in this mode, none employ the expensive, heavily produced stagings that might more readily fall under the rubric of filmic, as in the earlier works of Gregory Crewdson and Jeff Wall's cinematographic works.

Against this plethora of semi-critical writing on narrative photography, a consideration of the initial reception of one of the most often cited precedents to the work featuring adolescent models may help to understand why it is so difficult to frame critically. The work of Cindy Sherman, especially her *Untitled Film Stills*, 1977-1980, and early colour work, hovers in the background, providing a comparison that often seems hollow, despite the persistency. However, the discussion around her work, from very early on, echoes the points of contention that underlie much of the criticism of 'girl art'. To explore this further, I will quote at length Douglas Crimp's discussion of Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* from his important essay "Pictures", published in 1979:

> Here is a picture: It shows a young woman with close-cropped hair, wearing a suit and hat whose style is that of the 1950s. She looks the part of what was called, in that decade, a career girl, an impression that is perhaps cued, perhaps merely confirmed by the fact that she is surrounded by the office towers of the big city. But those skyscrapers play another role in this picture. They envelop and isolate the woman, reinforcing with their dark-shadowed, looming facades her obvious anxiety, as her eyes dart over her shoulder… at something perhaps lurking outside the frame of the picture. Is she, we wonder, being pursued?
>
> But what is it, in fact, that makes this a picture of presentiment, of that which is impending? Is it the suspicious glance? Or can we locate the solicitation to read the picture as if it were a fiction in a

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[32] Douglas Foyle, *Stills: Emerging Photography in the 1990s*, Walker Art Center Gallery, 7 November 1997-March 1998, np.

certain spatial dislocation – the jarring juxtaposition of close-up face with distant buildings –

suggesting the cinematic artifice of rear-screen projection? Or is it the details of costume and

makeup that might signal disguise? It is perhaps all of these, and yet more.

The picture in question is nothing other than a still photograph of/by the artist Cindy Sherman, one

of a recent series in which she dresses in various costumes and poses in a variety of locations that

convey highly suggestive though thoroughly ambiguous ambiences. We do not know what is

happening in these pictures, but we know for sure that *something* is happening, and that something

is a fictional narrative. We would never take these photographs for being anything but *staged*.[33]

The moves in the text précis the contemporary criticism of narrative photography. It begins with a

description of the photographs as containing a narrative. The text then tries to dismantle the apparatus

that sustains the narrative, before revealing that the image is not part of a narrative, but is a fragment, a

staged image. The oscillation between these three moments forms the matrix that determines much of the

subsequent discussion of Sherman's work and of the 1990s narrative photography. Crimp's text is one of

the early, influential discussions of postmodernism in the visual arts, centring on the idea of performance

and theatricality, quoting Michael Fried's famous pronouncement "*Art degenerates as it approaches the

condition of theatre*".[34] Crimp characterises this degeneration as a postmodern blurring of boundaries,

saying, "… the actual characteristics of the medium, per se, cannot any longer tell us much about an

artist's activity."[35] He also explains "As is typical of what has come to be called postmodernism, this new

work is not confined to any particular medium; instead, it makes use of photography, film, performance, as

well as traditional modes of painting, drawing and sculpture."[36] For Crimp, performance is what defines this

new postmodern practice, discussing how "The mode that was thus to become exemplary during the 70s

was performance – and not only that narrowly defined activity called performance art, but all those works

that were constituted *in a situation* and *for a duration* by the artist or the spectator or both together."[37] In

this study, Crimp's focus on a performance space in postmodernism will be a central concern, but rather

than neglecting the medium specificity, the particularities of the photographic portrait will provide ways in

[33] Douglas Crimp, "Pictures", *October* 8, Spring 1979, pp. 75-88; p. 80.
[34] Ibid., p. 76. Quote from Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood", *Artforum*, vol. v, no. 10, Summer 1967, p. 21.
[35] Ibid., p. 76.
[36] Ibid., p. 75.
[37] Ibid., p. 77.

which to overcome some of the ambiguities in much of the criticism of the narrative photography in the 1990s. The materiality and seductive nature of these large-scale colour prints is one that announces the works presence as photographic, whilst quoting from film and painting. In the rush to consider the filmic and painterly sources of this work, the dialogue with the conventions of the photographic portrait has been minimised, something which is addressed throughout this study.

A motif in Crimp's essay, which is developed in his later text "The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism"[38] is the idea of presence as incorporating both presence and absence.[39] This discussion of presence *and* absence in Sherman's work points to the tension in the criticism of her work between the structural nature of the project and the potential narratives contained within each image. The struggle between these two modes of interpretation is made explicit in the dialogue between two of the most influential essays on her work which date from the early 1990s, thus illuminating the use of Sherman's work as a predecessor of 'girl art' and narrative photography. These essays, Laura Mulvey's "A Phantasmagoria of the Female Body: The Work of Cindy Sherman", from 1991, and Krauss's text in the monograph *Cindy Sherman 1975-1993*, from 1993, discuss the importance of Sherman's work from rather different perspectives, although there is more overlap between the two essays than an initial reading might reveal.[40] Beginning with the later text by Krauss, the introduction is staged as an overview of the critical reception of Sherman, with Krauss arguing that early responses to her work (such as Crimp's) acknowledge the postmodernity of her work, which are then overturned by feminist readings of her work as presentations of female masquerade. Her powerful argument is driven by nostalgia for these early postmodern readings, saying how:

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[38] Crimp, Douglas, "The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism", *October* 15, Winter 1980, pp. 91-102.

[39] To describe this combination, Crimp relies on a filmic metaphor, again predating the focus on the filmic in the analysis of narrative photography: "They are like quotations from the sequence of frames that constitutes the narrative flow of film. Their sense of narrative is one of its simultaneous presence and absence, a narrative ambivalence stated but not fulfilled. In short, these are photographs whose condition is that of the film still, that fragment '*whose existence never exceeds the fragment*'." Crimp, "Pictures", pp. 80, 83, quote from Roland Barthes, "The Third Meaning: Research Notes on Some Eisenstein Stills", *Image-Music-Text*, Stephen Heath trans, New York: Hill and Wang, 1977, p. 67.

[40] Laura Mulvey, "A Phantasmagoria of the Female Body: The Work of Cindy Sherman", *New Left Review*, 188, July/August 1991, pp. 136-150; Rosalind Krauss, with an essay by Norman Bryson, *Cindy Sherman 1975-1993*, New York: Rizzoli, 1993.

In 1981, when Sherman had her first one-person exhibition, there was a small group of critics who were prepared to receive work that focused on the media production of reality and the disappearance of the artist's 'persona' behind the mask of the stereotype…. But this reception, forged in the pages of little art magazines, soon paled in the face of a larger, more massive enthusiasm for the young artist's work. And it is in that massive, popular press embrace, that Sherman, the de-myth-ifier, is reconsumed as myth.[41]

By staging the feminist response to Sherman's work as part of a popularist, naïve reading which does not consider the structural concerns in her work, Krauss produces a reading in which the narrative elements in each image have to be negated. Her condescending comment is that work that attends to the 'content' of the images does not "look under the hood":

That there is no free-standing character, so to speak, but only a concatenation of signifiers so that the persona is released – conceived, embodied, established – by the very act of cutting out the signifiers, making 'her' a pure function of framing, lighting, distance, camera angle, is what you find when you look under the hood.[42]

Here, Krauss reads Sherman as structurally absent in the images, and thus to read the narrative content is to fall into the trap that the work critiques, of being seduced into these scenes that are simulacra. Mulvey's essay is used in quotation throughout Krauss's text as an example of a feminist, psychoanalytic reading that consumes the images as 'myth'. Mulvey's text is caricatured by Krauss, although the tension between the two points to problems in both approaches to Sherman's work. Mulvey's commentary is similar to Krauss's in assessing Sherman's absence in the images, but uses this as a point of departure to consider what might be concealed or implied by this absence:

Sherman-the-model dresses up into character, while Sherman-the-artist reveals her character's masquerade. The juxtaposition begins to refer to a 'surface-ness', so that nostalgia begins to dissolve into unease. An overinsistence on surface starts to suggest that it might be masking something or other that should be hidden from sight…[43]

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[41] Krauss, *Cindy Sherman 1975-1993*, p. 32.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Mulvey, "A Phantasmagoria of the Female Body", p. 141.

Mulvey's contention is that Sherman's work enacts psychic structures of femininity, with her postmodern absences correlating to the necessarily impossible fiction of femininity. She posits that it is a structure of disavowal that underpins the movement between presence and absence in Sherman's work: "This 'oscillation effect' is important to postmodernism. The viewer looks, recognises a style, doubts, does a double take, then recognises that the style is a citation, and meanings shift and change their reference like the shifting perceptions of perspective from an optical illusion."[44] What Krauss does pick up on in Mulvey's text is the awkwardness of using a theoretical approach to work that is defined by its author as not being specifically influenced by feminist, or other theoretical ideas of representation. In a recent discussion of the *Untitled Film Stills*, Sherman presents her work within a biographical context, discussing her fascination with movies as a child and adolescent, and denying any conscious feminist framework, whilst acknowledging:

> I suppose unconsciously, or semiconsciously at best, I was wrestling with some sort of turmoil of my own about understanding women. The characters weren't dummies: they weren't just airhead actresses. They were women struggling with something but I didn't know what. The clothes make them seem a certain way, but then you look at their expression, however slight it may be, and wonder if maybe 'they' are not what the clothes are communicating.[45]

The awkwardness in all three discussions of Sherman's work – Krauss's postmodern reading (which does use psychoanalytic concepts despite her protestations at Mulvey's text), Mulvey's psychoanalytic reading and Sherman's biographical presentation, present a matrix of interpretive strategies that inform the reception of the narrative photography in the 1990s. In this study, the use of all three strategies will inform my reading of the work, with Crimp's concept of 'presence' as having a spectral quality introducing a discussion of temporality and the presentation of deathliness in the photographic portrait.[46]

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[44] Ibid., pp. 146-147.
[45] Cindy Sherman, "The Making of Untitled", *The Complete Untitled Film Stills*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2003, p. 8.
[46] See, for example, Roland Barthes' discussion of the tense of the photograph and the spectral quality of posing in the infamous *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (1980), (Richard Howard trans., London: Vintage, 1993), or Elizabeth Anne McCauley's comments on the attempts to make early photographic portraits 'life-like' in terms of rendering a likeness of the sitter and as being full of life, rather than the lack of life seen in early daguerreotypes. She also comments on how "The portrait's origins in static, commemorative funerary sculpture or even death masks continued to flavour its form and composition in the photographic era." *Likenesses: Portrait Photography in Europe 1850-1870*, Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico, 1981, p. 5.

Writing on portraiture, and photographic portraiture in particular, also stages the tensions between the structures and conventions that define the genre, and the 'narrative' that is conventionally played out: that of representing an individual subjectivity. In his survey of portraiture, Richard Brilliant quotes John Tagg's influential book *The Burden of Representation*, who sees portraiture as a defined genre with a history, describing the portrait as "a sign whose purpose is both the description of an individual and the inscription of social identity."[47] Brilliant's discussion considers how portrait painting has defined individuals through social and artistic conventions, as well as providing an arena for artists to self-reflexively comment on the expectations of the portrait to provide a 'likeness' of the sitter, whilst maintaining: "Fundamental to portraits as a distinct genre in the vast repertoire of artistic representation is the necessity of expressing this intended relationship between the portrait image and the human original."[48] He complicates this view with a quote from Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: "Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter. The sitter is merely an accident, the occasion. It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself."[49] Shearer West's survey considers the definitions of the word portrait, commenting that: "Other semantic roots of the term attach it to the idea of likeness: for example, the Italian word for portrait, *ritratto*, comes from the verb *ritratre*, meaning both 'to portray' and 'to copy or reproduce'."[50] Within these conventional surveys a central problematic that will be considered in this study is raised: the expectation of a portrait presenting an individual subjectivity, held in tension with an understanding of the conventionalised structures that are employed in creating this illusion. West's comment about the semantic roots of portrait being linked with the idea of the copy and reproduction highlights this indexicality that is conventionally assumed, whilst constantly disavowed, and also the discourse on the copy as destabilising the original in theories of postmodernism. Within histories of the photographic portrait, the importance of the portrait's link with the rise of the middle classes in the nineteenth century, with the popularity of the photographic portrait as a device for projecting "a distinct identity", drawing on genre paintings and scenes of everyday life to create

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[47] Tagg, *Burden of Representation*, p. 37.
[48] Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture*, London: Reaktion Books, 1991, 1997, p. 7. "Significantly, some of the greatest artists – of the stature of Rubens, Rembrandt, Manet, and Duchamp – made the concept of portraiture the worthy subject of their art." p. 20.
[49] Ibid., p. 50, quoting Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, London, 1891, chapter 1 (np given).
[50] Shearer West, *Portraiture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, part of Oxford History of Art series, p. 11.

an iconography of middle class identity that is more about a type, rather than individuality, is a topic that

problematises a reading of photography as primarily indexical.[51] This focus on the type, rather than the

individual is even more pronounced in the depiction of women, drawing on a long history of genre

paintings and nude work in which the individuality of the sitter is negated in favour of a symbolic presence.

This symbolism around 'the woman' is pronounced in the nineteenth century, with a drive for

classifications of types and a romanticising of femininity that congeal into conventional signs that stifle

individuality within the majority of carte-de-visite portraits. Allan Sekula's famous essay "The Body and the

Archive" considers the use of the photographic portrait in institutional contexts, cataloguing the ways in

which the depiction of individuality that is central to the middle- and upper-class portrait is put aside to

focus on classification and objectification, saying "every proper portrait has its lurking, objectifying inverse

in the files of the police."[52] For Sekula this doubling is one that is at the heart of the photographic portrait:

"We are confronting, then, a double system: a system of representation capable of functioning both

honorifically and *repressively*."[53] This objectification is one that is threaded through the depiction of women

in the photographic portrait, especially in the codes that surround the depiction of femininity, as explored in

texts such as Griselda Pollock's discussion of Arthur Munby's idiosyncratic archive of images of working

women or Abigail Solomon-Godeau's discussion of the Countess de Castiglione's self-imaging through the

photographic portrait.[54] Here the commodity and the sexual object become closely aligned, with the

classificatory role of the photographic portrait being part of larger social conventions. As has been

discussed in relation to the work of Sherman, by problematising the subjectivity of the model and the

consistency of the narratives being presented, interventions in the codes of the photographic portrait are

often enacted through repetition, citation and performance, especially within the context of

postmodernism. This destabilising of the photographic portrait is one that is often discussed in relation to

the work of Andy Warhol, in which individual subjectivity is evacuated in the face of commodity culture,

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[51] See ibid., p. 81, and Freund, *Photography and Society*. Freund discusses Disdéri's use of full-length portraits and props which for her "suggest a type rather than an individual", p. 61.
[52] Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive", *October* 39, Winter 1986, pp. 3-64; p. 7.
[53] Ibid., p. 6. "The sheer range and volume of photographic practice offers ample evidence of the paradoxical status of photography within bourgeois culture." p. 3.
[54] Griselda Pollock, "'With my own eyes': Fetishism, the Labouring Body and the Colour of its Sex", *Art History*, vol. 17, no. 3, September 1994, pp. 342-382; Solomon-Godeau, "The Legs of the Countess".

with his use of repetition seen as his central strategy.[55] The criticisms of his work return to the split in interpretive approaches as discussed in relation to Sherman, as discussed in Hal Foster's text "Death in America" in which he suggests: "Most readings not only of Warhol but of postwar art based in photography divide somewhere along this line: the image as referential *or* as simulacral." [56] He asks the question "Can we read the *Death in America* images as referential *and* simulacral, connected *and* disconnected, affective *and* affectless, critical *and* complacent?" before deciding that this is possible, and perhaps even necessary.[57] In terms of the contemporary work discussed in this study, this split between the referential and simulacral is also a primary site for anxiety, as the work invites readings of both postmodern playing with signifiers, as well as an emotional or narrative engagement with the performance enacted for the camera. By reading nineteenth-century images alongside contemporary works, the conventions and assumptions that underpin the photographic portraiture can be examined closely alongside postmodern narratives which often ignore medium specificity in favour of an analysis of visual imagery as an unstable sign system. The focus on the adolescent girl provides a symbolic vocabulary that is distinct from the consideration of femininity as seen through popular culture and celebrity that underpins, in very different ways, the work of Warhol and Sherman. The unease that Sherman's work has produced through her anti-theoretical stance is allowed to expand to its fullest potential in 'girl art', with the safety of Sherman producing images of herself replaced with the ambiguous interplay of adult artist and adolescent model. It is almost as if the artists have read comments such as Marsha Meskimmon's on Sherman: "… if Sherman was absent as the object and present only as the one who staged the 'masquerade', the representation might more easily be reappropriated as the typical objectification of a disempowered model by the empowered artist."[58]

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[55] "That sense of composing depicted objects and arranging display surfaces in serially structured grids emerges after all from the serial condition that constitutes the very 'nature' of the commodity in all its aspects: its *object status*, its *design*, and its *display.* As such seriality had become the major structural formation of object perception in the twentieth century, determining aesthetic projects as different as that of Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin on the one hand and Busby Berkeley on the other." Benjamin HD Buchloh, "Andy Warhol's One-Dimensional Art: 1965-1966", in Annette Michelson ed., *Andy Warhol*, October Files 2, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, pp. 1-46; p. 10. First published in *Andy Warhol: A Retrospective*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989.
[56] Hal Foster, "Death in America", (from *October* 75, Winter 1996), in Michelson ed., *Andy Warhol*, pp. 69-88; p. 69.
[57] Ibid., p. 71.
[58] Marsha Meskimmon, *The Art of Reflection: Women Artists' Self-Portraiture in the Twentieth Century*, London: Scarlet Press, 1996, p. 91.

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The symbolism of the adolescent girl accesses narratives around femininity and sexuality that are rooted in nineteenth-century conceptions of identity, enacting psychoanalytic concepts around femininity that have been difficult to shed in the twentieth century. This study draws on a number of adolescent characters from photography, literature and film to provide ways to explore the cultural resonance of the contemporary performances of adolescence. The mid- to late-nineteenth century was central to the foundation of psychoanalytic concepts of sexuality and identity, intertwining the narratives of photography and portraiture. The child portraits of Lewis Carroll, the pre-Raphaelite goddesses in the work of Julia Margaret Cameron and Lady Clementina Hawarden, the anonymous carte-de-visites of nameless dancers and models and the medical portraits of hysterics in the Salpêtrière all draw on a powerful symbolic vocabulary around the concept of femininity. The depiction of the young woman focuses attention on the erotic potential of the model, often held in tension with the virginal innocence connoted by the model's youth. Ideas of narcissism, hysteria, aggression and perverse, immature sexuality circulate around the unsafe site of adolescence, which in traditional psychoanalytic terms is a period of transition which has to be resolved so to progress to a mature identity. Helene Deutsch explains:

> Thus the task of adolescence is not only to master the Oedipus complex, but also to continue the work begun in prepuberty and early puberty, that is, to give adult forms to the old, much deeper, and much more primitive ties with the mother, and to end all bisexual wavering in favour of a definite heterosexual orientation.[59]

Here adolescence is a space through which the subject must resolve attachments and identifications that do not correspond with a normative outcome of the Oedipal complex. This achievement is however, always only a fantasy, as Deutsch concedes:

> Under normal conditions we may expect adolescence successfully to complete its specific tasks…. But even under the most favourable conditions, this function of adolescence is performed only to a limited extent. The 'end of adolescence' is thus a relative concept, and the phase it represents

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[59] Helene Deutsch, *The Psychology of Women*, vol. I, New York: Grune and Stratton, 1944, p. 116.

varies greatly among individuals. Many adolescent features are carried over to the years of maturity, and this is especially true of women.[60]

Deutsch's narrative presupposes that there is a preferred progression within psychic life, whilst admitting that this progression is only ever partial, the complete resolution an ideal, rather than a reality. Thus, within even this fairly conservative psychoanalytic framework, the period of adolescence opens up a contemplation of identifications and desires that do not conform to the normative heterosexual construction of gendered identity and sexuality. Deutsch's comment that women are particularly prone to carrying over "adolescent features" into adulthood corresponds with Freud's linking of femininity with narcissism and infantile identities.[61] By considering adolescence as a structure, rather than a period of transition, the movement towards a normative heterosexuality, and a conception of femininity as passive, infantile and narcissistic can be reconfigured as a set of terms, a set of identifications to be explored. Julia Kristeva makes this move in her essay "The Adolescent Novel":

> When I say 'adolescent', I mean less a developmental stage than an open psychic structure. Just as biologists speak of the 'open structure' of living organisms that renew their identity by interacting with another identity, it could be said that the adolescent structure opens itself to that which has been repressed.[62]
>
> The boundaries between differences of sex and identity, of reality and fantasy, of act and discourse, and so forth, are easily crossed without entering the domain of perversion or borderline states, if only because these 'open structures' easily mirror the free flow (the flimsiness?) of our mass-media society.[63]

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[60] Ibid., p. 185. In her later book *Selected Problems of Adolescence with Special Emphasis on Group Formation*, London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1968, Deutsch makes the point that "The upheaval of adolescence may be compared with the efforts of analysis, in that there is no certainty that the conquered forces of childhood will not be, under certain conditions, later reactivated." p. 38.

[61] See Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction" (1914), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund* Freud, vol. xiv, James Strachey trans. and ed. with Anna Freud, Vintage: London, pp. 73-102, discussed in chapter three.

[62] Julia Kristeva, "The Adolescent Novel", *New Maladies of the Soul*, Ross Guberman trans., New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, p. 136. Originally published as *Les Nouvelles maladies de l'ame*, Libraire Artheme Fayard, 1993.

[63] Ibid., p. 135. These comments differ dramatically from Kristeva's conceptions of lesbianism as psychotic, and thinking through femininity through maternity. See Judith Butler's critique of Kristeva's concepts of femininity in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York and London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 79-93.

This conceptualisation of adolescence as an open structure reworks the aspects that appear to be problematic for an analyst such as Deutsch, who frames the two basic problems of adolescence as:

> 1. the conflict between reality and fantasy – that is, between external and internal reality – and the ways in which the adolescent tried to solve that conflict; and

> 2. the balance between narcissism and object relationship and how it is maintained.[64]

The disruption of the Oedipalised identity in adolescents, as far as Deutsch can see, can only create problems. Her analysis of adolescence is often perceptive, but the maternal tone of her definition of 'problems' is continued in her discussion of the unisex nature of the adolescents' dress, in the subjects she has observed:

> The grotesque denial of sex difference is an expression of the boy's own feminine fantasies, by projection onto an external object and, at the same time, an identification with this object, in a kind of mirror-twin fantasy. It is like a realisation of the myth of Narcissus who, upon looking into the mirror of river water, sees the image of his twin sister.[65]

Deutsch's comments point to an interesting conflation of narcissism and object-love in the adolescent subjects she interviewed. Rather than identification and desire being held in opposition, as implied by a Freudian construction of heterosexuality, here the adolescent couple is structured around an identification with each other that is dismissed in Deutsch's account as a "grotesque denial of sex difference".

The relationship depicted in the photographic portrait is one that goes beyond that of the model and the photographer. The viewer is put in an imaginative relationship with both characters, with the possibility of identification and desire held in each position. The performance space of the photograph is one that constructs an imaginary meeting, one that rests on the conventions of portrait in its various guises. When a photograph is taken of an adolescent girl, if the model is posed in a way that can be described as seductive or sexualised, it is difficult to avoid a voyeuristic reading of the work, one that objectifies the model. Within photography, there is a history of problematic images featuring the sexualised young girl,

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[64] Deutsch, *Selected Problems of Adolescence*, p. 42.

[65] Ibid., p. 80. Her comments are made all the more interesting by the fact that this study takes as its subjects adolescents who are not in analysis, and have not been diagnosed as having mental health problems. There appears to be a pathologising of the state of adolescence when Deutsch can only see as the goal of adolescence a positive resolution of the Oedipal complex.

which feeds into and out of a wider cultural discourse around adolescence, femininity and voyeurism. From pornography to fashion to fine art, the picturing of the attractive young woman as an object of desire has been subjected to a range of feminist critiques. What kind of performance are these artists enacting in their restaging of these voyeuristic narratives? What kind of sexuality is depicted in these images?

One way to theorise the interplay between artist, model and viewer in these images is to use the adolescent structure of desire and identification as set out by Kristeva and by reading aspects of Deutsch, when taken from her framework of a necessary progression towards Oedipalised maturity. Rather than privileging an Oedipal explanation of identity, structures of narcissism and desire based on identification rather than possession allow for a reading of these contemporary photographic portraits that does not stop at a critique of their voyeuristic dynamic. The comments by Deutsch and Kristeva on adolescence can be seen to be moves towards a radical rethinking of psychoanalytic concepts that Juliet Mitchell theorises as sibling, or lateral relations. In her book, *Siblings: Sex and Violence*, she explores lateral relationships between siblings and peers as providing an equally important structure for the development of identity, alongside the traditional Oedipal model based on the vertical relationship between parents and child. Rather than this being an oddity of psychoanalytic thinking, Mitchell conceives sibling relations to be fundamental to a postmodern understanding of identity and sexuality: "Sibling and peer cohorts are the personnel of postmodernism with its focus on sameness and difference, its concern with 'time present' rather than 'time past'."[66]

Mitchell's work on sibling relations grows out of her examination of hysteria, considering its relationship to femininity and its 'disappearance' post World War I in psychoanalytic diagnosis.[67] The figure of the hysteric is an important one in terms of the conceptualisation of female adolescence, the photographic portrait and the development of psychoanalysis. The famous photographs from the Salpêtrière explore the symbolism of excessive femininity through the adolescent model Augustine in the 1870s and 80s (who is described

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[66] Juliet Mitchell, *Siblings: Sex and Violence*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003, p. 31.
[67] In Mitchell's study of hysteria, she also begins to discuss the importance of sibling relationships, saying "The sibling relationship is important because, unlike the parental relationship, it is our first *social* relationship." Juliet Mitchell, *Mad Men and Medusas: Reclaiming Hysteria and the Effects of Sibling Relations on the Human Condition*, London: Penguin, 2000, p. 20.

by one commentator as "probably the most photogenic hysteric"[68]), and the hysterical adolescent girl stands at the beginning of psychoanalysis, with Breuer and Freud's *Studies in Hysteria*, 1895 featuring the disturbing analysands Dora and Anna O, neither of whom fitted neatly into the emerging psychoanalytic categorisation of femininity: "Psychoanalysis had established itself by deciphering and comprehending the hysterical symptom."[69] The hysteric and the adolescent share a similar disavowal of sexual difference, one that Mitchell links to the rise of discussion around the term 'gender' and to constructions of identity that focus on lateral rather than vertical relationships, which she sees as describing the "minimal difference of sibling sexual relations" rather than the "maximal difference between mothers and fathers", describing how gender cannot be considered a binary.[70] Mitchell's comments reframe a discussion of sexuality in terms of a seriality that is not dictated by a heterosexual/homosexual split, or by a polarised male or female subject position. Mitchell sees that alongside the threat of castration that marks the Oedipal complex, there is the threat to a subject's uniqueness that is presented by the sibling.

Mitchell's work on siblings and hysteria is intricately linked with her interest in postmodern notions of performativity and gender. Mitchell provides a psychoanalytic framework for the postmodern critiques of sexuality and gender that have their most well known formulation in the work of Judith Butler. Butler's proclamation "*Gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original*"[71] has been often quoted and utilised within cultural theory to provide a way out of normative sexual identities. However, Butler's use of the performative to discuss gender and identity has often been employed as if performative equals performance, that identity is a conscious act rather than a series of psychic citations. By considering Butler's theories of performativity alongside Mitchell's theories of sibling relations, a more psychically invested, whilst still socially inflected model of identity can be brought to bear on the photographic portrait and its performances.

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[68] George Frederick Drinka, *The Birth of Neurosis: Myth, Malady and the Victorians*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984, p. 96. Drinka comments in relation to Charcot's theorising of hysteria: "That the patients of the Salpêtrière were often attractive young women, usually of the poorer classes, while the doctors of the Salpêtrière were often handsome and ambitious men, usually of the upper middle classes, seems not to have influenced his theories." p. 91
[69] Mitchell, *Mad Men and Medusas*, p. 16. For discussions of Anna O's and Dora's analysis, and their endings, see Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (1985), London: Virago, 1987.
[70] Mitchell, *Siblings*, p. 111.
[71] Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination", in Diana Fuss ed., *Inside/Out: Lesbian theories, gay theories*, London: Routledge, 1991.

In 1990, the publication of Butler's book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* provided a set of terms that have dominated much thinking about gender in the years that followed. Her thesis, that gender is performative, a series of citations that produce the semblance of stability, whilst remaining constantly fragile and under construction, has become an important tool in art historical discussions of identity. However, her ideas around performativity have sometimes been misused to free the subject from a sense of gender as beholden to normative schemas, following from her illustration of a drag queen as an example of gender's performativity. This conflation of performance and performativity produced a misunderstanding about the psychic investment in performativity for the subject – the fact that the subject does not exist prior to the performance of gender, that the set of citations is not a set of clothes to be put on or discarded at will: "performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate 'act'; but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects it names."[72] For Butler, the performativity of gender is not a free play of signification, but a result of regulatory practices, what she has termed the heterosexual matrix.[73]

This disruption of the concept of an original and a copy, in terms of sexuality and identity, pulls apart notions of heterosexuality and sexual difference as being able to distinguish 'normal' sexual identities from 'perverse' or 'pathological' constructions. Butler's theories have become common parlance in much cultural studies, from art history to literary theory, but the constant questioning of the heterosexual matrix that underpins her work is often forgotten in the translation of performative to performance. For Butler, identity categories cause trouble: "identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes, whether as the normalising categories of oppressive structures or as the rallying points for a liberatory

[72] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, London and New York: Routledge, 1993, p. 2.
[73] "I use the term *heterosexual matrix* throughout the text to designate that grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders and desires are naturalised." Butler, *Gender* Trouble, p. 151, footnote 6. For Butler, one her primary goals in writing *Gender Trouble* was to question assumptions around gender and sexuality that she saw being embedded in much feminist theory. She explains her position in the Tenth Anniversary Edition of the book: "In 1989 I was most concerned to criticise a pervasive heterosexual assumption in feminist literary theory. I sought to counter these views that made presumptions about the limits and propriety of gender and restricted the meaning of gender to received notions of masculinity and femininity.... In particular, I opposed those regimes of truth that stipulated that certain kinds of gendered expressions were found to be false or derivative, and others, true and original. Judith Butler, "Foreword", *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Tenth Anniversary Edition, New York and London: Routledge, 1999, pp. vii; viii.

contestation of that very oppression."[74] Both Mitchell and Butler's theorisation of identity shift the focus

from the 'classic' psychoanalytic scenario based around vertical relationships and the threat of castration,

and recast problematic categories of narcissism, femininity, hysteria and homosexuality as part of a

structure of identity that corresponds with postmodern conceptions of the self as fragmented and under

construction. The Lacanian discussion of sexual difference as 'being and having' no longer works within a

serial logic in which the relationship is not One to the Other, but one to another and another and another.

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One of my intentions in reading the performative alongside Mitchell's concept of sibling relations is to

reinvest Butler's theories with the radical potential that they offer in rethinking sexuality and identity.

However, I also want to explore the ambivalence, or 'gender melancholy' that the performative often

masks.[75] The interest in performativity in the visual arts in the 1990s often focused on the celebratory,

libratory potential of gender performance, rather than gender *trouble*. As in Jennifer Blessing's 1997

exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, the focus was on the fantasy potential of performativity

in the creation of queer identities, acknowledging that her choices led to the exhibition being:

> … a group of highly artificed, social images with a remote, lapidary quality that exudes an
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> exhibitionistic self-delight without, for a moment, indicating any gap in the performance, any self-
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> doubt, any sentimentality…. These photographs… are images of fantasy – they represent the
>
> dream of total control, the icy demeanour of mastery, like a femme fatale preserved on film, the
>
> classic phallic woman…. This is a world where to perform is to control.[76]

Blessing's exhibition and extensive catalogue is an important and extensive survey of gender performance

in photography, but the uncertainty and ambivalence that is explored in the photographic portraits of

adolescence considered here is antithetical to her pronouncement that "to perform is to control". This

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[74] Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination", pp. 13-14.

[75] Butler explores the idea of gender melancholy in the wake of the popularity of *Gender Trouble*. See *Bodies That Matter* and "Melancholy Gender/Refused Identification", in *Constructing Masculinity*, Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis and Simon Watney eds., New York: Routledge, 1995, pp. 20-36.

[76] Jennifer Blessing, "Introduction", *A Rrose is a rrose is a rrose: Gender Performance in Photography*, New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1997, p. 15.

celebratory embracing of performativity echoes the shifts in queer theory in the early to mid-1990s, which also began as a notion that troubled identity. Even in 1992, just two years after the publication of *Gender Trouble*, and one year after the publication of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet*, for Butler queer was already tired, or at least tiring.[77] Sedgwick's discussion of 'queer' in 1994 characterises this utopian use of the term that has drawn criticism, and can be seen as a contributing factor to Butler's tongue-in-cheek fatigue:

> That's one of the things that 'queer' can refer to: the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically.[78]

These comments point to the ways in which queer has been seen to lose any sense of agency through meaning any kind of movement within gendered identity. What is missing from this celebratory use of the term is its origin in the re-performance of a derogatory term, with queer's association with the odd, perverse, strange, gothic and hidden. This origin refocuses attention on the potential for queerness to point out the limits of normative sexualities, its oppositional and embedded characteristics that are subversive rather than a free play of signification. Queerness does not necessarily displace lesbian and gay identities, but rather points to the edges of stabilised performances of homosexuality as well as heterosexuality and allows a consideration of the margins of same-sex desire within a framework that does not pose homosexuality and heterosexuality as binary opposites. In my discussions of non-normative sexualities and identifications, queer becomes both a useful term to describe same-sex eroticism, and a term full of a critical history that necessitates engagement. Like the rise of large-scale photographic art in the mid-1990s, and the subsequent critical backlash, the rise and fall of 'queer' has been one of overwhelming embrace and then (or perhaps concurrently) a distaste, or distancing from its perceived catchall status. Perhaps a better explanation of queer theory for the purposes of this study can be seen in Ellis Hanson's description:

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[77] "I'm a little tired of being queer. Somebody called me the other day and asked me to go to a conference, and I said 'Well, I'm not queer anymore,' and of course I am totally queer, as it were, and have been since I was 16, but I want to deconstitute myself as queer." Judith Butler, "The Body You Want: Liz Kotz interviews Judith Butler", *Artforum*, November 1992, pp. 82-89; p. 85.
[78] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies*, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 8.

> … queer theory submits the various social codes and rhetoric of sexuality to a close reading and rigorous analysis that reveal their incoherence, instability and artificiality, such that sexual pleasure or desire, popularly conceived as a force of nature that transcends any cultural framework, becomes instead a performative effect of language, politics, and the endless perversity and paradox of symbolic (which is also to say historical and cultural) meaning.[79]

Combining queerness with performativity and adolescence produces a framework through which identity is seen as a series of identifications and performances that are quotations and recombinations, rather than naturalised states of being. Introducing queerness into the discussion also focuses attention onto elements of the photographic performances considered in this study that are often dismissed as derivative or naïve citations of sexist stereotypes: the layering of homoeroticism between women with the re-performing of voyeuristic dynamics; the spectral nature of the identities and desires performed; and the uncanny symbolism of the adolescent girl in cultural discourses from psychoanalysis to film. The 'different girls' of this study's title are different as in the serial logic of lateral relations, but also different in the sense that their performances are not easily contained with normative structures of heterosexuality, but instead perform femininity and adolescence as a series of erotically charged and unstable identifications. Read alongside Butler's discussion of gender melancholy, and within the temporal dynamic of the adult artist and adolescent model, performativity and queerness in relation to adolescence are politicised within a framework that does not focus on the playful and the celebratory. The title 'different girls' also focuses attention on queer theory's challenges to the fictions of 'normal', those fictions of psychoanalytic, psychiatric and cultural logic, which in terms of women exclude the feminine as the Other of the masculine normative, with the woman, and especially the adolescent, as being in a space of transition in which 'normal' is a constantly elusive goal.[80]

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[79] Ellis Hanson, "Introduction", *Out Takes: Essays on Queer Theory and Film*, Ellis Hanson ed., Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999, p. 4.
[80] "For both academics and activists, 'queer' gets a critical edge by defining itself against the normal rather than the heterosexual…" Michael Warner, "Introduction", *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, Michael Warner ed., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p. xxvi.

This study is divided into four chapters, each one focused on a different contemporary artist's (or pair of artists') work. The discussion of their work is then framed by a particular set of concerns in relation to the performances of adolescence, drawing on historical examples from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1980s, which in themselves form an idiosyncratic history of the depiction of the adolescent girl in photography and popular culture. Central to my thesis is a consideration of the way the photographic works can be seen to illuminate connections between the history of photography, psychoanalysis, feminism and queer theory in the dialogues around the depiction of the adolescent girl. The conceptualisation of the portrait photograph as a performance will be seen as a set of terms taken up by artists, amateurs and professionals to both shore up and problematise (sometimes simultaneously) narratives around identity and identifications, not just of the models, but also of the photographers and the viewers.

Chapter one considers the conventions of the photographic portrait through the work of Sarah Jones, alongside the portraits of Lady Clementina Hawarden in the 1860s, and Francesca Woodman's self-portraits from the 1970s. Beginning with a comparison of the space of the analyst's consulting room and the photographic studio, the photographic portrait is discussed in terms of a performance space in which identities and relationships between objects, models, photographer and viewer are played out. In the work of the three photographers, individual subjectivities are undermined through the manipulation of this performance space, with the different historical situations of each providing complementary entry points into the conventions of the portrait. The relationship of the photographer to the adolescent models is discussed through a number of motifs that are drawn from early commercial portrait photography: the use of the mirror to invoke narratives of narcissism and femininity, the equation of the beautiful woman with a decorative object, and the use of clothing, backdrops and props to produce an imaginative engagement between the viewer and the model. Central to the chapter is the oscillation in the photographs between subject and object – the model's subjectivities being problematised through their placement and repetition in the photographic space. The repetition within individual images is continued through the use of series in all three photographers – from the Victorian album, to the artist's book, to the large-scale installation. Exploring Mitchell's sibling theory, this repetition is seen as a way into reading the identifications between

model, photographer and viewer as being best described through lateral relations that privilege sameness and address fears of annihilation, bringing into focus the oscillations that occur in the photographs between adult/child, full/empty, subject/object and narcissism/voyeurism.

Chapter two considers the work of Anna Gaskell through the idea of the unreliable narrator found in gothic fiction. This gothic theme continues with a discussion of the double in Gaskell's photographs and her literary sources, comparing her work with surrealist photography, in particular that of Hans Bellmer, and in relation to Freud's notion of the uncanny. These links have been made before in criticism of Gaskell's work, but here the importance of gender in her configuration of the double and the uncanny is foregrounded, both in terms of her adoption of male authorial sources, and her employment of adolescent girls as her models. In this discussion the idea of 'homospectrality' – the trace of homosexual relationships being figured by ghostly or subtextual narratives – will be used as a way of disrupting the fetishistic model deployed by strict Freudian accounts of the uncanny. Against this discussion, Gaskell's most well-known series, *wonder* and *override* – both based on Alice in Wonderland – will be looked at next to Lewis Carroll's identification with his fictional Alice and the real girls in his photographic portraits. The symbolic vocabulary created in these series is focused on through the doubling of Alice, and the depiction of the models' hair and teeth. Forming an interlude, considerations of the hysteric and medium are presented as precursors and parallels to the cultural narrative that tells of the disruptive potential of the adolescent girl, alongside a discussion of an emblematic horror movie – *Carrie* – to discuss Gaskell's references to film. Finally, Gaskell's series *half life* is discussed in relation to its various ghostly sources, developing Gaskell's complicated relationship to her source material and the symbolic vocabulary of the model's bodies.

Chapter three considers Collier Schorr's 'baby butches' alongside the feminine models that populate Hellen van Meene's images, with their depictions of adolescent girls seen as a way of evoking a complex of desiring and identificatory viewing positions. In the photographs of Schorr and van Meene, the clichéd understanding of the adolescent as a period of possibility and loss is used to engage the viewer in a more subtle and aggressive relationship, with the repetition of models, dress and settings constructing a narrative that reworks nostalgia and narcissism. Starting with a consideration of Vladimir Nabokov's novel

Lolita, the presentation of the adolescent girl in ways that play with the traditional voyeuristic modes is discussed, using comparisons with eroticised portraits by the Swiss photographer Karlheinz Weinberger of rebel boys in the 1960s, alongside EJ Bellocq's Storyville photographs of anonymous prostitutes from around 1912. Widening the discussion to include different photographic styles and genres in the creation of these portraits, this chapter also considers fashion and documentary photography as well as the painterly influence of the Pre-Raphaelites and the soft-focus portraits of Julia Margaret Cameron in the creation of performative photographic spaces. Central to the discussion is the relationship of the photographers to their models, which is an ambiguous one for both Schorr and van Meene, incorporating familiarity (the models were taken from family and friends), collaboration and fantasy. The different relationship of the two photographers' work to a voyeuristic viewing structure is complicated by discussions of female masculinity, gender melancholy, the temporality of their photography and the blurring of gender and sexual identities through nostalgic and narcissistic identifications.

Chapter four examines Amy Adler's practice in terms of postmodern theorising around the photographic. Adler's work consists of redrawing photographs, and then photographing the drawing, with the performance presented taking place not in front of the camera, unlike the other artists in this study. For Adler, the act of drawing itself is adolescent, with discussion focusing on her use of adolescent models that include her younger self and anonymous celebrity images. The centrality of Adler's actions in her artistic practice draws attention to the performances of the artist and the viewer, rather than that of the model. In the engagement with the performances of adolescence represented in the images, the structures of identification, desire and aggression are considered through Adler's drawing, rephotographing and eventual destruction of the drawing, rendering the final photograph as a copy without an original. Central to Adler's practice is the use of the fan as a structural position in relation to her photographic source material. To discuss how the idea of the adolescent fan crosses over with the process of appropriation in emblematic postmodern photographic practices, Sherrie Levine's rephotographing of Edward Weston's nude portraits of his son, Richard Prince's girlfriend series and Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* are considered as precedents for Adler's series. The filmic and silk-screened portraits of Andy Warhol are considered as providing disruptions to the conventions of photographic

portraiture that inform both the work of the appropriation artists in the early 1980s as well as that of Adler. Warhol's work of the early 1960s also corresponds to the conceptualisation of the teenager as a distinct social category and consumer group, intersecting with Warhol's interests in disruptive sexual identities and the status of art as a commodity. The dialogue with postmodern critiques of authorship as well as the use of quotation and appropriation are intersected with discussions of identifications as performative, so that the relationship of the original and copy is viewed in terms of destabilising the image and non-normative sexualities and genders.

Across all four chapters, the different performances that the photographic portrait involves from both behind and in front of the camera, as well as in front of the printed image, allows for theorisations around the depiction of the female model, spectator and artist in terms that do not require an identificatory structure that privileges the 'male gaze' or a heterosexual matrix. By considering adolescence as an 'open psychic structure', the potential for new viewing and identificatory strategies allow a discussion of the disruption and anxiety that these performances of adolescence provoke, both to Freudian concepts of identity and to feminist constructions of voyeurism and femininity. When seen alongside theorisations of the image and identity – from nineteenth-century attempts at classification to postmodern fragmentation – the possibilities and problematics that these performances of adolescence open up reveal a dialogue with feminism, psychoanalysis and popular culture that has been insufficiently theorised as either cynically commercial or ambiguously critical. The seduction and disturbance that these photographs enact is seen in this study as a response to a history of suppressed identifications and disavowed desires in the performances of adolescence that can offer new ways of thinking about sexuality and gender that trouble the boundaries between 'normal' and 'abnormal' psychic structures from narcissism to heterosexuality. The 'different girls' of this study's title are not only the models in the photographs, but also the artists creating the images and the viewer looking at these photographic performances, creating new histories of identifications around the female body, from Collier Schorr's androgynous boys and Amy Adler's younger self to Anna Gaskell's multiple Alices.

Spatial concerns in the photographic portrait: the work of Sarah Jones

… every proper portrait has its lurking, objectifying inverse in the files of the police.[1]

Sarah Jones's early photographs depicted couches from the Royal Society of Psychiatry, sparse mattresses set against magnolia painted walls, the close framing of these unremarkable objects drawing attention to every wrinkle on the cover, every crack in the paint, every difference in colour and set up between each individual image (fig. 1.1). These photographs could be seen as portraits, depicting the space left by an imagined number of analysands, the focus of each image being the rumpled place on the couch where anonymous bodies have lain. The subject of these images have left the room, and all that remains is the residue of their presence, the compilation of numerous sessions following the same ritualised encounter with the analyst – walk in, lie down, talk, lie in silence, talk, leave. Jones has cropped these images so that we (the viewers) only see the couch, the dark space below, and the empty wall above. Each image is framed in the same way – the context of the room is cropped so that even the top and bottom of the mattresses are excluded from the field of vision, and we are left focusing exclusively, repetitively, on the empty space into which a body barely fits. The pillows with their protective tissues, the plastic foot covers, the folded blankets that look rough and dirty rather than comforting; all the elements in these rooms that should connote rest have a utilitarian practicality about them that emphasises the transition of bodies through the rooms rather than individual encounters. The equivalence here of the analyst's couch with the commercial photographer's studio is made explicit by vacating the scene of individual confession, photographing the space as if it was the backdrop for a portrait. Just as the encounter between analyst and analysand is a private explication of the self, here Jones seems to suggest

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[1] Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive", *October* 39, 1986, pp. 3-64; p. 7.

that parallels can be drawn with the public encounter and construction of self in the photographic portrait.[2]

In both a professional takes control of the scene, in which a body is placed and explains itself visually or verbally, within parameters that are as much about cultural expectations as they are about individual subjectivities. At the same time, the photographic portrait is traditionally used as an expression of the individual, as a statement of cultural legibility and status, of normality, as opposed to the admission of failure, or problems of identity that the aid of an analyst indicates. From the case history to the photographic portrait, from the individual print to the album, these are the spaces that reveal the contradictory desires and structures held in place by the conventions of photography and its aspirations to define the sitter, photographer and viewer. Jones's empty couches set the scene for this chapter in which the performance space of the photographic portrait will be considered from the domestic portraits of Lady Clementina Hawarden from the 1860s, to the performative photographs of Francesca Woodman in the late 70s, arriving finally at the contemporary re-working of these images in the hands of Jones and her portraits of middle-class, adolescent girls.

Linking these three photographers is an interest in the formation of the photograph and the space that is depicted within it, each one working at a time of experimentation in the developing photographic genre. Lady Clementina Hawarden is emblematic of the Victorian amateur, whose practice can be seen as expanding on and questioning the conventions being set up by the commercial studio photographer; Francesca Woodman was working at a moment when interest in the status of the photograph as document instigated a new approach to the photographic in art, valuing the photograph's ability to capture a moment over modernist concerns with composition, print quality and artistic authorship. Jones's contemporary work challenges the notion of the portrait as a representation of identity, or simply as a postmodern simulacrum, utilising new printing technology to make large-scale, installation-style colour

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[2] Sarah Jones explained how this series came out of an interest in "the whole ritual of psychoanalysis", and the experience of reading psychoanalytic theory whilst studying at Goldsmiths College London. She was interested in the way the space of the consulting room was so carefully composed to facilitate the analytic encounter. "I wanted to put forward this idea that there are two parallel worlds, the actual experience of therapy, which is so varied for so many people, you can't really pin it down, and the actual object in the gallery." This physical representation of the analytic encounter becomes a way of challenging, or engaging with the space of psychoanalysis as experienced in theoretical texts. Quotes from conversation with the author, September 2004.

prints.[3] Of central importance in this discussion is the way in which the spatial economies of these portraits disrupt the conventions of the photographic portrait, so that individual subjectivity is eroded and equated with the scenery, furniture and costume that the models are placed within. Rather than the individual photograph existing as a discrete image, all three photographers create images in series, with the repetitive use of settings and models allowing for a more performative reading to be made of the portraits. Drawing on the album, artist's book, magazine article and filmstrip, the use of the same models and motifs across a number of photographs undermines the naturalisation of the photographic space and the representation of identity. The use of the adolescent girl also links these three photographers, with the particular construction of feminine identity that is processed through their young models, and the complex relationship between themselves (as older women in the case of Hawarden and Jones, and as peer or photographer/model in the case of Woodman) and their subjects. The repetition of the images create a reading of the models' identities and the photographers' and viewers' relationship to the images as one that is both deeply coded and one that cannot be understood through conventional definitions of spectatorship. To consider the different potential identifications that take place across the images, I will look at the use of lateral relationships as a structural component in the images, which allow for a reading of the images as presenting and interrogating different ways in which women can look at other women without falling into maternal or male-identified positions. By focusing on lateral relations, viewing positions are available that do not negate eroticism in the images, or conceive desiring relations simply as an appropriated voyeurism. The possibilities of relational readings of the photographic space will form the focus of my account, arguing for a placement of the viewer within the performance space of the photograph, imaginatively situating him or herself between the model and photographer.

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[3] Her photographs have been considered within the context of other artists who depict the adolescent girl, with her international fame being consolidated in part by being selected for the exhibition *Another Girl, Another Planet*, in 1999. The co-curator of this exhibition contextualised the work on display through a discussion of reality in photography: "So much of photography has been about documenting reality, and this is about subverting that reality, creating a kind of unreality, a fictitious space that looks real." Jeanne Greenberg Rotiatyn of Lawerence Rubin Greenberg Van Doren Fine Art, quoted in Rynn Williams, "Generation Y: The Art of Identity from the Women of Yale", *American Photo*, 2000, pp. 44-46; p. 46. As explored in the introduction the blending of fact and fiction has been a noted characteristic of this strain of 1990s photographic art, but what I am interested in is the particular way that Jones sets up this tension in relation to a broader tradition of photographic portraiture. Rather than accepting the commentary of this photography as responding solely to a photographic space indicated by the cinema and fantasy, I want to use the work of early photographers to provide a different photographic vocabulary. A typical discussion of this work: "Above all it is modern – a cinematic blend of reality and fantasy that combines the opposing qualities of a previous generation of women photographers. Imagine the intensity of personal diarist approach of Nan Goldin combined with the wry artifice of Cindy Sherman." Williams, "Generation Y", p. 46.

Photographic portraiture

To start, a brief history of the photographic portrait, with its basis in the traditions of painting, and its centrality in the construction of a bourgeois, aspirational identity. It was possible to take portraits with early photographic techniques in the 1840s, but due to the length of exposure times, these were uncomfortable experiences, with restraints used to hold the body in place. Some of the earliest portraits, such as Robert Adamson's and David Octavius Hill's images taken in a cemetery between 1843-1848, show the participants awkwardly held by the camera, with stern expressions and stiff bodies (fig 1.2). Any movement translates in these images to ghost-like traces across the photographic plate, leading to the spiritualist links later in the century between the photographic process and psychic phenomena. Portraits became physically easier to take in the 1850s, with the development of the wet collodion process allowing for exposure times of just a few seconds when shot in bright sunlight.[4] By the late 1850s and early 1860s photographic portraiture became available to a wide section of society, with commercial portrait studios springing up in industrial centres across Europe and America. As has been shown in many histories, the explosion of photographic portraiture had been prepared for with the increasing demand and democratisation of portraiture, taken up by the growing middle classes and aspirational working class.[5] From silhouettes drawn for a few pennies at fairs, to engravings and miniature portraits churned out by studios, the depiction of the individual was no longer the terrain of the rich and titled, as in previous centuries. Patronage for portraitists no longer came solely from royal or aristocratic sources, but increasingly through local trade. As Audrey Linkman remarks:

> With a market as sophisticated and developed as this, portraiture appeared absolutely ripe and
>
> ready for mechanisation via the camera. It was no accident that portraiture became the first major

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[4] See Helmut Gernsheim, *The Rise of Photography: 1850-1880, the age of collodion*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1988, the second part of the revised third edition of *The history of photography* by Helmut and Alison Gernsheim, 1955.

[5] See Gisèle Freund, *Photography and Society*, Richard Dunn, Yong-Hee Last, Megan Marshall and Andrea Perera trans., London: Gordon Fraser, 1980. Originally published as *Photographie et Société*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1974; Audrey Linkman, *The Victorians Photographic Portraits*, London and New York: Tauris Parke Books, 1993.

commercial application of photography, and that the typical photographer of the nineteenth century took portraits.[6]

The commercial heights of the photographic portrait were reached with the invention of the carte-de-visite format in 1854 by AAE Disdéri, which allowed up to 10 exposures to be made on one glass plate (though normally there would be six or eight exposures).[7] By 1859 Europe and America were in the grips of what was known as 'cartomania' or 'cardomania', a craze for collecting carte-de-visites. The huge numbers of carte-de-visite images that were produced during the late 1850s and early 1860s were only surpassed by the introduction of the Kodak camera in the 1880s, which effectively transferred the authorship of the domestic photographic portrait from professional photographer to family member. It is this brief moment – after the early, expensive, daguerreotypes and soft toned calotypes of the 1840s had given way to the more commercialised collodion on glass plate negatives, and before the availability of the Kodak camera in the 1880s and the decrease in demand for the photographic studio – that I will be concentrating on in my discussion of early portrait photography.

The album

This period of photography, between the late 1850s and early 1880s, was characterised by the album, and the collection of images that would be gathered between its covers. The work of Lady Clementina Hawarden is assumed to have been originally displayed in albums, as the images that were deposited in the Victoria and Albert Museum by her granddaughter have torn or cut edges, implying that at some point they were removed from an album setting. Hawarden was a Victorian amateur photographer who had a brief career between 1859-1864, cut short by her death at the age of 42.[8] Like Jones, Hawarden primarily photographed adolescent girls, with her three eldest daughters – Isabella Grace, Clementina Maude and Florence Elizabeth – being her main sitters. In her photographs, the girls act out various scenes, from fully

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[6] Linkman, *The Victorians Photographic Portraits*, p. 21.

[7] See Elizabeth Anne McCauley, *AAE Disdéri and the Carte-de-Visite Portrait Photograph*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985.

[8] The most in-depth account of Hawarden's life and oeuvre comes from Virginia Dodier, *Clementina, Lady Hawarden*, London: V&A Publications, 1999. Much of the information about Hawarden in this introductory paragraph is taken from Dodier's book.

costumed tableaux to intimate, everyday portraits. Her studio was her South Kensington home, echoing Jones's use of domestic interiors, where she used a first floor room that was practically emptied of furniture, and is unusual in contrast to the traditional, cluttered Victorian décor. Her photographs are concerned with the spatial effects of light, setting and pose, so that her primary focus seems to be the interplay of bodies and spaces, rather than a narrative sense of the photographic space, or a traditional notion of the portrait. In the Victorian context, her photographs would be seen primarily as genre scenes. Rather than an attempt to capture an individual identity, her work engages with symbolic performances for the camera, illuminating the conventions that dictated portraits of women at this time. Not much is known about Hawarden, as she left little written correspondence, and appears in perhaps only one of her photographs, and even then it is possible that the woman shown is her sister. Like Jones behind her camera, using her models to act out events, Hawarden is hard to find except for through the intimate interactions depicted in her photographs. The dislocation of images from their original setting in albums means that there are also no titles for the works, with the few images that were exhibited during Hawarden's lifetime simply titled "Photographic study" or "Studies from Life", again reinforcing the difference of her work from conventional notions of portraiture.[9] As well as the coincidence of subject matter between Hawarden and Jones, further relationships between their work emerge in an exhibition that brought their photography together, even though Jones explains that whilst she did come across Hawarden's work whilst researching her *Francis Place* and *Mulberry Lodge* series, she was not making these portraits specifically as a response to her work.[10]

Although Hawarden was unusual in the Victorian period in being able to present her *own* photographs in albums, for many middle-class families a photograph album was a treasured and carefully compiled

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[9] From the scant information that is available about Hawarden's work, there emerges the admiration from amateur photographers, with awards won at the Photographic Society of London and the respectful obituary, full of praise and admiration, written by OG Reijlander, who appears to have been a friend (see Dodier, *Clementina, Lady Hawarden* for more details). The work of Lewis Carroll will be discussed in the next chapter, but in the context of Hawarden, his diary clearly indicates his admiration of her work, noting how he bought a number of her prints, and brought a couple of his own favourite models, the Terry girls, to be photographed by her.

[10] For a review of this exhibition see Elin O'Hara Slavick, "Kindred Spirits in Photography," *Art Papers*, July/August 2000, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 47-48. However, her comparison is rather unfavourable to Jones: "Hawarden's photographs, the size of one's hand, corners ripped from being pulled out of family albums, are staged portraits of her daughters; Jones's smooth cibachromes of posed characters are mounted to aluminium. Jones's lethargic subjects are alienating; Hawarden's are passionate, seducing us into their state of faked grace." p. 47. Jones's comments on the relationship between her work and Hawarden's come from conversation with the author.

selection of images including studio portraits, images of royalty, actresses, writers, miscellaneous celebrities, friends and relatives. This conflation of the public and the private is rather different from a contemporary understanding of an album as solely chronicling a family history, with the Victorian album stretching across the family album, the fan book, and the gossip column. Abigail Solomon-Godeau has noted that:

> In producing and reproducing the image-world of capitalism, photography is simultaneously a commodity and an instrument of commodification. Such mid-nineteenth century cultural developments as an expanded conception of celebrity, with its auxiliary discourses of fashion and publicity, are inseparable from the rise of camera culture. Furthermore, photography plays a critically important role in fostering that condition of modern life which the Situationists have dubbed spectacle.[11]

In discussions of contemporary photography, the family album is often discussed as an archival model on which contemporary photographers have based their practice – from Nan Goldin to Richard Billingham. What is interesting about the Victorian version of the album is the setting up of a wider range of subjects for inclusion, and the coding of the domestic images. Rather than being a casual, or intimate compilation of snapshot images, a Victorian album asserts the status of its owner through the selection of characters included and the quality of the images depicting family members. In terms of the history of photography, it was the work of amateurs such as Hawarden, or her contemporaries Lewis Carroll and Julia Margaret Cameron, who, through their experimentation with portraiture and the album format, created new photographic vocabularies, and redefined the photographic portrait which was already being conventionalised through the huge carte-de-visite industry.[12]

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[11] Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "The Legs of the Countess", *October* 39, Winter 1986, pp. 65-108; p. 69.
[12] For a discussion of the importance of amateur photographers on the development of photography see Grace Seiberling with Carolyn Bloore, *Amateurs, Photography, and the mid-Victorian Imagination*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Spatial economies

I'm interested in the relationships that people have with space.

Francesca Woodman[13]

In *Polka Dots #5*, 1976-1977, Francesca Woodman stands against a wall, bent sideways at the waist, her hand blurred through movement just below her face (fig. 1.3). She wears a dress of polka dots, the pattern slightly blurred by the movement of her body. In an untitled photograph from 1975-1976, Woodman stands in the middle of an empty, seemingly derelict room, her body sideways to the viewer, her face turned with a steady gaze to the camera, her hands held up in front of her (fig. 1.4). Although she appears to be still, the print of her dress blurs at the bottom, as if she has moved a finger over the photographic plate, simulating movement. In both of these images, the adolescent girl is pictured within an interior, articulating this space in a way that emphasises the path of the body within it. In Woodman's work, the use of movement is a way of making the body disappear, become transparent, as well as indicating the stillness of the rest of the pose and the relationship to the dimensions of the photographic space. In both images her face is turned to the camera, as if to hold the viewer within the logic of the space that she articulates through her body and the photographic frame. Using the same square format as Jones, Woodman's images also set up a complex vocabulary of young female bodies, settings, props and costume. The use of her own body in many of her images provides a different relationship to the photographic portrait, and I want to use her work as a kind of echo to be found in Jones's and Hawarden's portraits – the self-portraits of the adolescent woman featured in their photographs, presented by herself, rather than being channelled through the desires and transference of the older women. Woodman's photographs operate as another archive of images that are articulated through the lack of knowledge surrounding them, her suicide containing the work within an unknowable adolescent space whilst the narratives of friends and family circle around the enigmatic body of work, unable to contain or explain it completely. What seems to be clear from the photographs is the centrality of an interest in the space of the photograph, and the use of

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[13] Francesca Woodman, quoted in Phillipe Sollers, "The Sorceress", in Hervé Chandès ed., *Francesca Woodman*, Paris and New York: Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain and Scalo, 1998, p. 13.

the body to articulate this. Like Hawarden and Jones, Woodman's use of interiors is often to condense them into backdrops, with resonances between clothing, posture and perspectives acting as indicators of their translation into the flat, cohering surface of the photograph. Woodman puts her hands out in front of her as if performing a ritual, or checking to see if the space in front of her is clear. Her gaze to the viewer indicates her complicity in the construction of a performance to be viewed, she appears to invite the viewer to identify with her body feeling through the space in the room, whilst being aware of the spectacle presented by her body and clothing.

In Lindsay Smith's book *The Politics of Focus*, she discusses the uses of focus, setting and props in portraits by Hawarden. She argues that a disruption of a geometrical perspective is achieved by giving equal weight to all of the objects in the picture field: "vast expanses of light and shadow characteristically achieve emphasis equal to that of human figures; so too do props and objects, particularly jewellery and objects of adornment."[14] Smith contrasts this with the photographs of girls by Lewis Carroll, which she sees as exploiting all vanishing points to focus exclusively on the child's body:

> The oddly repetitive depth of field in Carroll, culminating in a captive displayed literally up against a wall, represents a space assumed necessary to mobilise that geometrical binary relation, which is also a space of male fantasy…. [H]is photographs more nearly approximate the colonising gaze of documentary practice, that which requires geometrical mapping for its intelligibility.[15]

Smith's discussion of the space of the portrait constructs a politicised understanding of the placement of the female model, with her argument contrasting the approaches of Carroll and Hawarden to indicate ways in which Victorian women photographers could experiment in the presentation of female-identified viewing

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[14] Lindsay Smith, *The Politics of Focus: Women, Children and Nineteenth Century Photography*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998, p. 38. Another text on the geometric perspective, or Classical representation that Smith discusses can be found in Michel Foucault's discussion of *Las Meninas*, in *The Order of Things*, in which he discusses the ways in which the positions of the artist, spectator and model are doubled into each other through the self-reflexive consideration of the situation of the portrait, and more broadly of representation: "Around the scene are arranged all the signs and successive forms of representation; but the double relation of the representation to its model and its sovereign, to its author as well as to the person to whom it is being offered, this relation is necessarily interrupted…. Perhaps there exists, in this painting by Velàsquez, the representation as it were, of Classical representation, and the definition of the space it opens up to us." Foucault, *The Order of Things*, London: Routledge, 1992, first published as *Les Mots et les choses*, Paris: Gallimard, 1966, p. 16.
[15] Smith, *The Politics of Focus*, p. 30.

positions through their manipulation of the traditional portrait format.[16] For Smith, the nineteenth-century conception of photography had strong iconographic links with the child – as an infant art – looking at the presentations of children as embodying the photographic process. In this discussion, the focus on the adolescent girl articulates the relationship between the viewer and the model as a more uncomfortably eroticised engagement than suggested in the anxiously "repetitive" mastery of the child models of Carroll. For although Jones's portraits do share a compliance with this formulaic construction of the photographic space on numerous occasions, her use of props and backgrounds reveal the disruptions of the photographic space and viewing positions as presented in the work of Woodman and Hawarden.

A central spatial characteristic of all three photographers' work is the condensing of the photographic space behind the model, either through the use of backdrops, poses against walls, or shallow focus. In Hawarden's work, the view from the windows and balcony in her work is often blurred so as to resemble a painted backdrop. Jones uses flash in her outdoor images to flatten the sky into a dark surround, lighting only the model and immediate background. Jones, Hawarden and Woodman all use fabric, walls and different coloured drops (from professional rolls of backdrop to scarves) to evoke a shallow space within the photograph. This shallow space is a self-conscious delineation of the photographic space into which the viewer is asked to imaginatively project him or herself. Rather than a naturalistic perspective in which the model is one element, the cutting off of the photographic space to just behind the model insists on the intimacy between model and photographer, producing an awareness of the viewer's perspective being bounced off the model and ricocheting back into the viewer's space. Like being in a small room, or the closeness of the two chairs in Jones's photograph *Consulting Room*, two people in close proximity have to engage with each other more intensely when there is nowhere else to go, no room to back off. In the photographic portrait, the shallow space also evokes the flatness of the studio portrait, in which there is just enough room for the model to stand in front of artificial backgrounds, used to signify status and

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[16] "Relatedly, not only do these photographs lack male figures entirely in their compositions, but they also suggest points of identification between, and among, women in terms of the viewpoints they invite." Ibid., p. 39.

emphasis the model's centrality in the photograph.[17] By enlarging the photographic space to show the edges of the backdrop (or by posing the model within the space so as to emphasise the edges of the photographic frame) the dialogue with the naturalised conventions of portraiture in these portraits is indicated, as well as the importance of the viewer's engagement with the photograph's spatial concerns. However, this focus on the model in the shallow space – normally kept to between a few feet to half a room away – is complicated by the introduction of other decorative elements that maintain attention within the photographic frame.

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> The significance of rooms was something the best Dutch and Flemish painters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries understood – how the silent relationship between places, objects and the people who used them or moved through them in their slow, staccato dance could be as expressive of intense feeling as any Greek drama.[18]

In a stereoscopic image by Hawarden, the polka dot dress of Woodman seems to be prefigured by the elaborate dress worn by her daughter Isabella (fig 1.5). Seated with her back to the camera, leaning on a white cloth-covered table, the billowing skirt of the dark dress and the stylised pale flowers blurs as it reaches almost the edge of the photograph – expanding beyond the field of focus. The white of the tablecloth is echoed in the white cuffs of Isabella's undergarment, and the triangle of her neck – set off by the coiled braid of hair. The photograph is taken against a dark backdrop, which is pinned against the wall, causing the compressing of the photographic space as explored above. The composition plays the light and dark of fabric, hair and skin against one another, the lighting playing on the braided hair replicating the highlights on the heavy fabric of Isabella's skirt. Here the photographic space is condensed by the plainness of the backdrop, but importantly, it is not erased completely – it is not flattened into a two-

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[17] The space of the photographic portrait is also a practical one, stemming from the shallow depth of focus in early photography. To maintain a focus across a photographic image, the distance between the sitter, props and backdrop had to be minimised.
[18] Jennifer Higgie, "Sarah Jones", in Xavier Douroux, et al, *Sarah Jones,* Dijon: Centre d'Art Contemporain, Le Consortium, 2001, p. 8.

dimensional space – as the containment within the frame of the pinned length of fabric allows a spatial orientation to be maintained. Like Woodman's images, this image is about the space of the photograph, mapped out by the encroaching dress on the edges of the frame, the shallow focus around the body of Isabella, and the corner of the room just showing on the left hand side. Unlike the commercial studio portrait, here the construction of the image is laid bare, allowing the viewer to imagine the posing of the photograph, the feeling of Isabella held captive in the large skirt of her dress, leaning elegantly, but perhaps uncomfortably forward onto the side of the table. The use of a stereoscopic image emphasises the depth of the image, so that viewed properly (that is, in three-dimensions) the viewer is again placed in a position of imagining the space of the room, kept just at its edges by the small gap of floor between the edge of the frame and the beginnings of Isabella's dress. The formal composition of the photograph is set off by the turning of Isabella's head: if she faced the camera this could be seen as a conventional portrait, but without her face, the viewer is left with a more ambiguous image that sits between a portrait and a formal play of light and texture. Like Woodman's portraits discussed above, the individuality of the model is overlaid with the conventions of the photographic space that they delineate with their pose and costumes. Here Isabella is almost upstaged by the expanse of fabric encasing her body, with the eroticised white of her neck forming only one part in a play of light and dark across the picture plane.

The experimental treatment of the photographic space in Hawarden's portraits can be appreciated by comparing Hawarden's image of Isabella with a number of commercial carte-de-visite portraits. In a typical carte-de-visite by the French photographer Camille Silvy the sitter, Flora Bradford is shown in profile and facing the viewer, her white dress displayed in all its finery, set off by the heavy furniture in the background (fig. 1.6). She poses seated before a mirror, so that her face is captured from both sides, a common device in Victorian portraits of women. In a set of images by AAE Disdéri, taken of Princess Gabrielle Bonaparte, again the dress forms the focus of the image, with the princess looking at a picture, holding a book and leaning on a sofa (fig. 1.7). In these images a number of themes which will be explored in relation to the work of Jones and Hawarden are introduced: the conventions of feminine representation in Victorian portraiture, the woman by the mirror, the use of dress and setting to symbolise the sitter's desirability and class, the placement of the body in the space of the studio, the use of subtle repetition to

create an experience of temporality. In the set of six images of Flora Bradford, two have been cut out of the print, with the remaining images forming a temporal space established by the minor movements of the sitter's face and hands, emphasised more strongly in the Disdéri images. They form a prototype of the filmstrip, in which the viewer becomes aware of the performance event that has been captured in the different frames. These portraits secure the sitter within the conventions of Victorian feminine desirability, signified by the pose, dress and setting, whereas in Hawarden's portrait the same devices almost engulf Isabella in her dress and elaborately coiffed hair. Just as painters of portraits in previous centuries had used assistants to fill in backgrounds, clothing and limbs, with the main painter simply filling in facial details, here the photographic portrait is constructed through a set of conventions into which the sitter is shoehorned, exposed by Hawarden in the edges of the backdrop left within the frame of her image. The popularity of these carte-de-visite portraits formalised the representation of identity in a way that was intricately coded, where images of women emphasised the characteristics seen to be most fitting to the Victorian ideal: chastity, virtue, beauty.[19]

The carte-de-visite gave rise to a new interest in images of celebrities in which the beautiful woman – mainly in the form of actresses and dancers – became a popular category of photographic portrait. In opposition to the images of eminent men who were normally posed either standing, or seated with an arm leant on a table, images of desirable women focused on their costume and setting, with the large, extravagant dresses often taking centre stage, framing demurely folded hands or a thoughtful gaze in a mirror. The extent to which images of men and women were coded differently can be seen by looking at Arthur Munby's images of working women (fig. 1.8). Here, Munby's fascination with the masculine qualities of the women he had photographed is continued in the poses taken up by them. Rather than the limp, pliable poses favoured by the studio photographers in the typical portrait of a woman, here the women stand upright, hands on hips, in the costume of their trade, surrounded by their tools. More often than not, these women meet the gaze of the viewer, hair and costume dishevelled from work, standing in their

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[19] For a discussion of idealisation and beauty in photographic portraits, see Linkman, *The Victorians Photographic Portraits*, chapter 2: "Idealisation in portraiture was a fundamental tenet of belief which influenced all aspects of their [portrait photographers'] practice." p. 33.

trousers: an indecent and titillating sight for a Victorian.[20] Here, the class division between the bourgeois and aristocratic sitter and these working-class women is revealed. What would be scandalous for one of Hawarden's daughters becomes an object of fascination when seen as doubly 'othered' through the sitters' status as working-class and female. The erotic potential of these images was borne out by the popularity of carte-de-visites of working women in their work trousers, a subsection of tamely erotic images that also included images of ballerinas and gymnasts in their revealing costumes.[21] Whilst Munby's collection of images were seen by some as titillating due to the exposure of the models' legs, in the main they flout all the conventions of depicting the desirable woman. This can be seen in the way that the conventions of the portrait crossed over with those of the erotic or pornographic image, which again used the doubling of the woman in the mirror as a device to capture the model from all angles, as well as the positioning of the desirable female body next to exotic or luxurious furniture and props. As Solomon-Godeau has discussed in relation to images of women during this period: "this new image world is underwritten by fantasies of imaginary possession."[22] A pornographic image discussed by Solomon-Godeau makes this point explicitly with an arresting photograph of a woman with her crinoline pulled above her head, exposing her legs and genitalia (fig. 1.9). Here the pretence of any other function within the photograph as representing a personality (such as a ballerina) is dispensed with, and the model's body becomes as anonymous as the dress that covers her. It is this equation of the model with the dress and props that surround her, emptying the model of subjectivity and making her the site of erotic fascination rather than identification, that form the basis of a symbolic vocabulary that will be explored at more length through the work of Jones and Hawarden. This pornographic image makes explicit the position of the viewer and photographer as consumers of the model's body; there is little or no identification with the woman who stands concealed and exposed by the large expanse of cloth. Hawarden's portrait of Isabella stages this objectification of the female body through the foregrounding of the dress, and turning of the model's head. However, the photographic space that is presented within the portrait, and the repetitions

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[20] For a discussion of Munby's images, see Michael Hiley, *Victorian Working Women: Portraits from Life*, London: Gordon Fraser, 1979 and Griselda Pollock, "'With My Own Eyes': Fetishism, the Labouring Body and the Colour of Its Sex", *Art History*, vol. 17, no. 3, September 1994, pp. 342-382.

[21] See Solomon-Godeau, "The Legs of the Countess" for a discussion of the fetishisation of legs in Victorian erotic photography.

[22] Ibid., p. 94. Godeau argues that the images taken by the Countess constitute an internalisation of feminine codes from portraiture and pornography of the period, and can be seen as a lexicon of feminine identities as presented through photographic portraits.

across the portraits of her daughters undermine a simplistic voyeuristic reading as is set up in the pornographic image.

The shallow space explored in Hawarden's portrait of Isabella is accentuated in Jones's series in Francis Place. The series I will focus on in my discussion of Jones's work are photographs that use the same group of girls: Camilla, Stephanie, and Rohan from 1996, with a fourth girl, Chrissie being included from 1998 onwards. For around 4 years Jones photographed this group of girls in their parents' houses and gardens, with the main series being called after the houses: Francis Place and Mulberry Lodge.[23] Jones has worked with other models, including a series using actors.[24] However, her work with adolescent girls is her most well-known, and for me encapsulates much of her enquiry in to the structure and space of the photographic portrait, linking her work with earlier constructions and deconstructions of female representation through the use of the adolescent girl. Unlike Hawarden's photographs, in which windows and light are allowed to flood and play over her interiors, Jones's interior shots are marked by an absence of the outside – curtains are closed, compositions are tightly contained within a space of between six to 12 feet.[25] Speaking about the reasons for starting the series in these bourgeois interiors, Jones says that "they almost have the same fascination as the consulting rooms, they have the same kind of ritual embedded in the furniture, in the way the objects are arranged".[26] She began with an interest in the bed as "a space of transition, a private space" that becomes very important during adolescence. This expanded to take in the various interiors that the models either "lived in or moved through", making it unclear whether the models should be seen as belonging in the interiors in which they are depicted. Explaining the range of reasons behind the choice of adolescent girls as her models, Jones says:

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[23] The models were 13 or 14 when the series started, and about 17 when the series stopped. Jones was interested in continuing the series as the models got older, but explains that this became too difficult as they went to college or moved away from home. From conversation with the author.

[24] This early series using actors from 1995 was exhibited with the *Consulting Room* series. Jones explains her thinking behind the series: "The idea was to give stage directions that had no link to a character or a story. So the whole thing is about what are we looking for in a portrait, our needs, or the idea of portraiture…. To strip the portrait right back to its bare elements, no context, no special lights, just flooded with light, the only context became the gallery." From conversation with the author.

[25] "If there are windows, it appears to be night or dusk. The window traditionally represents escape, or fantasy…. Even that is closed off." Ibid.

[26] Ibid. All quotes in the following paragraph are from this conversation.

The primary reason I chose to photograph adolescent girls was because they are a site of performance, it is that age where their gestures are so important, as well as how they hold their bodies, it is so written on the body. It is part of a continued interest in the language of psychoanalysis; the fact that adolescence is always revisited in every point in our lives, you're going to be dealing with this for the rest of your life.[27]

Continuing her explanation, Jones talks about the way in which the adolescent girls had a different way of posing compared with their brothers, who did not have the same "culture of display". For Jones, the relationship of the models with these bourgeois interiors was one that engaged with her interest around the gesture and the history of portraiture, referencing the space of both the traditional studio photography and portrait painting.[28]

In two linked portraits, *The Sitting Room (Francis Place) IV* and *V*, both 1999, Camilla and another model are posed in front of a floor-length red curtain (fig. 1.10).[29] The cropping of the two images is almost the same, with just the side of another chair coming into view in *IV*. The two girls pose in mirror images of each other – Camilla poses with her left arm folded behind her, whilst the other model poses with her right arm behind her. Jones's interest in gesture and formalised spaces is combined in the performances of her adolescent models, saying how she:

… wanted them to take up gestures that one of the other girls had occupied, made iconic if you like, and see how differently they might inhabit exactly the same gesture. It's kind of about vocabulary… I was stripping gesture right back to very tiny gestures, with no sense of drama, no attempt at naturalistic engagement between the three girls, either by themselves or together.[30]

The models are shot full-length, with only a couple of centimetres between the bottom of their feet and the bottom of the photographic frame. The curtain operates like a studio backdrop, with the footstool that they stand in front of recalling the heavy Victorian furniture used to prop the subjects of nineteenth-century

[27] Ibid.
[28] Jones explains how the settings in these houses were important in terms of the class structure they implied, although this was not the main drive behind the series. Rather than the interiors being public stately homes, they are what Jones calls a "mirror image of public spaces, they are scaled down, squashed, claustrophobic."
[29] When asked to name the other model in this work, Jones did not want to disclose her identity. She is either Stephanie or Rohan, and features in many of the Francis Place and Mulberry Lodge photographs. Camilla can be identified by the fact that Jones titles one of the photographs "Camilla".
[30] Jones, conversation with author.

portraits. The red of the curtains also recalls the portrait painting of artists such as Holbein, with the backdrop used as a device to focus all attention on the subject. However, in Jones's portraits, these backdrops are used to accentuate the construction of the photographic frame, and the proximity between model and photographer/viewer. The cool gaze of the model captures the viewer, echoing Woodman in her untitled portrait of 1975-1976, creating an uncomfortable moment of intimacy, providing an experience of the condensed space that is about emotional distance as well as spatial dimensions. Camilla poses with her eyes cast upwards, in a more typically evasive dynamic that is acted out in Jones's portraits. These portraits in front of the red curtains link to other works in the series, as well as previous images, such as *Camilla (I)*, 1998, in which she is pictured emerging from under a single bed (fig 1.11). Here Camilla wears the white shirt worn by the other model in the Francis Place image, creating a visual continuity and repetition between the images and the models. In this photograph, the drawn curtains are a flowery chintz, their folds echoed in the blonde swathe of hair that covers Camilla's face. Here the model is obscured as is the outside world – from the gap in the curtains only darkness can be seen. The white of the bedspread is repeated in the white of Camilla's shirt, with the green of the carpet appearing to steeply veer towards the viewer, setting up a similar set of correspondences and use of photographic space as Hawarden's portrait of Isabella, with formal resonances established between hair, costume, setting and frame. In this less conventional portrait, Jones indicates the level of awareness that is contained in each image of the importance of the spatial economy in the construction and seduction of the photographic space.[31] As Régis Durand has noted in relation to these images: "… we are not in the field of a representation of an object or a situation, but in a relational space."[32] Jones's portraits are balanced between the insolent intimacy projected by Woodman's self-portrait, with her hands defining her body in space, her gaze holding the viewer, and the voyeuristic, obsessive images of Carroll's girl models. The concealed face of Camilla and the staged, pliant pose also recalls the structure of the pornographic image, in which the female body is disarticulated into a display of its erotic parts.

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[31] The gestures that the models perform become more minimal as the series progress. Jones says that this occurred through the process of working with the models, and picking up on various gestures. Ibid.
[32] Régis Durand, "Dark Foundations", *Art Press*, no. 231, January 1998, pp. 42-45; p. 43.

<u>Adolescent images</u>

> … gazing into Hawarden's picture-world can induce a fantasy of *being* Clementina. At the centre
> of this delight, this secret treasure, is the thrill of becoming Clementina not once, but twice: as
> mother and daughter, looker and object of the look, adolescent and woman, model and
> photographer, Clementina and Clementina.[33]

An important aspect in Jones's work is the identification between the viewer/photographer and model, which disallows a straightforward voyeuristic reading of the bodies presented in her portraits. In Carol Mavor's book on Hawarden, she discusses the work in terms of "becoming", a term she uses to include the attractiveness of the models and the images, the models' position as adolescents, and the identification of Hawarden and the viewer with the model. As the quote above shows, Mavor points to an important doubling in Hawarden's images in her focus on her namesake, Clementina, and the impact this has on the viewer's identifications, an identification that can help in the articulation of the relationships presented in Jones's work. Mavor pursues a queer reading of the images, using adolescence as a structural component of the images. Talking about Hawarden and her contemporary Lewis Carroll she says: "[t]heir work is indebted to the open structure of adolescence, which emphasises the multiple and often discomforting contradictions between adulthood and childhood, masculinity and femininity, responsibility and play, sexuality and innocence."[34] Whilst Mavor's readings of Hawarden's images are often subjective, her thesis emphasises the construction of an eroticised exchange in her photographs that is touched on rather less explicitly in other discussions of her work. Carol Armstrong's work on Hawarden, for example, explores the tactility of her compositions, constructing a Barthesian maternal photographic

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[33] Carol Mavor, *Becoming: The Photographs of Clementina, Viscountess Hawarden*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999, p. xxx.

[34] Ibid., p. 6. Mavor draws upon Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's construction of an adolescent mode of reading in her introduction to the collection *Novel Gazing*, which coincidentally features one of Hawarden's photographs on its cover: "It seems to me that an often quiet, but very palpable presiding image here – a kind of *genius loci* for queer reading – is the interpretive absorption of the child or adolescent whose sense of personal queerness may or may not (*yet?*) have resolved into a sexual specificity of proscribed object choice, aim, site, or identification. Such a child – if she reads at all – is reading for important news about herself, without knowing what form the news will take; with only the patchiest familiarity with its codes; without, even, more than hungrily hypothesising to what questions this news may proffer an answer." Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction is About You", *Novel Gazing: Queer Readings in Fiction*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick ed., Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997, p. 3*.*

logic.[35] Her focus on the uncanny and a particularly photographic vocabulary in the use of doubling, light and shadow follows on from Craig Owens's brief discussion of Hawarden's work in his influential essay "Photography *en abyme*".[36] Whilst both these interpretations of Hawarden's work are important to my own, the oscillation between an identification of the photographer with the model (as being a self-portrait) and a desire for the model captures the ambiguous quality in Hawarden's images, and gives a way into the unsettling qualities of Jones's portraits. For Mavor, the obsessional quality of Hawarden's photographs – in which she photographed her daughters over and over again, trying on different poses and costumes – "evoke[s] a practice of adolescent reading".[37] An image that helps to illustrate the structures of identification and representation in Hawarden's work is an image in which Clementina and Isabella are posed against a blank wall, Isabella facing the viewer, eyes cast down, holding a photograph in her hand of her sister Florence (fig 1.12). Clementina embraces her sister, her body sideways on to the viewer, her gaze brushing the collar of her sister's outfit.[38] The camera is in close proximity to the girls, framing their bodies just below the waist, with the wall on which they lean condensing the pictorial space. The intimacy of the camera's position places the photographer in the photographic space, as another set of eyes completing the uneven circuit of gazes and touches. Isabella holds the image of her sister as a young girl, which emphasises her identity as a young woman. She seems to be full of sadness as she casts her eyes down, with the photograph perhaps indicating a sorrow over her youth ending. Her sister also holds her, but does not look at her directly, with only their mother looking at them directly through the interface of the camera lens. The space of the photograph and the interlacing of bodies and gazes, form a metaphorical and emotional space in which the identifications with the different girls and women function as self-recognition, nostalgic memory and anticipation.[39] The mother/photographer looks at her girls, who appear

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[35] Carol Armstrong, "From Clementina to Käsebier: The Photographic Attainment of the 'Lady Amateur'", *October,* vol. 91, Winter 2000, pp. 101-139.

[36] Craig Owens, "Photography *en abyme*", *October*, vol. 5 (special issue on photography), Summer 1978, pp. 73-88.

[37] Mavor, *Becoming*, p. xxxi. This repetitious consumption or staging that Mavor identifies as adolescent in Hawarden's work also corresponds with a hysterical mode of representation, continually attempting to present the body again and again in a display of unsolvable symptoms. The importance of hysteria will be explored later in the chapter.

[38] For Mavor's reading of this image, see *Becoming*, pp. 41-43. It is from her account and Virgina Dodier's that the identity of the girl posed in the photograph as Florence is taken.

[39] Looking through Hawarden's photographs, it becomes clear that she experimented with various ways of making the photographed scene become more dynamic. She experimented with different frames, starting with very small figures in the landscape, to posing her models in close proximity to the camera. After beginning with traditional

to act out her nostalgia and desire for their youthfulness, the temporal space of the adolescent standing in for the girl looking at the woman and the woman looking at the girl. The photograph stands in as a memento, representing a lost identity, as well as indicating the reproducible nature of both the photograph and the construction of femininity: "In Hawarden's photographs, the relationship between the category of woman, the photograph and the female fetish reflect each other's reflections, constituting a supra-*mise en abyme*."[40]

In Jones's work there are also a few examples of portraits being framed within her photographs, standing in for a similar allusion to identification, albeit with a very different emotional charge. In *The Dining Room (Francis Place) III*, 1997, a girl is seated at a formal dining table, her gaze looking down, just off camera (fig. 1.13). Above the table is a portrait of a middle-aged woman, who has been identified by some commentators as standing in for the model's mother. There does seem to be a resemblance in the face of the girl and of the woman in the painting, with their gazes seeming to be focused on the same point. Rather than a circuit of intimate touches, as in Hawarden's photograph, the girl sits stranded behind the heavy polished table, the camera pulled back from the scene, clipping just the far edge of the table in its square frame. The painting is almost centrally placed at the top of the image, its position reinforced by a large, shiny silver tureen placed directly beneath it on the table. The model is placed on the left of the image, cut off from the portrait on the wall by a low dado, and cut off from the photographer by the edge of the table. The reflection of her shoulders in the table surface seems to present a mirror image that is as equally inaccessible to her as is the portrait on the wall. Here the chain of identifications between the photographer, model, portrait and viewer are set up only to be frustrated, with each character being ultimately stranded within the photographic space.

These two images – one by Hawarden and one by Jones, are unusual in their work overall in the inclusion of another kind of portrait in the photograph. The identifications between the figures in the picture and the photographer are normally left abstracted, implied only by the spatial economies of the photographic

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portrait poses, she increasingly used the touches of the models between each other, or props around them, to create a flow across the photographic surface.

[40] Mavor, *Becoming*, p. 43.

composition. As part of Jones's *Consulting Room* series, she took pictures of the chairs on which

analysands and analysts would sit for their sessions. These portraits of two chairs, set against nondescript

walls, sometimes enlivened by a picture, encapsulate the relational economy of the photographs of the

three girls which were to follow the next year. In *Consulting Room (I)*, 1995, the turquoise blue of the wall

is echoed in the dining room walls of Francis Place, creating a formal correspondence between the two

sites (fig. 1.14). Two navy blue chairs are placed at an angle to one another, with the space between them

forming the bottom centre of the image – the space filled by a small wastepaper basket. Above this basket

is a print of Van Gogh's sunflowers, cut off by the top of the picture frame. The chairs stand in for their

absent subjects, personalised only by the relationship between the two as analyst and analysand – there

is no more information available as to their individuality. Instead, the viewer is left with a space in which it

is possible to imagine being in all three positions presented: the anxious person looking at the Van Gogh

print and starting to speak, awkward in their relationship to the analyst, who knows the fabric of the room

intimately, to the photographer, who chooses the composition of the print above the wastepaper basket,

the bin the depository of rubbish, the only link between the two chairs in which an exchange of importance

is meant to take place. As in *The Dining Room (Francis Place) III*, which emphasises the gaps between

the model and her placement within the domestic environment, the chairs are held in tension by their close

proximity to one another – with their slight angling towards the other implying an intimacy – and the

intrusion of the waste bin and Van Gogh print. Just as the costumes and poses of the studio portrait are

standardised, allowing a set of significations that fit a multitude of sitters, here the space of the consulting

room is treated to expose the viewer to the underlying spatial constructions that standardise the

experience of analysis, and by implication, the photograph.

The linking here of the nineteenth-century portraits of Hawarden with the late-twentieth-century portraits of

Jones requires more than just a visual comparison. At the time that Hawarden was making her

photographs, adolescence was still a rather undefined period, with the ages of her daughters designating

them as adults, rather than suspending them between children and women according to the twentieth-

century conception of teenage years. Whilst there was a category of 'youth' or 'adolescence', its viability,

especially for young women, was ambiguous in the nineteenth century, with the status of the child being

the focus of cultural fascination. As Philippe Ariès has explored in his seminal study *Centuries of Childhood*, the nineteenth century's redefinition of the family as a private, patriarchal unit was concurrent with the hardening of gender binaries and the role of children idealised and separated from that of adulthood. In this context, Hawarden's manipulation of her domestic space into a studio, a space capable of depicting multiple fantasies and a female-orientated mode of spectatorship, shows the ways in which photography allowed Victorian upper-middle-class women a way to quietly redefine increasingly patriarchal modes of representation.[41] Just as Hawarden explores and erodes one of the most potent mythologies of the nineteenth century – that of the feminine, passive woman, so Jones exploits a contemporary mythology, that of the adolescent. As Ariès discusses: "[t]hus our society has passed from a period which was ignorant of adolescence to a period in which adolescence is the favourite age. We now want to come to it early and linger in it as long as possible."[42] The myth of femininity, so powerfully engrained in the discourse of domesticity in the nineteenth century, is explored in Hawarden's photographs by distancing herself as the older woman from her idealised depictions of her beautiful daughters, who appear to play with their roles of femme fatale, domestic goddess, and passive decoration. This generational gap is also exploited by Jones, who draws upon our contemporary desire for the adolescent female model as the epitome of feminine beauty. The unobtainable "angel in the house" has been reconfigured as the unobtainable Lolita, with youth combining with femininity to produce a potent stereotype. Jones's attractive, middle-class models are used as ambiguously compliant collaborators, photographed not by a peer, or by a professional portraitist, but by an older woman, manipulating their poses within the photographic field. Hawarden's eroticised, maternally intimate photographs can be seen as examples of manipulating the photographic space and presentation of the adolescent model, which are reconfigured in a cooler, more ambiguous mode by Jones.

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[41] As Marina Warner points out in her introduction to Dodier's monograph on Hawarden, the photographer would have spent much of her married life pregnant or with very young children (she had seven daughters and one son), necessitating the use of her domestic environment as the focus for her artistic practice. Marina Warner, "The Shadow of Young Girls in Flower", *Clementina, Lady Hawarden*, p. 6.

[42] Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, Robert Baldick trans., London: Pimlico, 1996, p. 28. Originally published in French as *L'Enfant et la familiale sous l'ancien regime*, Paris: Librairie Plon, 1960.

Woodman's self-portraits, positioned at the end of the 1970s, represent another reference point for Jones

in the convergence of experimentation with the photograph as document in conceptual art, and the

redefining of female representation as seen in second wave feminist art and politics. Whereas the amateur

photographer in the mid-nineteenth century was a role only affordable to the wealthier classes, connoted

in Hawarden's images by the bourgeois settings, props and dress, during the 1970s, the photograph was

requisitioned in conceptual art as a kind of ready-made, as a document rather than as an artistic

statement. The use of the photograph to document performances, acting as a residue of the event, rather

than a fine art object, with attention paid to the print, composition and vintage, produced a

reconceptualisation of art photography, discarding the history of modernist photography, embracing

instead a reportage style of representation.[43] This focus on the event being depicted, rather than the style

and skill of the photographer re-activated concerns with the space of the photograph which echo the

experimentation of amateur Victorian photographers such as Hawarden. In Woodman's photographs,

there is a conscious quotation of this early moment in photographic history, with attention paid to the

quality of the hand-made print, the construction of her images in series or made into mini-books or albums

such as her artist book *On Some Disordered Interior Geometries*, 1981.[44] The lack of contemporary detail

in Woodman's work can be seen comparing *In My Cousin's Room Who is My Same Age*, nd and a double-

page spread from *On Some Disordered Interior Geometries* (fig. 1.15a and b). In the first image Woodman

poses nude in her teenage cousin's bedroom, strewn with soft toys, a bike and a CND carpet. Woodman's

naked body and cool stare into the camera seem out of place, or perhaps, more accurately, out of time.

The photograph is unusual in Woodman's oeuvre in its inclusion of items that can be identified as being

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[43] See Kathy O'Dell, *Contract With The Skin*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998 on the use of the photograph in 1970s performance art. For a survey of photographic debates taking place during the 1970s, see the exhibition catalogue *The Last Picture Show: Artists Using Photography 1960-1982*, Douglas Foyle ed., Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 2003.
[44] Harriet Riches explores the relationship of Woodman and her work to Victorian photography, discussing her choice of a small square format that echoes the work of amateur photographers such as Clementina Hawarden and Julia Margaret Cameron, who Riches says Woodman was aware of. "Apparently, she 'often said she had been born in the wrong era, claiming she was much better suited to the aestheticised formality of the Victorian age'." Harriet Katherine Riches, *Skin, Surface and Subjectivity: The Self-Representational Photography of Francesca Woodman*, unpublished PhD thesis, London: University College London, 2004, p. 40. Quoting Ann Gabhart, in her biographical notes in *Francesca Woodman, Photographic Work*, Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College Museum and New York: Hunter College Art Gallery, 1986, p. 54.

from the late 1970s, and is not an image that has been reproduced in any collections of her work.[45]

Woodman appears to perform her discomfort in the photograph, refusing any of the gestural actions that normally link her to the photographic space. In the page from her artist's book, Woodman's handwritten text under a pair of photographs reads: "These things arrived from my grandmothers they make me think about where I fit in this odd geometry of time." The photographs show Woodman dressed in a lacy shirt, standing on a mirror in the second image, which appears to relate to the following sentence: "The mirror is a sort of rectangle although they say mirrors are just water specified." Her focus in *On Some Disordered Interior Geometries* is the different depictions of geometrical objects and spaces, disrupted in their translation into the performance space of the photograph as mirrors, bedspreads, body parts, paper. Like Hawarden and Jones, Woodman uses the female body to articulate the space of the photographic portrait, blending issues of identity and representation with the movement of the model in the frame of the photograph. As can be seen by the awkwardness of Woodman in her cousin's room, the site of adolescence is not one of a particular moment of consumerism or a tableau of a particular moment in an individual's life. Instead, the transitional status of adolescence is used as part of a symbolic vocabulary to explore the variations possible in the photographic portrait.

The problem of representing the female body, and the ways in which the photographic space can be manipulated by the photographer, are replayed in the work of Jones and her contemporaries through large-scale colour photography.[46] Rather than Woodman's return to the size and patina of Victorian prints, Jones's portraits utilise new technologies that allow for the production of large-scale colour prints. Typically 150 cm square, Jones's photographs explicitly relate to the scale of portrait painting, as well as to the cinematic screen.[47] Talking about the use of the almost life-size square format, Jones explains that she wanted to print on a large scale to provoke "the sense that you have to feel this person [in the

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[45] The image is reproduced in Gerard Malanga ed., *Scopophilia: The Love of Looking*, New York: Alfred van der Marck Editions, 1985.

[46] In a round table discussion "Francesca Woodman Reconsidered", *Art Journal*, vol. 62, no. 2, Summer 2003, pp. 53-67, the participants consider the legacy of Woodman's work on the depiction of adolescence in the 1990s, as well as discussing her work in relation to a broader history of photography, seeing her as being a "photographer's photographer" in her engagement with the specificities of the medium.

[47] Jones says that cinema is a big influence, explaining that in her research she looks at films and film stills as well as photographic work. Her use of colour is influenced by cinema and painting, creating a reduced palette that contributes to the formal quality of her portraits. Conversation with the author.

photograph] physically", hanging the images in the gallery space at a height so that the figures appear to be hovering.[48] For Jones, the prints are presented in the gallery space in a way that she describes as "sculptural", and are conceived in dialogue with one another: "My work has been about setting up these condensed narratives. If I do another show with the same images, I rearrange it, it's like I rewrite the story, working it over and over again."[49] Whereas in the small-scale of Hawarden's and Woodman's photographs the physical engagement with the viewer evokes the act of looking through an album, Jones's work zooms in on this intimate engagement, enlarging it by using the space of the gallery as the site of interaction between viewer and image. By comparing the work of Jones with these earlier photographic practices, the performance of the viewer in relation to the photographic portrait is brought to the fore, as the performative spaces in each individual photograph are articulated in relation to the other images in the installation, album or artist's book. The difference in format in the three photographers' work does create a different engagement with the performance space of the photographic portrait. However, comparing Hawarden's experiments with stereoscopic imagery, different sizes of prints, natural light and drapery to create the most successful articulation of the photographic space with Woodman's series of performances and texts and Jones's engagement with the photograph's presentation in the gallery's white cube can be seen as presenting different solutions to an enduring set of concerns around the photographic portrait and the representation of the adolescent female model.

Doubling and disappearing: the 'subjectless' portrait

In Virginia Dodier's discussion of Hawarden's photographs, she explores the potential narratives that could be contained in the images:

> Indeed many Hawarden photographs are comparable to mid-Victorian 'subject pictures' of
> women reading, sewing, dressing, regarding themselves in the mirror, or just losing themselves in
> thought. They are part of a tradition that can be traced back from the early nineteenth-century

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

Biedermeier artists to the work of the seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish painters. These

images might more rightly be called 'subjectless' because, whatever the premise, they have no

real subjects beyond the beauty of the women and the comforts of home. Certainly there is no

suggestion of narrative or anecdote. The images are open to interpretation; in fact, through subtle

use of metaphor and symbol, they *invite* different readings without resorting to contrivance.[50]

Dodier's reading inadvertently suggests more radical reading of the images, so that 'subjectless' comes to

stand in for the lack of individuality presented in the models. Rather than lacking a narrative subject, I want

to explore the possibilities invited by the images that the models themselves lack subjecthood, or perhaps

more accurately, oscillate between subject and object. The images that invite this reading most specifically

are those in which the model is paired up with decorative objects, is doubled up with another model, or

displaced completely from the field of the photograph. This reading of the images as 'subjectless' also

goes some way to link the structural concerns with the photographic space and the symbolisation of the

adolescent girl – as the stability of representation and identification is brought into question.

Alongside the first two Woodman self-portraits that have been discussed, a third image could be added,

from the same period, *Untitled*, Providence, Rhode Island, 1975-1978 (fig. 1.16). In the same derelict

rooms that Woodman posed with her hands in the air and against walls, a door is leant against a wall at an

impossibly precarious angle, so that it appears almost to float in space. Placed in one catalogue opposite

the untitled image of Woodman with both hands out in front of her (fig. 1.4), the open door on the left hand

side of her self-portrait appears as the opposite of the suspended door, with its grubby white paint

contrasting with the dark irregular rectangle cast by the leant door. The articulation of space by Woodman

in the first image is echoed by the strangely leant door, so that an equivalence between it and her own

body is created. In another set of images, from New York, 1979, Woodman presents two variations on the

same combination of elements – herself in a printed dress, posed against a peeling, decaying wall, holding

what appears to be the skeleton of a fern leaf or a fish (fig. 1.17a and b). In one image, Woodman poses

so that her body faces the viewer, her head bent sideways, in shadow. One hand holds the fern/fish

skeleton horizontally next to her body, her other hand is placed behind it, echoing its shape. In the second

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[50] Dodier, *Clementina, Lady Hawarden*, pp. 44-45.

image Woodman poses with her back to the viewer, her dress open to reveal her spine. One hand is raised over her head, the other holds the fern/fish skeleton up alongside her spine, providing another visual echo between body and object. In both images, the decaying wall provides another resonance with her body and the skeleton, with the wooden supports, revealed underneath the plaster replicating the vertebrae of the delicate skeleton structure. Added to this is the print of her dress, which is patterned with a print of fern leaves. Here, rather than literally disappearing from the frame, as in the previous image, Woodman presents her body as disappearing within the visual resonances of place, object and dress, a device that can be seen in Jones's portraits. By using the repetitions across images, the subject of the portrait becomes replaced by the terms by which it is represented, so that the model's body becomes only one element within a shifting symbolic space.

This disappearance and equivalence can be seen in Jones's portraits, with her models interchanging with each other, or disappearing completely. In two almost identical images, shot outside with a flash to foreshorten the space, *The Fence (Passion Flower) I* and *II*, both 2002, a passion flower bush fills the middle ground of the image, the white flowers and foliage lit up starkly against the dark blue sky (fig. 1.18). In The *Fence (Passion Flower) I*, the bush fills the frame, overpowering a just glimpsed fence, almost engulfing the floor of concrete floor slabs, and pushing up to almost obliterate the sky. In *The Fence (Passion Flower) II*, a young girl stands in front of the bush, her hands hanging by her sides, her head tilted upwards, as she gazes up and to one side. Flicking from one image to the other, it is as if Jones sets up a little vanishing act for the viewer – now you see her, now you don't. Both images hold the viewer's attention, with the bush animated by the harsh lighting and the composition that almost forces it to exceed the frame of the image. Like Woodman's strangely angled door, the uncanny aspect of an everyday object is exploited to hold the viewer in tension with the scene pictured. When looking at the portrait of the model (not one of the girls used in the Francis Place and Mulberry Lodge series, but one who poses in a way that recalls them) next to the image of the bush, what comes in to focus are the ways in which the model becomes part of the scenery. Her blue top and denim jeans tone in with the sky, accentuated by the match between both top and sky by her eyes, which are positioned just at the top edge of the bush, next to the beginning of the bluey-grey background. Her lit upper face resonates with the white constellations of

passion flowers, with the vague awkwardness of her pose stopping any clichéd comparison of girl with nature. Instead, this pair of images comment on the construction of the photographic space and that of the model's identity – the flattened space of the bush, floor and sky recall not an image of nature gone wild, but the painted backdrops used by the portraitist in the studio, a simulacra of place, a symbolic construction. The movement between the two photographs with the presence of the model erased and replaced again draws attention to the way that both images appear to have equal presence – there is not the sense that one is just background, the other the portrait. The model is positioned so she too is revealed as constructed and constricted as the photographic space. The title of the works – *The Fence* – draws attention to the just seen wooden fencing on the right hand side of the image. The passion flower has completely overgrown this boundary, but it is at this limit of domestic space that Jones chooses as her setting and also title. As with all of her outdoor images, the garden is used almost as an extension of the interiors she photographs, a space in which the foliage and flowers are shot to resonate with the proliferation of flowered chintzes, curtains and decorative painting that populate the middle-class interiors. As well as commenting on the construction of the photographic space of the portrait, this pair of images also engages the viewer in a play of symbolism, in which artificiality and nature are played against each other, so that the construction of the portrait links the model with the backdrop she is posed against. As Woodman uses her hands to define the space in front of her in the works described previously, and then plays her own body against that of the uncannily placed door, here Jones uses her teenage model as an ambiguous presence in the photographic field, both there and not there, both subject and object.

The use of the female model as a decorative component in an image was a commonplace in Victorian photography and painting. [51] The setting of *The Fence* also draws upon Victorian conventions found in the work of the Pre-Raphaelites as well as amateur photographers such as Julia Margaret Cameron. Sylvia Wolf discusses the motif of the garden in relation to Cameron's work:

> As romantic love became a thriving subject, a visual language of signs and symbols was developed to describe or allude to passion and longing. A garden, for example, signalled at once pastoral beauty and erotic potential. It symbolised the inner sanctum, where a young woman's virtue was

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[51] See ibid p. 58 for a discussion of the style of portrait.

isolated and protected from the outside world by ivy-covered walls…. An image of a woman in a

garden, therefore, delivered a tantalising combination of virginal unavailability and sexual

suggestion.[52]

These comments resonate with Jones's reasons for choosing the garden as her setting. She explains how

in the garden nature is clipped and pruned, combining a potential for freedom and the reality of its

containment.[53] The combination of "virginal unavailability and sexual suggestion" also focuses on the

adolescent girl being the ideal subject to emphasise this symbolism. An image by Julia Margaret Cameron

that can be compared with Jones's diptych is *Maud – The Passion Flower at the Gate*, 1875 (fig 1.19).

Wolf explores how the passion flower represented both belief and susceptibility in the Victorian language

of flowers, again underlining the symbolism of the adolescent model and her placing at the edge of the

garden. Here the use of the gate, like the wall in Jones's photographs, is used to hold the model in a

domestic space that is only a step away from the public realm. Michael Bartram, in his book *The Pre-

Raphaelite Camera* says that one of the reasons models were often posed against walls was to avoid

blurring the background in a photograph, as well as the symbolism explored above. He also discusses

how the motif of the wall or foliage was used in Pre-Raphaelite painting to give a richly detailed surface,

allowing the painter to demonstrate their virtuosity in rendering even the smallest flower petal.[54] He

considers a painting by John Everett Millais, *A Huguenot, On St Bartholomew's Day*, 1852, which shows a

pair of young lovers in front of an ivy-covered wall (fig 1.20). Like Jones's portraits in Francis Place and

Mulberry Lodge, the focus of the painting is on the textures, colours and details of the models' costumes

and surroundings, producing an equality of surface across the painting. The Pre-Raphaelites were

influenced by photography's ability to capture detail, and aimed to emulate its realism during its first

decades. The symbolism in Millais's painting is no less important than the passion flower and gate in

Cameron's photograph, a symbolism that is mainly lost on contemporary readers, but would have been

obvious to the Victorian spectator. Bartram explains how "Ivy, in particular, was rich in meaning. It stood

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[52] Sylvia Wolf, "Julia Margaret Cameron's Women", in *Julia Margaret Cameron's Women*, Sylvia Wood ed., New Haven and London: The Art Institute of Chicago and Yale University Press, 1998, p. 43.
[53] Jones, conversation with the author. Jones also said how "The interiors are very often the place of the mother, and the exteriors are the place of the father." Here the control of the family is extended to the outside space.
[54] Michael Bartman, *The Pre-Raphaelite Camera: Aspects of Victorian Photography*, London: Widenfeld and Nicolson, 1985. The relationship between painting and photography in the Victorian era will be discussed in more depth in chapter three. Rather than seeing a one-way relationship where photographers draw on painting as source material, Bartram explores the conversation between painters and photographers during this period.

for the passing of time and friendship in adversity. When clinging to a wall, it further connoted female sexuality."[55] The symbolism in Pre-Raphaelite painting employed a vocabulary in which the female model in domestic and natural settings became the focus for numerous narratives around femininity, love and sexuality. Whilst the particularities of many of these symbols have been lost, the weighting of the images with these layers of meaning was something that was played with by both contemporaneous photographers such as Cameron and Hawarden, as well as in the reworkings of these vocabularies by Woodman and Jones.

In Hawarden's photographs the equation of female model with decorative item is employed on numerous occasions. In a full-length image, posed in a very similar shallow space against a wall as in Jones's portraits, Clementina is shown in a full-length skirt posed next to a large decorative cabinet that is placed on an ornate mantelpiece (fig. 1.21). The wallpaper on the wall behind her is patterned with stars, and in front of the mantelpiece stands a desk with carved legs and a vase of flowers. Clementina appears to lean her face onto the side of the cabinet, half her face in shadow, gazing back at the viewer as her hand holds one of the cabinet's many drawers slightly open. The seductive gaze of Clementina, which is a feature of so many of Hawarden's images, locates the open drawer within a set of possible narrative illusions, that of Pandora's box being the most obvious.[56] However, the main force of the image is not narrative, but is in the intimacy of the photographic space, with the shallow space holding the viewer in the thrall of the gaze of Clementina. To see the ways in which this pose is echoed and altered in Jones's portraits, the image *The Dining Room (Francis Place) VII*, 1999, serves as a good comparison (fig. 1.22). Considered alongside the two images of *The Sitting Room (Francis Place)* discussed above, this image shows one of the same models posed against a wall, next to an ornate porcelain vase and a mantelpiece. The formal similarities between this image and Hawarden's – the mantelpiece, the full-length pose, the shallow space, the use of domestic ornaments alongside the adolescent model – allow for a consideration of the ways in which the portraits differ. The most obvious difference between the images is the way that the models are posed with the decorative objects that surround them. The seductive pose of Clementina, and her leaning

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[55] Ibid., p. 127.
[56] See Dodier, *Clementina, Lady Hawarden*, p. 52.

into the cabinet is at odds with the awkwardly turned foot of Jones's model, who stands in close proximity, but adamantly separate from the objects around her. Her hands are placed on her legs, her head is bent down, with her gaze buried somewhere into the carpet that stretches out from the photograph's frame. Where Hawarden intensifies the eroticism implicit in this genre of portraiture, overflowing from the genteel confines of the conventionalised studio portrait into an intimate, tactile image, Jones's concentrates on the conventional aspects of the image, focusing the viewer on the awkward fit of the model into the ideal image of attractive female model complemented by a decorative or exotic object. In Jones's picture, the vase operates as the other figure in the image, so that as in the diptych *The Fence (Passion Flower)*, the model is equated with the scenery in a way that both negates and draws out their symbolic portent. Just as the model is imbued with a history of portrait poses, and middle-class expectations of the attractive young woman, so the bourgeois setting is imbued with the symbolism of status, taste and control. The repetition of the models and the backgrounds across the sets of images undermine the individualism of the portraits, so that the viewer is again drawn into the photographic space of the portrait, with the small differences of gaze, pose and setting across the images setting up an identification with the act of taking the photograph, a relationship that is minimised in the typical studio portrait.[57] Rather than the image being a token of the sitter's personality and status, in both Hawarden and Jones's images the repetition of the act of photographing the models constructs a performative space in which the viewer is asked to identify with the model and the photographer. In Hawarden's heavily erotised repetitions, the viewer is seduced by the pose, gaze, beauty and youth of her models, complicated by the knowledge that the relationship underlying the image is one of mother and daughter. As Mavor and Armstrong have explored, Hawarden is interested in producing images that have a surface of light and shadow that is a tactile, sensual surface, underscoring the erotic tension depicted through the pose and gaze of the models. Jones's images are also seductive, with their large-scale, deeply coloured compositions, but there is an underlying alienation put in place by the overly manipulated pose of the models and the flattened relationship between models, setting and photographer. Here the eroticism of the models is equated with the beauty of their environments in which they are posed, with the disjunctures between the elements, and the repetition

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[57] This is emphasised in Jones's portrait by the pairing of this image with a similarly posed version using Camilla as the model.

across the series enforcing a sense of symbolic emptiness in the final composition. By using such overdetermined elements, Jones's comments on the way in which the photographic portrait is composed and naturalised, enacted in a repetitive, performative space that seduces the viewer through the ambiguity of its authenticity.

Reflections and repetitions: mirrors and the subject multiplied

A convention in Victorian portraiture that continues the theme of the female model as decoration is the use of mirrors in portraits – a device that both allows the photographer to capture the model from all angles, as well as insert a narrative of narcissism that has been a component of painted portraits for centuries before the advent of photography. The mirror allows the viewer to take up a voyeuristic position in relation to the model (the fantasy of gazing on the model as she poses unawares) as well as retelling the myth of the narcissistic woman, entranced and infantilised by her own beauty. In two commercial carte-de-visite images, the device of a mirror can be seen as it was typically deployed (fig. 1.23a and b). In the first, a woman stands sideways with her head turned away from the viewer, her voluminous silk dress taking centre stage in the image, displayed to its fullest extent. Her reflection in the mirror, which is positioned on a table next to her, captures her face, showing her downcast eyes, as if she is oblivious to the photographer's presence. This moment of contemplation constructs the fictional space in the portrait that allows the viewer to consume the model as image, a modest pose when compared to Hawarden's lascivious daughters, but one that is similarly constructed around the equation of model with the decorative, domestic surroundings. In the second image, twin girls are posed in front of a mirror, both turned away from the viewer. As one girl looks into the mirror, her gaze meeting the viewer, the other stares at her sister, in a multiplication of gazes and identities. The girls' matching outfits and hair, along with the staged, central position of the mirror, again flattens their identities in the conventional play of symbols. Compared with these studio images, Hawarden's use of the mirror and multiple models emphasises the conventional vocabulary being employed, subtly undermining its naturalisation through the intimacy and eroticism created in her photographs. In yet another portrait of Clementina, she poses

next to a mirror, again leaning into the wall, and holding her prop as if she can barely stand on her own

(fig. 1.24). This time the shallow space of the photograph has been shortened to such an extent that the

arm of Clementina's dress is out of focus. She stares at her reflection in the large glass, the frontal pose

reflected for the viewer to engage with alongside the sideways shot model. Her gaze is not directed at the

viewer, but, like the first carte-de-visite image, she appears to be absorbed in her own reflection. However,

Hawarden's position in the scene – so close that she appears to be almost as close to the mirror as

Clementina herself – forces the viewer to recognise the position of the photographer not as that of voyeur,

but as participant. The doubled body of Clementina provides the two sides of a triangular space that is

completed by the photographer's body (another Clementina), illustrating the construction of this most

clichéd of photographic poses. The status of the reflection in Hawarden's portraits is further complicated

by the similarity of these images to the double portraits of her daughters, most often Clementina and

Isabella. In what could be imagined as a sister image to the mirror portrait of Clementina, the two sisters

are shown embracing, the face of Clementina visible over the shoulder of Isabella (fig. 1.25). As the two

girls hold each other by the shoulder and waist, apparently gazing into each other's eyes, the narcissism

of the mirror portraits is complicated by the homoeroticism of these double portraits.[58] The relationship

between siblings and its complication of the oedipal narratives of traditional psychoanalysis, as explored

by Juliet Mitchell, emphasises the importance of lateral relationships in the formation of identity, in addition

to the well documented vertical relationships, that of parents and children. In *Siblings* Mitchell argues: "The

sibling is *par excellence* someone who threatens the subject's uniqueness. The ecstasy of loving one who

is like oneself is experienced at the same time as the trauma of being annihilated by one who stands in

one's place" and "I suggest loving one's sibling *like oneself* is neither exactly narcissism nor object-love. It

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[58] This connection is also explored in Mavor's discussion of Hawarden's portraits: "Clementina's mirror images emphasis that Sapphic love is never far from Narcissus, who, in psychoanalytic theory, is a privileged sign of homosexuality." Mavor, *Belonging*, p. 102. She also explores the link between narcissism and maternal identification in the use of mirrors: "Hawarden displays women as *ontologically* fetishistic by picturing passion as a kind of feminine doubling of the mother herself, as simulation. For example, the photographs that focus on mirrored images in actual mirrors and windows as mirrors suggests not only feminine narcissism but also the mirroring of the mother through the daughter." Ibid., p. 37. Another way of considering the maternal relationship in these photographs could be to follow the problems of transference and counter-transference as experienced in the psychoanalytic encounter, taking us back to the empty spaces of Jones's couches. Jessica Benjamin has explored the ways in which the mother could be used as a model for the active/passive exchanges in her book *Shadow of the Other: Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis*, New York and London: Routledge, 1998, saying "Mothers' psychic work involves a response that unites elements generally understood as passive – taking in – and active – giving back or out. The processing of other's psychic material, and its integration in intersubjective expression – recognition – constitutes the active-passive reconciliation in the work of the maternal subject." p. 29.

is narcissism transmuted by a hatred that has been overcome."[59] Hawarden's depictions of sisters concentrate on the fierce love that Mitchell describes in the love of a sibling or peer, and is based in a narcissistic mode of identification rather than a voyeuristic object-love. This motif of eroticised sameness continues throughout Hawarden's portraits, including a pair of images in which Clementina appears to be calling for Isabella, with the two sisters looking at each other through or by French windows (fig. 1.26). In these images the windows again echo the glass of the mirror, so that the identities of the two girls are complicated by their merging into each other, just as in the single portraits where the models are equated with decorative objects. The use of mirrors and doubling is taken up in a similar manner by Woodman, who uses mirrors and models to double her own body. Her friend Sloan Rankin remarked "In many of the pictures we couldn't tell ourselves apart because she managed to make my features photograph like her own."[60]

This complex slippage between narcissism, homoeroticism and lateral relationships, alongside the inflections of the subjectless or multiple subjects in the portraits, is played out in a rather more aggressive mode in Jones's photographs. Rather than mirrors being used to create an intimacy and eroticism as in Hawarden's work, in Jones's portraits it is the reflective, distorting surfaces surrounding her models that are utilised. In *The Dining Room (Mulberry Lodge) III*, 1997, Camilla is photographed with her head leaning on her arms, which are placed on the shiny surface of a dining table (fig. 1.27). Her white top is reflected in the tabletop, but her head is obscured, so that neither she nor the viewer can take part in the eroticised reflections that populate Hawarden's work. Instead, reflections in Jones's work are constantly frustrated and ignored, echoing the similarly alienating poses of her multiple portraits. In two pairs of images, *The Dining Room (Francis Place) I* and *II*, and *The Dining Room (Mulberry Lodge) I* and *II*, all

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[59] Juliet Mitchell, *Siblings: Sex and Violence*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003, pp. 10, 36. Mitchell's thesis is that sibling relationships have been ignored in psychoanalysis, but with changing social structures, are more and more important in the understanding of identity: "although there is always interaction, the perpetuation of the polymorphous perverse, non-reproductive sexuality takes place through lateral, not vertical relationships, starting with siblings in the context always of peers and later of affines. In other words, as the infant-maternal was latent in the heyday of patriarchal psychoanalysis, so the sibling/the lateral has been latent throughout the reproductive (inevitably more matriarchal than patriarchal) period." pp. 127-128.
[60]Sloan Rankin, "Francesca Woodman: Voyeurism Among Friends", in Malanga ed., *Scopophilia: The Love of Looking*, p. 117. Riches compares the use of mirrors in the work of Woodman and Hawarden, saying "A symbol of female narcissism, in these images the mirror becomes a paradoxical space of obfuscation and denial as both photographers manipulated available light, flooding the mirror's silvered surface with an over-exposed, bleaching brightness which destroys its reflective function." *Skin, Surface and Subjectivity*, p. 47.

1997, two dining rooms are the setting for portraits of two and then three girls (figs. 1.28-1.29). In *The Dining Room (Mulberry Lodge)* Camilla and another model are posed, one standing behind the table, the other sitting. The two photographs document the two models swapping places, with the differences in their poses forming the focus of the images. Similarly in *The Dining Room (Francis Place)* three girls are shown swapping places across the two images. In all four images the reflective surface of the tables and their placement in the foreground of the frame link up all the images, across the different rooms, models and poses, into a modulating series. The reflection of the left hand model – who like Camilla in the earlier *Dining Room* image discussed is slumped over the table so that only her hair can be seen – appears to literally merge into her own reflection, with the glossy mane of hair reflecting perfectly in the table's polished surface. Unlike Hawarden's daughters, who are nearly always connected to each other by intimate touches, Jones's models are kept separate from each other and the viewer, with the connection between them coming from the repetitions between the images in the series. The viewer is kept at a distance by the placement of the objects, so that in the *Dining Room* images the table is always cutting across the front of the photographic space. In terms of Mitchell's formulation of lateral relations, what is interesting in Jones's images is the way that her serial presentation of her models echo Mitchell's suggestions as to the sibling's importance in the construction of identity. By learning that one is one of many, and not unique, through the presence of a sibling or peer, that one mourns the unique self, and learns to love the sibling/peer in a mode that is not based in a reproductive sexual difference:

> Lateral desire does not involve the symbolisation that comes through the absence of the phallus (or womb); it involves seriality. As part of a series, girls and boys are 'equilateral', in other words, they are not defined by what is missing. Girls and boys explore what is *there*, not what is not.[61]

In the portraits of Hawarden and Woodman, there are images that appear to serialise the representation of the models, as in Jones's images in which the models swap positions with each other. In an unusual pairing of Clementina and Isabella, the two girls stand against the wall of the studio/lounge, both wearing boldly striped skirts, one in black and one of white (fig. 1.30). Contrasting with the strong shadow cast by the window on the right, the girls costumes echo the study in light and shadow used as their setting, so they appear almost as the positive and negative of each other (and of the photographic plate), as well as

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[61] Mitchell, *Siblings*, p. 128.

replicating of each other through the similarities of their hair, faces and dress. They are both alike and

opposite, neither mirror images nor separate individuals. Rather than through an exchange of touch or

gaze, as in most of Hawarden's double portraits, here the structural doubling is made in a way similar to

her pairing of her daughters with decorative objects. Similarly, Woodman's more humorous portrait, taken

in Boulder, Colorado, 1972-1975, shows Woodman and another girl standing against a wooden house,

one in a light printed dress, the other in a dark printed dress, both open to the waist exposing their breasts

(fig. 1.31). The light skin of Woodman contrasts with the tan of her friend, their similarly positioned hands,

legs and hairstyles producing an oscillation between the pair doubling and inverting the other.[62]

Mitchell's construction of lateral relationships collapses the Freudian opposition of identification and

object-love, so that modes of desire can be conceptualised that are not based on the binary of sexual

difference.[63] Here the replication and erasure of the adolescent girl symbolises the process of seriality that

is a working through of an identity set in place by the fear of being annihilated by the presence of another

who appears the same – a symbolic that also goes some way to explain the merging of model with object,

so that the subject-object relationship is destabilised. Adolescence is a time in which peer groups become

very important, with the formation of identity taking place within a space of both the family and a wider

social context. The importance of lateral relationships during this period, especially those between same-

sex friends, makes the adolescent an exemplar of Mitchell's theorising. The mythology of the girls' school

homoeroticism, and the working through of the question "How does narcissism become love of another,

object-love?"[64], makes the adolescent girl a culturally resonant symbol of this merging of identification and

desire, homo and heterosexuality, with a close link to the definitions of femininity:

> Sibling relationships prioritise experiences such as the fear of annihilation, a fear associated with
>
> girls, in contrast to the male fear of castration. They involve fear of the loss of love which is

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[62] Woodman played with the presentation of multiple models, especially in their relationship to her use of herself as a model. In one untitled series, 1976-1978, she uses a model that is very similar facially to herself, with the two of them playing out an ambiguous narrative that appears to hinge on their relationship to and with each other. For a discussion of this series, see Harriet Riches, "A Disappearing Act: Francesca Woodman's *Portrait of a Reputation*", *Oxford Art Journal*, 27.1, 2004, pp. 95-113. Another image that plays with this idea of both representing and annihilating identity is an untitled work from Providence, Rhode Island, 1975-1978, in which 3 girls pose naked in an interior, each holding a photographic portrait of Woodman's face up against their own face.
[63] For Mitchell, gender is constructed through lateral relations, and is not understood by a binary logic of sexual difference.
[64] Mitchell, *Siblings*, p. 35.

usually associated with girls; an excessive narcissism which needs to be confirmed by being the object, not subject, of love. Siblings and femininity have a similarly overlooked destiny.[65]

Dead or alive: full or empty

The uncertainty contained in this threat of annihilation can be seen in Jones's portraits, with the replication of models having an almost compulsive quality, with an emptiness that appears to come from the lack of interaction between both the models and the interaction allowed to the photographer and viewer. One critic has said of Jones's images that "[t]he girls' hair and skin are groomed to the same pristine perfection as the hardwood furniture and plush carpeting."[66] This equation of the models with each other, in terms of their 'pristine perfection' and with the objects that surround them, creates a visual vocabulary that appears to negate the individuality of the girls, and consequently negating the explicit function of the portrait: to capture someone's unique character. However, when looking over Jones's models, what is striking is the way that their clothes are not pristine, and although they are not scruffy or dirty, they are not unusually groomed. What catches the eye are the details that link the girls and cause us to only see them as objects, or at best performers: the trainers that are worn in numerous images that seem to have just been taken out of the box; the differences in hair length across the series; the ways in which the girls are not 'perfect', but are shifting within the repetitive terms of the individual images. The emptiness comes from the repetition in the images, but also the blankness that is the main characteristic of the models' expressions and poses. It is as if what is being demonstrating is the way in which their identities are simply performances that are imperfectly presented, and are always in danger of slipping into nothingness. This is very much like a description of the hysteric's self-presentation, as both full and empty, subject and object:

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[65] Ibid., p. 4. Mitchell also links lateral relations to the concerns of postmodernism: "Sibling and peer cohorts are the personnel of postmodernism with its focus on sameness and difference, its concern with 'time present' rather than 'time past'…. Social groups not constructed along the apparent binary of reproduction rely on managing violence unleashed by the trauma of threatened replication; representing seriality is crucial." p. 31

[66] Duncan MacLaren, "Everything in the garden is not at all rosy", *The Independent on Sunday*, 22 August 1999, Culture section, p. 5.

I suggest that the hysteric – male or female – dramatises an assumed phallic position, and at the same time believes that he or she has had the penis taken away, which in its turn means he or she has nothing. So she appears simultaneously hugely potent and horribly 'empty'.[67]

In the same discussion, Mitchell also mentions a little commented on quality of the hysteric – that of pretending to be dead. Here, in Jones's portraits, the uncanny quality of the images comes from the repetition of the poses and settings, but also the blank 'deadness' that many of her models convey.[68] With the actual erasure of the model in some instances, as in the diptych *The Fence (Passion Flower)*, discussed above, it is as if the model is only haunting the photographic space of the image, rather than properly 'being there': "If mourning [for the unique self] cannot take place, then the 'haunting' which is so commonly a noted feature of cross-cultural studies of hysteria takes place: the object is not lost, then represented and internalised; instead it persists as though it has not been lost, but is everlastingly present."[69] Jones's models are in some important way absent – just as the couches and consulting rooms depicted in her early work are empty. What her portraits explore is not a new approach to representing the individual models, but the structures that underpin the identification between spectator and model, self and other, analyst and analysand. The performance space of her photographs show the engagement between the models, the settings and the photographer, with all positions constructed using a serial logic that undermines a stable viewing position.

This quality of 'haunting' in Jones's work can be explored further in relation to the spectral in photography. Discussions of her work repeatedly note that they are somehow distant, but compelling, with their careful compositions and colour palettes lending a sense of unreality to the portraits, so that "these photographs are not portraits, or at least not in the traditional meaning of the word".[70] It is this quality of 'not-quiteness' that appears to elude writers on Jones's work: almost being a portrait, depicting girls who are almost

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[67] Mitchell, *Siblings*, p. 7.
[68] Many critics have commented on the 'haunted' quality of Jones's photographs. For example "a haunting residue is perhaps the defining characteristic of Jones" and "Jones's large (5 foot by 5 foot), slightly chilly, haunted images of girls posed – and seemingly imprisoned – in the trappings of their parents' success show the next generation of the British upper middle class in the formal rooms of their parents' homes." Chris Townsend, "Openings: Sarah Jones", *Artforum*, vol. 36, March 1998, pp. 90-91; p 91; Mark van de Walle, "The Raw and the Cooked up", *Art and Auction*, vol. 21, no. 10, February 1-14 1999, p. 54-59; p. 59. Jones herself has described her work as being "freighted with the psychological debris of past events". Sarah Jones, quoted in Durand, "Dark Foundations", p. 42.
[69] Mitchell, *Siblings*, p. 42.
[70] Higgie, "Sarah Jones", p. 7.

women in a space that is almost a construction of the photographer, but is also almost the domestic space of the models, almost allowing the viewer access to the scene recorded, but somehow not quite. As has been explored above, the models' emptiness is created in part through the equation of the girls with their surroundings, and the repetition of gesture and clothing. To consider this emptiness as spectral or 'ghostly' allows a different reading of the models being both there and not-there.[71] In Barthes's *Camera Lucida* (for many people the definitive guide to photography's relationship to death), he talks about the relationship of the pose to the individual's subjectivity:

> Now, once I feel myself observed by the lens, everything changes: I constitute myself in the process of 'posing', I instantaneously make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image.… the Photograph (the one I intend) represents that very subtle moment when, to tell the truth, I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object: I then experience a micro-version of death (of parenthesis): I am truly becoming a spectre.[72]

Barthes's comments again points to the confusion between the models' status as subject or object in Jones's photographs, as well as Hawarden's and Woodman's. In the early history of photography, there was a similar doubling in the discussions around the status of this new medium: put forward as both an objective, scientific method of representation, as well as a magical, unexplained phenomena in which images were brought forth to the photographic plate.[73] These discussions can be illustrated by comparing an early portrait by Robert Adamson and David Octavius Hill from the 1840s and a late example of a 'spirit photograph' from 1934 (figs. 1.2 and 1.32). The blank expressions and poses typical of early portraits were due to the long exposure times, with the location of this image in a graveyard (to capitalise on the natural light, whilst providing a version of an interior setting) emphasising how the portrait photograph, with the experience of an identity being captured on the glass plate, became linked with narratives of death and

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[71] "… *Consulting Rooms* can be seen as an attempt to apprehend something of the presence/absence deposited on the walls and furniture, like a fine layer of dust, a patch of light, an aura. This idea of photography as a means of capturing phenomena at the limits of the visible, is characteristic of several photographic primitives and of their work on para-psychic phenomena: spiritism, magnetism, death (the soul taking flight), etc." Durand, "Dark Foundations", p. 42.

[72] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (1980), Richard Howards trans., London: Vintage, 1993, pp. 10, 14.

[73] "Photography insisted upon the accuracy of its reproductive and mimetic powers and yet also immediately conjured up the realm of magic and spectres." Pamela Thurschwell, "Refusing to Give Up the Ghost", in *The Disembodied Spirit*, Alison Ferris ed., Maine: Bowdoin College Museum of Art, 2003, p. 22.

emptiness.[74] As will be explored in more detail in chapter two, the imprinting of an image on the glass plate by light, with the potential for multiple exposures, or accidental blurs and disappearances, led to a craze for 'spirit photographs' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ranging from double exposures to white clad 'ghosts' appearing in the studio. In the example here, two women pose for the camera, overlaid with the white draperies of ghostly presences at the top of the frame, and a third woman who appears to sit behind them. The spectral presences can be seen as projections of the sitter, the photographer, or the photographic medium itself. The photographic plate is turned into a site not just of documentation but also transference and revelation, a performative space in which the interaction of viewer, model and photographer is played out in uncertain combinations.

Conclusion: the performance space of the photograph

Full or empty? Subject or object? Narcissist or voyeur? These are questions raised by the portraits of Hawarden, Woodman and Jones. To conclude I want to go back to the empty space of Jones's consulting couches, and look at two images by Hawarden and Woodman that offer complementary insights on the construction of their particular performative photographic spaces. In an untitled image by Woodman, Providence, Rhode Island, 1976-1977, Woodman poses to the side of a roll of white paper, normally used as the ground on which to take studio photographs (fig. 1.33). The roll of paper is rather crumpled, with the edge of it almost stretching to the bottom edge of the photograph, but a hitch on the ground stops it just short. Woodman poses in what appears to be a black, furry coat, and tall leather boots. Her arms are held in front of her body, not quite naturally, recalling the more theatrical gestures that accompany her other self-portraits. Her head is turned to the side, looking out of the frame of the photograph, towards what

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[74] Much early advice on how to create a successful photographic portrait concentrated on how to bring the sitter to life, and to counteract the deathly, spectral or grotesque effect of long exposures. Walter Benjamin's discussion of early portrait photography such as those by Hill and Adamson sees the effect rather differently, saying "The cult of remembrance of loved ones, absent or dead, offers a last refuge for the cult value of the picture. This is what constitutes their melancholy, incomparable beauty." "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), *Illuminations*, Hannah Arendt ed. and intro., Harry Zohn trans., London: Fontana, 1992, pp. 211-244; p. 219. For Benjamin, the deathliness of the photograph comes with its reproducibility. See also "A Short History of Photography" (1931), *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter trans., Verso: London, 1985, pp. 240-257.

appears to be a source of natural light, most probably a studio window. The ground of the room appears a dark grey next to the roll of white paper, the shadow on the left hand side balancing the dark figure of Woodman on the right. Here, the portrait photograph is taken apart and the viewer is left with the pieces but not the finished puzzle. The setting is presented as both the studio and the roll of paper, white, unmarked, ready to provide background. The model is present but is off-centre, high up in the photograph, almost backed up against the wall, turned away from the viewer. The photographer has vacated her position behind the camera and is located within the photographic space, so that the spectator is left alone to view the scene. The play of light and shadow, black and white, evokes the photographic process, with the image developing through contrasts. Here the photographic surface is a play of light and texture, the absorbent black surface of Woodman's coat in playful opposition to the reflective white roll. Woodman's body is also loaded with clues for the viewer, as one pose amongst a whole archive of images that show her body in domestic and photographic spaces. She turns away, but holds her body straight on to the camera, the mannered pose insisting on the performative nature of her presence in front of her camera.

A century earlier, Clementina poses her daughter Clementina in front of a large mirror in a long white dress (fig. 1.34). In the mirror the camera that captures the scene can be seen, a dark square object on its tripod, the lens reflecting in the glass. In front of the mirror stands a table, on which is placed a piece of embroidery or tapestry, which appears to be almost falling off. Clementina and the mirror on which she leans are framed by a large archway, either side of which are walls decorated with star motif paper. At the extreme edge of both the left and right of the image are tables, both of which are cut off by the frame of the photograph. Like the Woodman image, this photograph plays with the conventions of the portrait and the self-portrait, with a similar frustration of the parts not adding up to a naturalised whole. Here the white of Clementina's dress forms the focus of the image, contrasted with the dimly focused black image of the camera in the mirror. Clementina's face is rather blurred, further foregrounding the inanimate objects in the image – the dress, mirror surface and tapestry – which are all in sharp focus. The presumed focal point – Clementina's face – is used to frame the actual focal point – the surface of the mirror. The bright whiteness of the reflected window parallels the white roll in Woodman's image, the ground on which the subject should be posing. However, the subject of the image, if read as a self-portrait, is an out of focus

camera, with no hint of the photographer behind it. Similarly, if the image is read as a portrait of Clementina, her blurred face and turned upper body force the gaze to slide off her over and over again.

Both of these images, when seen within their own repertoire of portraits, or in conjunction with Jones's images, present a performative notion of the identities played out and the photographic space presented. With the lapse in time across all three photographers' sets of portraits, the models within their photographs alter subtly, just as the settings and props are modulated to provide a temporal narrative that endlessly circles back and around. In the two images discussed above, the awareness of the construction of the photographic space, and implications of this for the representation of the models' identities, are clearly registered. The relationship between the model, photographer and viewer is one that is constantly reconfigured, a compilation across the images as they are viewed. Going back to the empty space of Jones's early *Consulting Room* images, the traces of interaction, with their narrative hints and deceits, can be played out in all three photographers' portraits. The viewer is seduced into the photographic space by the techniques I have described – through repetition, manipulation of the surface elements, correspondences with props and settings, modulation of poses and models. The play between the 'subjectless' subject (the object) and the individual's identity causes the viewer to become part of the exchange of identification and desire set up by the photographers. Drawing on the pornographic discourse of the female body as fetishised parts to be desired, and the portrait discourse of the model representing an inner identity, the conventions of photographic representation are quoted and reconfigured, with the body of the adolescent woman providing a focal point, even when the photographic space is empty of human presence.

<u>Fairytales and fantasies: the work of Anna Gaskell</u>

"Well, What are you?" said the Pigeon. "I can see you're trying to invent something!"

"I-I'm a little girl," said Alice rather doubtfully, as she remembered the number of changes she had gone through that day.[1]

Anna Gaskell's work circulates around narratives culled from children's classics, fairytales, newspaper snippets and ghost stories. Since 1997, with the exhibition of her *wonder* series, based on Alice in Wonderland, she has been seen as one of main protagonists in the mid-1990s generation of artists using photography in a directorial mode. However, the reception of Gaskell's work has been tinged with a condescension about its high gloss anti-narratives, annoyed at its connections with schlocky horror and B movies, irritated at the commercial viability of a young artist who doesn't seem willing to give much more away about her series than a proscriptive list of sources and influences. Proclaimed as the "Cindy Sherman of her generation", Gaskell herself has kept away from allying herself with any group of artists, frustrated at the assimilation of her practice with the derogatorily titled 'girl art'.[2] When asked what she sees as the main drive behind her work she sidesteps the individual narratives that are the starting points for each series: "My work moves around and through many different stories and characters, but at the heart of it all, its about the suspension of disbelief, the possibility of the impossible, the absence of doubt, the completeness of faith."[3] This explanation for her work is couched in terms that resonate more with the moralising tone of the fairytale and ghost story sources of her work than the actual images. The defining feature of each series, the use of girls and young women as the models, is dismissed by Gaskell as something that is simply a result of the stories that she has chosen to retell. Her reluctance to discuss her

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[1] Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), London: Penguin, 1994**,** p. 63.

[2] "The Cindy Sherman of her generation" is quoted in Carol Squiers, "Anna in Wonderland", *American Photo*, vol. 10, no. 1, January-February 1999, pp. 34, 36; p. 34.

[3] Quoted in an interview with Matthew Drutt, in *Half Life*, Diana Murphy and Lucy Flint-Gohlre eds., Houston: The Menil Collection, 2002, p. 68.

models as a linking trope is compelled in part due to the focus on the use of the adolescent model in work by artists umbrellaed under the term 'girl art'. Gaskell is quick to point out that although in much criticism of her work her models are defined as adolescent, the actual ages range between seven and 21.[4]

Since selling out her *wonder* exhibition at Casey Kaplan Gallery in New York in 1997 (helped in part by the Guggenheim buying a complete set of the photographs, except for one) Anna Gaskell has had reactions that tend to fall into two camps: the adulatory; as mainly seen outside the art press, in lifestyle and newspaper articles, and the suspicious; with criticisms registering from slight unease to open dismissal. Before the onslaught of media attention that this solo show brought, her earlier portraits had gained quiet, but appreciative press. The change of working method to series of photographs using a disrupted narrative, combined with the hype generated by such a young artist selling her entire show before it had opened, as well as the building interest in large-scale colour photography, meant perhaps that it was inevitable that Gaskell's work would have to be taken apart in the art press. Her images have been seen by many critics as somehow not being 'proper' art, with their seductive colours and filmic influences seeming too self-consciously produced. A typical comment is as follows: "Gaskell's world is one of fairytale film and staged moments. The glossy *wonder* series stages *Alice in Wonderland* scenarios: (almost too) lush photographs taking up the Doppelgänger motif, with several Alices shrinking and growing in scenes of play and cruelty."[5] It is in the "(almost too)" that the discomfort is revealed; the review becomes a description of Gaskell's methods and sources, and somehow the pictures themselves are left to one side. A more robust critique follows up this theme of the work being too much:

> It is precisely the obviousness of these stagy, contrived, and tightly self-conscious images that makes them ultimately disappointing…. Like an overblown Baroque opera with all its trap doors, elaborate costumes, and stage machinery, the self-conscious, rigid figure placement in Gaskell's photogs lend them an unreal, melodramatic, almost comic air.[6]

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[4] Anna Gaskell, conversation with the author, 26 February 2002.
[5] Dora Imhof, "Unheimlich/Uncanny, Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland", *Art on Paper*, vol. 3, no. 6, July-August 1999, pp. 59-60; p. 60.
[6] Dennis Raverty, "Anna Gaskell: Des Moines Art Center", vol. 29, no. 4, March-April 2002, p. 83.

Again and again, criticism is levelled at Gaskell's use of source material in her work as contributing to a stylised, illustrative narrative, with the use of young girls as models read as a straight metaphor for crises of identity and a loss of innocence. The coding of childhood and adolescence in the work is not considered, with the associations with horror films, fairytales and fashion photography taken as a given influence, rather than the source of a critique. Equally, the self-conscious, 'unreality' of the photographs is also seen as a flaw, as if Gaskell could redeem her work if she could just make it a bit more 'real'. As explored in the introduction, the 1999 exhibition *Another Girl, Another Planet* seemed to crystallise misgivings about this new trend of photographic art featuring adolescent models.[7] Although Gaskell declined to participate in the exhibition, a photograph from her *override* series, from 1997, was reproduced in the catalogue, positioned Gaskell as a precursor to the slightly younger artists. As a graduate of Gregory Crewdson's Yale MFA, Gaskell was interpreted as following on from his staged, cinematic scenes.[8] In this context, Gaskell's distancing from this trend seems understandable, with her comments on *Another Girl, Another Planet* underlining her frustration at the response to her work as being simply about pretty young girls: "I didn't want to be a part of it, not because I didn't think that there were obvious associations, but I don't think my work is about adolescence, it's a metaphor for something else, I play with it much more, it's not about teenage girls hanging out."[9] In my consideration of Gaskell's work, I want to return to the figure of the adolescent girl in her work within in a structural account of the photographic and conceptual space that she creates in her series. Rather than seeing her models as simply being "teenage girls hanging out" I will argue that their presence and performances in Gaskell's work form a prism through which a number of cultural narratives around the adolescent girl, built up from film, photography and psychoanalysis, are used to create a rearticulation of the sexualised female body, disrupting the viewer's relationship to its consumption.

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[7] "Girls, girls, girls! The 'it' show this spring was unquestionably 'Another Girl, Another Planet', which assembled the work of thirteen young photographers from several countries, all but one of them women, taking pictures of women and girls. Enough press accumulated around the show to generate speculation as to its meaning, not to mention a bit of a backlash." Katy Siegel, *Artforum*, vol. 38, no. 1, September 1999, p. 161.

[8] Gaskell is adamant that Crewdson was not a dominant influence on her practice, and that his construction of a group of artists around him at Yale occurred after she had left the course. Instead, Gaskell maintains that her own work on narrative and portrait photography during her time at Yale influenced Crewdson's directing of these younger artists. Gaskell, conversation with the author.

[9] Ibid.

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My discussion of Gaskell's work is framed by a literary device found in much nineteenth-century fiction: that of the unreliable narrator. This is a recurring model in the source material Gaskell uses for her photographs, and one that I want to explore as a structural precedent to her work. As a device in gothic fiction and realist novels, this unreliability is normally presented through the use of letters, diaries, or oral histories. In this way, the reader is encouraged to believe in the source's 'reality', to suspend disbelief and read the fiction as fact, whilst becoming increasingly aware of the subjectivity implied by such formats. This device seems to parallel Gaskell's use of photography as a format which invites this suspension of disbelief, with her codings and fragmentations of the frames exposing the viewer to the inconsistencies and assumptions that are held in place by realist conventions. In Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw", 1898, a source for Gaskell's series *half life*, 2002, the narrative told by the governess is unverifiable – the story can be read as either a recounting of ghostly presences or as the rantings of a hysterical woman. Her account is embedded in yet another account in which the story is told, by the fireside, many years after its occurrence, read from the governess's manuscript. "The Turn of the Screw" shows how the tension is dependent on the reader being seduced into the story within a story, even at the same time as they are fully aware that what they are reading is a work of fiction. Gaskell operates within her work as an unreliable narrator, building up the source material around her photographs and focusing on the formal qualities in the work, refusing to discuss her engagement with the models. Her position within the work is left unclear – should she be read as identifying with her models, or with the narrators of her source material; is she presenting these performances as a voyeur or as a participant? These uncertainties make the viewer's position equally unstable, calling into question the modes of identification that operate around each series. In Gaskell's work, the absence of names and identification for her settings, models or photographs, the multiplication of bodies and characters, and the cinematic, narrative space of her photographs work together to draw the viewer in, to involve the viewer in a performance that is presented as both fantasy and reality.

The figure of the unreliable narrator can also help when trying to situate Gaskell in biographically. Whilst her training on the Yale MFA course, and subsequent rise to fame is well documented, other personal details are scant. One of the few anecdotes that she has offered comes in an interview in the *Half Life* catalogue. Here she talks about her childhood in Iowa, going to tent meetings with her mother:

> My mother was an evangelical Christian. As children, my brothers and I would join her on wild pilgrimages throughout the Midwest attending tent meetings, where we would watch miracles being performed, people speaking in tongues, healing by touch, surrounded by a belief in the impossible. I don't remember anything strange in all of this, but more a feeling of excitement and a security in the faith that I felt from everyone there.[10]

As a fragment of a biography, this scene is also too close to the fantastical sources of Gaskell's photographs to be taken at surface value. Apart from this image of a childhood steeped in fantasy, the biographical information on Gaskell is typified by an early article for *American Photo*, which seems to be the source for much subsequent journalistic writing. Carol Spiers recounts (from an interview with Gaskell) that Gaskell moved to New York after finishing her MFA at Yale, where she became an assistant photo editor at *Child* magazine, which is seen leading into her use of young models in her own work, mentioning in passing Gaskell's period as an assistant to the photographer Sally Mann.[11] Gaskell herself points to the literary sources of her photographs as the real lead, rather than her own histories. Her ambiguous biographical presence is continued in the way she has kept the level of interpretive literature of her work to a minimum in her catalogues.[12] Reading through the slim essays that accompany the image-dominated books, it is striking that Gaskell has chosen not to counter the interpretations of her work in the art press,

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[10] Gaskell interviewed by Drutt in *Half Llife*, p. 68. This interview is the first interview to be presented as such. In Gaskell's other publications, text is kept to a minimum, and personal information is normally conveyed through newspaper and art magazine accounts of her practice, presumably from interviews with Gaskell, which are then paraphrased.

[11] However, when I spoke to Gaskell, she said that her use of young models preceded the job at *Child* magazine, with her friendship with a casting agent being the reason for her being able to source her models. Although this is a small detail, these contradictions in the genesis of Gaskell's work appear every so often, indications that she is not so interested in setting the record straight as in putting in small complications and deceptions that stop any reductive reading of her work.

[12] Gaskell's views on the presentation of her work in the art press can only be ascertained obliquely through the odd reference in magazine articles. For example, in an article in *The New York Times*, we are told "Ms. Gaskell's new photographic exhibition is a departure from her earlier series, which, in part, owed their popularity to the provocative role girls played in her images. As a result, Ms. Gaskell, to her dismay, found herself grouped with other photographers, like Dana Hoey, Malerie Marder and Justine Kurland, who are also exploring the idea of the supposedly safe, tidy world of young women." David Hay, "Photographs on a Wall, Doors to a Haunted Manor", *The New York Times*, September 29 2002, Arts and Leisure section, p. 37.

but instead only hint at what might be the alternatives. In one of the most informative essays, from the 2001 monograph on Gaskell, Nancy Spector's essay covers just two pages, ending on the back cover of the book, literally sliding out of view. Here the majority of the inferences about Gaskell's work come from conversations with the artist. Many of the statements are prefaced with "according to Gaskell". Talking about the models: "[t]hey are, according to Gaskell, multiple incarnations of a single character, physically embodying that person's inner contradictions and secret desires. And as corporeal manifestations of subconscious elements, personality traits, and pathologies, these figures patently misbehave."[13] Here the dominant interpretations of the adolescent model are quietly countered with the construction of the models as multiple aspects of one character. Feeding in her own commentary, Gaskell makes her presence felt, but only indirectly.[14] In my discussion, Gaskell will figure as an unreliable narrator, a creator of her own stories that weave fictional sources with personal identifications. For the viewer, Gaskell as the artist remains as elusive as the anonymous models that populate her images, something that I would argue is central to the construction of her photographic performances, to allow for the complex interplay of projections and identifications between viewer, artist and model.

Double takes, ghostly presences, uncanny bodies

> Those periods of modern literature in which the double appears as a vehicle for psychological
> analysis are seen to coincide with the recurrence of 'subjective realism' – the paradoxical attitude
> that insists on the faithful and realistic reproduction of mental processes, even when they seem to
> have a purely subjective validity; such fantasies as hallucinations or derangement may suggest to
> the imagination are then treated with the objectivity of a psychiater's case-book.[15]

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[13] Nancy Spector, *Anna Gaskell*, New York: Powerhouse, 2001, pp. 154-155.
[14] When asked about the texts written about her work, Gaskell put it very simply: "[y]ou have to throw away a pretty good size of what has been written." Gaskell, in conversation with the author. She has also said that in her practice she is "[t]rying to combine fiction, fact, and my own personal mishmash of life into something new is how I make my work. Into all of this, I try to insert a degree of mystery that ensures that the dots may not connect in the same way every time." Gaskell, interviewed by Drutt, *Half Life*, p. 73.
[15] Ralph Tymms, *Doubles in Literary Psychology*, Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1949, p. 119.

In Ralph Tymms' classic study of the double in literature, from which the quote above is taken, the depiction of interior states and fantasies as reality is a central component in his analysis. In terms of Gaskell's photographs, the definition of 'subjective realism' resonates with her performances of multiple and fractured identities.[16] The double is present in Gaskell's work in the way she often presents characters through a number of models, from her use of twins to depict Alice from Alice in Wonderland, to the threatening groups of girls in series such as *by proxy*, 1999, and *resemblance*, 2001. Speaking about the series *wonder* Gaskell has explained: "at the beginning I doubled Alice as I wanted her to have the identity crisis of finding herself, because it was so important for me to be able to participate in that. In most of my work I want my audience to be able to participate in the event, rather than photography's usual voyeurism."[17] Gaskell's explanation situates a number of themes and structures in her work: the use of multiple models to represent interior states; the double as an imaginary presence that is presented as real; the identification and placing of the audience/photographer in the presentation of the photographic performances; the identification and voyeurism implied in the sexualised staging of the models. Whilst the models in Gaskell's photographs can be seen to act out interior conflicts, the presentation of the model's interaction simultaneously implies a relationship between two or more separate people, with the figure of the double merging the presence of the self and other.

An archetypal tale revolving around the double, or doppelgänger, is ETA Hoffmann's *The Sandman*, 1817. This is explored as a classic German romantic construction of the double in Tymms' study (for Tymms' the double is "the romantic device *par excellence*"[18]), as well as forming a central illustration in Freud's text "The Uncanny", 1919. As visual doubles to these references, the tale is also a source for Gaskell's series *resemblance* and was an influence on Hans Bellmer's surrealist doll photographs.[19] The story is told

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[16] The term 'subjective realism' also resonates with Sarah Jones's description of her photographs as "performative realism". Sarah Jones, conversation with the author, September 2004.
[17] Gaskell, conversation with the author.
[18] Tymms, *Doubles in Literary Psychology*, p. 16.
[19] Although, to be exact, Bellmer was inspired by the opera based on *The Sandman*, entitled *Tales from Hoffmann*, by Oftenbach, which was performed in Berlin in 1932. In the operatic version, Olympia was played by two women (one singing, one dancing the part) and a doll. Perhaps it was this multiplying of the character of Olympia, who in the story, is already a substitute both for Nathaniel and his lover, that resonated with Bellmer. At the end of the operatic version, Olympia is pulled apart by Coppelius and Spalanzani: "[t]he sight of this automaton pulled limb from limb at the climax of the opera would reverberate in the many photographs of Bellmer's doll dismembered and lifeless" See Sue Taylor, *Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000, pp. 62-65; p. 65.

through the exchange of letters between the hero Nathaniel, his friend Lothaire and his beloved Clara, foregrounding both the 'realism' of the text and the unreliability of the narrators. At the climax of the story Nathaniel takes a room opposite Professor Spalanzani, and through his window he can see the beautiful Olympia, who he takes to be the professor's daughter, but is an automaton. The character Coppola (who may be also be the evil Coppelius who contributes to Nathaniel's father's death at the beginning of the story) visits Nathaniel and shows him his lunettes and spectacles that he refers to as "pretty eyes". Nathaniel buys a telescope from him through which he wants to look at Olympia more closely. Once he looks through the telescope: "For the first time could he see the wondrous beauty in the form of her face; – only the eyes seemed to him singularly stiff and dead".[20] Falling desperately in love with Olympia he speaks to her at a festival that the professor prepares in order to present his creation, and still believes that she is a real woman. The illusion is shattered when he sees the professor and Coppola arguing, pulling the doll Olympia between them, as Coppola had provided the doll's eyes and wanted them back: "Nathaniel stood paralysed; he had seen but too plainly that Olympia's waxen, deadly pale countenance had no eyes, but black holes instead – she was, indeed, a lifeless doll."[21] The trauma of the event, combined with seeing Coppelius once again, compels Nathaniel to throw himself over the railing of a steeple. The story turns on the Coppola's telescope, which provides Nathaniel the lens through which to 'see' Olympia. Her passivity is translated by Nathaniel as acquiescence, her beauty appearing to him to both mirror that of his love, Clara, and of himself. Here the double is figured in a number of combinations throughout the text, with the most obvious being the pairing of Coppelius/Coppola, who is also featured as an evil double of Nathaniel's father. The doll Olympia is both a double of a real woman, and the narcissistic screen for the projections of Nathaniel. In Freud's discussion of this story, his focus is on the equation between the eyes/sight/blindness (both in the magic telescope that Nathaniel buys from Coppola and the blinding of Olympia) and castration. For me, what is more interesting is his equation of Nathaniel with Olympia:

> This automatic doll can be nothing else than a materialisation of Nathaniel's feminine attitude
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> towards his father in his infancy. Her fathers, Spalanzani and Coppola, are, after all, nothing but

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[20] ETA Hoffmann, "The Sandman" (1817), *Tales from the German*, John Oxenford and CA Feiling trans., London: Chapman and Hall, 1844, pp. 140-165; p. 156.
[21] Ibid., p. 162.

new editions, reincarnations of Nathaniel's pair of fathers [his biological father and Coppelius]. Spalanzani's otherwise incomprehensible statement that the optician has stolen Nathaniel's eyes, so as to set them in the doll, now becomes significant as supplying evidence of the identity of Olympia and Nathaniel.[22]

The double appears as a focal point of anxieties around identity, desire, projection and the reality of the other – which is, here, nothing more than a doll onto which to project fantasies.

This anxiety around the double can be seen to have a homoerotic as well as a narcissistic component when examined through the frame of homospectrality, as defined by Terry Castle in her book *The Apparitional Lesbian*. Castle argues that "[t]he lesbian remains a kind of 'ghost effect' in the cinema world of modern life: elusive, vaporous, difficult to spot – even when she is there, in plain view, mortal and magnificent, at the centre of the screen".[23] She considers a number of literary and filmic traditions in which the presence of a lesbian subtext is presented as an imaginary or ghostly double to the explicit heterosexual storyline.[24] She constructs a female homosocial structure that echoes Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's construction of a male homosocial structure in her seminal study *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*.[25] Sedgwick posits that the suppressed relationship in much literature (and society) is that between men, played out through their rivalry over a female love interest, one which provides evidence of the anxious relationship between hetero and homosexuality (fig. 2.1a).[26] Castle extends and adapts this structure, tracing the presence of a secondary female relationship in her

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[22] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" (1919), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. xvii, James Strachey trans. and ed. with Anna Freud, Vintage: London, 2001, pp. 217-256; p. 232, footnote 1.

[23] Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993, p. 2.

[24] "…one might speak of a 'great tradition' of antilesbian writing – a dubious shadow canon of works in which women who desire other women repeatedly find themselves vapourised by metaphor and translated into (empty) fictional space." Ibid., p. 45.

[25] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

[26] This is a very crude rendering of Sedgwick's seminal construction of the relationship of homo- and heterosexuality, drawing on literature from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. Her thesis considers the way in which the formation of the male homosocial triangle is presented both as acknowledgment of the importance of the relationships between men, and as a way of warding off homosexual connotations of the relationship, through the presence of the female love interest. Sedgwick has provided much of the groundwork for subsequent constructions of queerness as radically disruptive to societal norms, rather than a deviant sexual preference or 'lifestyle'. See also her influential book *The Epistemology of the Closet*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

literary sources (fig. 2.1b and c): "Within this new *female* homosocial structure, the possibility of male bonding is radically suppressed: for the male term is now isolated, just as the female term was in the male homosocial structure."[27] In her tracing of a presence of female-female bonding in twentieth-century novels and films, she proposes a movement which she calls "erotic 'counterplotting'" where the presence of the bond between two women destabilises the heterosexual narrative and isolates the male term.[28] Here the homosocial bond between women is presented as a ghostly presence, a subtext within the explicit narrative. An example is Daphne Du Maurier's novel *Rebecca*, 1938, in which the new Mrs De Winter is plagued by the presence of the dead Rebecca, the first Mrs De Winter. As the one of the sources for Gaskell's series *half life*, it is the relationship between the young woman, the memory of her predecessor, the infatuated Mrs Danvers (whose adoration of Rebecca fuels the second Mrs De Winters's paranoia) and the imaginary ghostly presence that takes precedence over the relationship between Mrs De Winters and her husband, who is absent for much of the story. As one critic has put it "The question thus becomes does the girl want to be like Rebecca (which she clearly is not) or does she desire her?".[29] Castle notes that these "lesbian apparitions" can be found mainly in stories about the adolescent girl, with the queer subtext appearing as a temporary phase on the path to normative heterosexuality, and in stories of the "post-marital" woman, in the context of divorce and widowhood. In terms of Gaskell's work, this apparition of queer sexuality can be seen in the presentation of the images as performances between female models, with the photographer taking up an ambiguous position in relation to both her models and the male authors of her source material, so that in Castle's triangle of female homosocial bonding, the male term becomes uncertain (fig 2.1d). Her images of girls struggling with each other can be seen as a performance of the fight to create an individual identity, which in part is a struggle to form a coherent sexual identity, spatialising and eroticising the linear story of the adolescent coming to adulthood, as played out in her literary sources. In Gaskell's work, the presentation of a series of photographs to be read simultaneously frustrates any resolution, suspending the narrative at the point of conflict, aggression and

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[27] Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian*, p. 72.
[28] Talking about Sylvia Townsend Warner's 1936 novel *Summer Will Show*, Castle states: "What makes this novel paradigmatically 'lesbian', in my view, is not simply that it depicts a sexual relationship between two women, but that it so clearly, indeed almost schematically, figures this relationship as a breakup of the supposedly 'canonical' male-female-male erotic triangle…. It is exactly this kind of subverted triangulation, or erotic 'counterplotting', that is in fact characteristic of lesbian novels in general." Ibid., p. 74.
[29] Janet Harbord, "Between Identification and Desire: Rereading *Rebecca*", *Feminist Review*, no. 53, Summer 1996, p. 102.

desire. Gaskell can be seen to be both identifying with her models, and replaying their voyeuristic presentation, overlaying the heterosexual voyeuristic mode with a disturbing queer exchange between the models in her photographs, and her position in relation to their sexualised performances. Gaskell's early series *The Alice Portraits*, 1996, help to explain her use of doubling (fig. 2.2). Gaskell explains the reasons for her making the series:

> I was taking pictures of myself for a long time and I got bored of that. I took these pictures of myself sneezing - I was interested in this in between space where you expect a sneeze, or you expect an orgasm, or you expect…. I was interested in this non-place and trying to articulate that. Then I became more interested in characters that I felt could articulate that, because people were familiar with these characters and these imaginary places, a place where anything could happen, where there is no time. This was how I became interested in the character of Alice and because of her age, I cast these girls.[30]

The models all have long, shiny hair, glossed lips and pretty, child-model faces, posed in the same blouse, against a black background, with the age of the girls appearing to be around eight to ten years old. Originally titled individually with phrases that evoke particular moments from Alice in Wonderland, such as *As the Serpent* and *Beat Him When He Sneezes*, in the 2001 monograph a set of eight of the images are gathered under the title *The Alice Portraits*. Describing the genesis of this series, Carol Squiers (presumably from a conversation with Gaskell) says:

> She queried various agencies for child models who could play the role of Alice. Over a period of eight months she took about 30 portraits of the girls who responded. Dressed in a blouse provided by Gaskell, they were lit like some kind of Pre-Raphaelite heroines and posed to resemble Julia Margaret Cameron's vision of Lewis Carroll's original muse, four-year-old Alice Liddell.[31]

In another essay, Gaskell is said to have been intrigued by the way the Pre-Raphaelites used the same model in for different paintings, with her series reversing this, using many models for one persona. Both explanations point to a need to empty the model of a coherent identity – something that it seemed did not happen when Gaskell used herself as the model. In this initial configuration of Alices, the model becomes

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[30] Gaskell, in conversation with the author.
[31] Squiers, "Anna in Wonderland", p. 36.

an empty space, an interchangeable unit, styled to provoke visual references but ultimately vacuous. Gaskell only discusses her models in terms of their formal qualities, with their repetition seeming to reinforce the possibility of a sexualised identification between model and viewer being a phantom, a figment of the viewer's perverted imagination, with the varying tones of sexualised expression and pose seeming to be subordinated to the portraits' serial nature. The structural nature of Gaskell's portraits point the viewer to an asexual, formal reading, whilst simultaneously pointing to the presence of the double both in the repetition of models, and their position as doubles for both the real Alice Liddell and the fictional character of Carroll's creation. Made before Gaskell's more well-known series of photographs, these portraits work through the presence of the double both in the use of multiple models to represent Alice in each image, and the uneasy interplay between quotation and eroticised engagement.

Returning to Freud's construction of the uncanny, central to his definition is the oscillation between the familiar and strange, and imagination and reality. His other definition, "when a symbol takes over the full functions of the thing it symbolises" points to the fetishistic content.[32] In this context, the definition of surrealist photography by Rosalind Krauss is useful. Her thesis also focuses on the importance of doubling and the uncanny in the images:

> … nothing creates this sense of the linguistic hold on the real more than the photographic strategy of doubling. For it is doubling that produces the formal rhythm of spacing – the two-step that banishes simultaneity. And it is doubling that elicits the notion that to an original has been added its copy. The double is the simulacrum, the second, the representative of the original. It comes after the first, and in this following it can only exist as figure, or image. But in being seen in conjunction with the original, the double destroys the pure singularity of the first. Through duplication, it opens the original to the effect of difference, of deferral, of one-thing-after-another.[33]

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[32] Freud, "The Uncanny", p. 244. There is also a relationship here to the hysterical presentation. As Juliet Mitchell notes about the hysteric's relationship to the identity/idea that s/he acts out: "This presentation of another in acting treats the substitute, the fantasy, as though it were the thing itself." The link between hysteria and the uncanny will be explored later in this paper. Juliet Mitchell, *Mad Men and Medusas: Reclaiming Hysteria and the Effects of Sibling Relations on the Human Condition*, London: Penguin, 2000, p. 210.

[33] Rosalind Krauss, "Photography in the service of Surrealism", *L'Amour Fou*, Rosalind Krauss and Jane Livingston, New York: Abbeville Press, 1985, p. 28.

It is this component of doubling – the ability to disrupt the 'original', to put its 'original-ness' in doubt – has implications in terms of the doubling of heterosexual, narcissistic and queer viewing structures. In Gaskell's work, the voyeuristic gaze is doubled by the narcissistic identification for the models, with a queer desire for the models as nostalgic versions of the self and as seductive, separate individuals. It is the self-reflexivity that is required on the part of the viewer and the imagined position of both the artist and models that create a situation that Krauss describes as "the disarticulation of the self by means of its mirrored double."[34] To move from this photographic consideration of the viewing space to Judith Butler's construction of gendered and sexual identity, shows how the photographic structure of doubling is echoed in the fantasmatic construction of heterosexuality as the original and homosexuality as the copy:

> [I]n its efforts to naturalise itself as the original, heterosexuality must be understood as a compulsive and compulsory repetition that can only produce the *effect* of its own originality; in other words, compulsory heterosexual identities, those ontologically consolidated phantasms of 'man' and 'woman', are theatrically produced effects that posture as grounds, origins, the normative measure of the real.[35]

It is here that Gaskell's work can again be seen to double the normalised relationships between model and artist, viewer and image, voyeur and object, source and quotation; employing the structure of the uncanny in its oscillation between the familiar and strange, the imaginary made real, to situate the viewer within an uncertain ground of participation and observation of the performances played out in the photographs.

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[34] Rosalind Krauss, "Corpus Delicti", *L'Amour Fou*, p. 78. For Krauss this disarticulation centres around the *informe*: "this subject who sees is a subject who, in being simultaneously 'seen', is entered as 'picture' onto the mirror's surface. In this very moment of inscription, as in a doubling reminiscent of Caillois's theory of mimicry, one discovers an image of the *informe*, the crumbling of boundaries, the invasion of space." p. 78. I would argue that in Gaskell's work, the result is not a total collapse of boundaries, but an oscillation between positions, held in place by the documentary style performance space of their photographs.

[35] Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination", in Diana Fuss ed., *Inside/Out: Lesbian theories, gay theories*, London: Routledge, 1991, p. 21. Butler argues that the relationship between homo- and heterosexualities is in a constant state of anxiety and tension. It is here that the act of repetition constitutes the performative nature, rather than performance of gender and sexual identity: "The parodic replication and resignification of heterosexual constructs within non-heterosexual frames brings into relief the utterly constructed status of the so-called original, but it shows that heterosexuality only constitutes itself as the original through a convincing act of repetition." p. 23. This compulsive repetition can be seen to be duplicated in some of Gaskell's visual strategies, i.e., with the use of multiple models in *The Alice Portraits*, and the use of series of images in which numbers of models play one character simultaneously.

A brief consideration of Gaskell's series *resemblance* alongside Hans Bellmer's photographs of his dolls illustrate some of these issues brought up through the motif of the double, as well as clarifying the links between Gaskell's practice and surrealist photography. Whilst Gaskell herself denies any explicit influence between her work and Bellmer's, there are similarities in the presentation of the photographic space, and also in the presentation of the adolescent girl. *Resemblance* takes as its source material a number of narratives, including "The Sandman", the German expressionist film *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* and Mary Shelley's classic Gothic novel *Frankenstein*.[36] Each of these sources has at its centre a consideration of the double as both a character in the story, and as a projection of one of the characters. Gaskell's condensing of the characters of carer/creator/mother and child/creation into a performance by models of similar age transposes the relationship from a parental one to a struggle between peers, a fight for individuality and identity that is played out on a lateral axis. In Gaskell's all-female universe, the source material is transformed into a struggle around definitions and representations of female identity. Gaskell has explained the activities of her models as acting out "the impossibility of making the person who made you".[37]

The contrast between Hans Bellmer's use of his two dolls in his famous series of performative photographs from 1934-1935 and Gaskell's use of young girls helps to explore the position of the model in Gaskell's work. The frustrations that she felt when using herself as the model are resolved in the use of a group of anonymous girls, who can appear within the photographs as somehow empty of personal narratives, and can act more efficiently as symbolic agents. Similarly, the ambiguous identification and fetishisation in Bellmer's photographs places the viewer in an uneasy position in relation to both the model and photographer. Bellmer's photographs present his dolls in different anatomical combinations, posed in

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[36] All three of these sources use the structure of letters or oral histories to present the narrative as 'real', and to bring into focus the unreliability of the narrator. In *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, dir. Robert Wiene, 1920, the suspicious Dr Caligari has a somnabulist, called Cesare, who appears to predict people's death. When a number of unexplained murders occur, the finger is pointed at Dr Caligari and his strange companion. However, when watched over by the hero, Francis, neither Dr Caligari or Cesare appear to leave their house. When confronted by Francis and the police, it turns out that Francis had actually been watching over a dummy of Cesare, whilst the real man had been out all night. The trail to find Cesare leads to the local mental asylum, where it turns out Dr Caligari is the director. At the end of the film, Francis is telling the story to another man (which is also how the film begins), and it transpires that Francis is actually an inmate of the asylum, and whilst Dr Caligari is the director, he is most probably not the maniacal character that Francis presents.
[37] Gaskell, in conversation with the author.

domestic settings that hint at a larger narrative (fig 2.3). Bellmer described his use of the dolls and his identification with them as follows:

> Yes, my dolls were the beginning. Obviously there was a convulsive flavour to them because they reflected my anxiety and unhappiness. To an extent they represented an attempt to reject the horrors of adult life as it was in favour of a return to the wonder of childhood, but the eroticism was all-important, they become an erotic liberation for me.[38]

Bellmer's description links the nostalgia for childhood with a wider implication for a crisis of identity in general. Childhood is used for its connotations of an idealised, innocent state, so that its violation and eroticisation better convey the metaphorical violation of identity that Bellmer wishes to explore. In a photograph from 1934, Bellmer's doll is arranged so that it (I want to say she) leans against a wall, a coat or cloth around its shoulders, the torso opened to reveal a mechanical centre (fig 2.3a). The focus of the photograph is a man's hand that comes into the shot from the left, explicitly placing the doll in a position of a desired object. The reading of the doll as a young girl also contextualises the desire of the caress in terms of a violation, so that the doll's actual passivity merges with the (pre)adolescent's imagined sexual vulnerability. The hand on the doll's face encourages the interpretation of the doll's expression as being wary, demonstrating how the scene in which the doll is posed influences the viewer's projections onto its imagined state of mind. I would argue that Gaskell uses her models in a similar way – using the implication of narrative to seduce the viewer into reading the scene as 'real', whilst constantly reminding the viewer through the use of doubling, multiple models, mannered lighting and camera angles, that what is actually being viewed is a performance.[39] The doll is both a site of identification for Bellmer and a site of total otherness, an untouchable inanimation. It is interesting to note similarities in the development of both

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[38] Hans Bellmer, quoted by Peter Webb in "Eroticism in Twentieth Century Art: Interviews with Contemporary Artists", *The Erotic Arts*, Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975, pp. 369-370. Cited in Taylor, *Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety*, p. 23.

[39] Therese Lichtenstein has said that the impact of Bellmer's doll is dependent on his representation of the different combinations through photographs, rather than presenting the doll as a sculpture: "By reproducing and displaying the doll as a series of photographs in a small-book format, instead of exhibiting it as sculpture, Bellmer makes the doll appear more performative. Like a model assuming various poses in different settings, the photographed doll evokes psychologically complex narratives." Lichtenstein, *Behind Closed Doors: The Art of Hans Bellmer*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001, p. 7.

Bellmer's and Gaskell's practice, with a similar emptying out and re-symbolising of the model's body occurring in their photographs.[40]

Bellmer's second doll, photographed in 1935, underwent a similar transition to Gaskell's positioning of her models – from the relatively coherent bodies that feature in the earlier works, to the fragmentation of the models' bodies into multiple objects in series such as *resemblance* (figs. 2.4 and 2.5). Bellmer's second doll was constructed around a ball joint, with two sets of legs that were often used in combination with each other. In *The Doll*, 1935, the two pillars of legs stand in front of a tree, with breasts hanging either side of them, like huge eyes or ineffectual testicles (fig. 2.5a). Krauss, in her discussion of Bellmer's images, sees the legs as being phallic, fetishised signifiers to ward off the threat of castration, following Freud's thesis that castration is the fear behind the proliferation of phallic objects. For Krauss, Bellmer "stages endless *tableau-vivants* of the figure of castration".[41] This reading of Bellmer's photographs flattens the photographs to the level of a symbol, something that I think is disrupted by the photographic space, which implies the documentation of a 'real' scene. Returning to Freud's idea of the uncanny, the effect is reliant on an oscillation between familiar and strange, or "when a symbol takes over the full functions of the thing it symbolises". Seen alongside Gaskell's presentations of multiple legs and bodies in *resemblance*, what seems to be played out is an excessive emptying of the symbolic resonance of the limbs as phallic, dislocating this relationship by replaying the symbol over and over again. As I will discuss later, Gaskell's repetitive stagings of her models' bodies appears to create a vocabulary of the female body that is not satisfactorily explained through a phallic, Freudian schema. In terms of Bellmer's photographs, the complication of his own identification with the model as a narcissistic substitute (he wants to inhabit the space of the doll, as well as maintaining his voyeuristic presence on the other side of the camera) puts into play an embracing of the implied castration, rather than a talismanic warding off. The phallic logic is undermined by the profusion of limbs, and the interchangeable status of arms, legs, torsos

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[40] In an echo of Gaskell's *Alice Portraits*, Bellmer visited an orphanage in around 1930 and invited a series of girls aged eight to ten years old to come and pose for him at his parents home: "The portrait studies he made of them, and the finished paintings (now lost) in which the anonymous girls are pictured in the lace-curtained, bourgeois interior of the Bellmer home, are modest, straightforward, and sober." Taylor, *Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety*, p. 29. Bellmer's drawings also have similarities to Gaskell's preparatory drawings in which body parts are multiplied and fragmented.
[41] Krauss, "Corpus Delicti", p. 86.

and heads, creating a new articulation of both the bodies presented and the viewing positions made available to the viewer. This resonates with the explanation of the work in the exhibition catalogue:

> Gaskell flips the usual roles: her young girls attempt to fabricate their creators, represented here by other young girls, in an ideal form. According to the artist, they act on the belief that if their creators are perfect, then they will in turn be flawless. To gain control over their histories and the construction of their bodies, the girls must go back to the time of their creation.[42]

As the models can be seen to act this struggle, Gaskell's visual and structural quotations from work such as Bellmer's can be read as an attempt to gain control over representations of the female body, using the doubling and uncanny effects to position the viewer in relation to both her models, her role as the photographer and the shared role of viewing a representation of the female body within a heavily coded visual history.

Alice Underground: *wonder* and *override*

> I wanted Alice to rewrite her own story the way she wanted it to be.[43]

In *wonder*, 1996, and *override*, 1997, Gaskell uses the story of Alice in Wonderland as her starting point, taking it apart, presenting a series of abstracted moments through which a fragmented narrative is held together by the documentation of the extended performance by the models. Much has been written on these series, describing the jewel-like colours enhanced by lamination, the unframed prints evoking film stills, the multiple camera angles and print sizes, and, of course, the pretty, "apple-cheeked" Alices, played by twins in *wonder* and a group of seven girls in *override*. In my consideration of these two series, I want to pay close attention to the individual images, and the way that they fit with the source material of *Alice in Wonderland*, with the deviations and diversions set up in these surreal performances providing some clues to the images' allure. Following the theme of the unreliable narrator, I will look at Lewis Carroll the writer

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[42] Jeff Fleming, *Resemblances*, Des Moines, Iowa: Des Moines Art Center, 2001, p. 9.
[43] Gaskell quoted in Squiers, "Anna in Wonderland", p. 34.

and Charles Dodgson the photographer as two personas in one man, an unreliable narrator both to his audience and to himself. Gaskell herself is ambiguous about the relation between Lewis Carroll/Charles Dodgson's story and photographs in the influencing of her own images. In my conversation with her she said she was not familiar with the photographs when she began the project, although people did tell her about them once she had started it. In an interview, however, she is quoted as saying: "'This slippery relationship between Carroll and his real-life Alice, Alice Liddell, got me started,' says Gaskell, 29. 'No one can exactly pin down what this 30-year-old don was doing taking pictures of and writing stories for a 10-year-old-girl.'"[44] In this quote there seems to be a slippage between the 30-year-old Carroll and the 29-year-old Gaskell. Here it seems that the starting point is the taking on the position of the narrator, of taking over Carroll's position in the presentation of Alice's story. When Gaskell says she wants to rewrite the story the way Alice would want it, what she is really doing is rewriting the story the way that she wants it, and the way that she imagines Alice would want it, whilst referencing the voyeuristic overtones of Carroll's authorship. The complex of identifications that circulate around Alice in Wonderland and the photographs of Alice Liddell are captured and refigured as much as the narrative of a girl falling down a rabbit hole.

In the series of 20 *wonder* photographs and ten *override* images, the sizes of the prints vary drastically – from 6 by $7_{1/4}$ inches to 60 by 90 inches. As Alice in the story changes sizes from 3 inches to giantess, the individual frames reflect these contortions, installed in a manner that heightens these manipulations. Rather than seeing the photographs as individual works, the installation of Gaskell's series compels the viewer to read the images together, with each piece fitting together to create a chaotic, contradictory whole. For Gaskell, part of the reason of the works' different sizes is to evoke a sense of each image happening simultaneously, or somehow for the narrative to be looped and layered, so that each event does not take place as part of a linear progression but instead different models can be the same person at different times: "The characters in each series evolve, and with the changes comes the pain and growth and frustration and fulfilment…. That's why the pictures are all such different sizes. They're all the same girl at different ages at the same time."[45] When the images are viewed in installation there is also an

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[44] Gaskell quoted in Lynn Robertson, "Quest for Alice", *Sun-Sentinel*, October 28, 1998, section E.
[45] Gaskell, quoted in Gunning, "Prints of Darkness", p. 20.

impact on the viewer, who is made to follow the changes of vantage point and perspective, physically aware of the different angles that each image requires of both the model and the photographer. This method of installation acts as a lure to the viewer, so that spatially there is a compulsion to move back and forth, to peer at small images, to stand back to view the almost life-size prints, to make continually changing links between the images, evoking the space of the performance depicted and the oscillations described in the fantastical adventures of Alice. The use of twins in *wonder* to take the place of Alice continues this disorientation both conceptually and spatially. Gaskell not only doubles Alice, but has her playing every part in the abstracted moments from Carroll's story, continuing the disorientation that is set up by the different size images and multiple perspectives across the series. There is no Cheshire cat, no white rabbit, no tea party or queen. In opening up the story, Gaskell strips it back to the fantasy that is contained within the story – that of a daydream of a little girl, which is itself the construction of its author. As has been noted of *Alice in Wonderland*: "There is no equivocation in Carroll's first *Alice* book: the dainty child carries the threatening kingdom of Wonderland within her."[46] Here this "threatening kingdom" is put back into the "dainty child", who has now become two people who engage in a series of physical dialogues which each other and the camera. Alice is no longer a "dainty" ten-year-old, but a pair of aggressive and confrontational adolescents. In *Alice in Wonderland* the narrator tells us that "this curious child was very fond of pretending to be two people" as Alice tells herself off as she becomes distressed, and tries to box her own ears.[47] Here the clue in the story that Alice maybe talking to herself throughout the entire fantasy is made real in the presentation of Alice as a pair. Now, rather than talking to a caterpillar on a mushroom, she can literally talk to herself.

Curiouser and curiouser! [48]

Before exploring the images of the Alices, I want to briefly consider the relationship between the book of *Alice* and the photographs of her, and the way the two interact in the personas of Charles Dodgson/Lewis

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[46] Nina Auerbach, *Romantic Imprisonment: Women and Other Glorified Outcasts*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 132.
[47] Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, p. 19.
[48] Ibid., p. 21.

Carroll. His passion for photography, which spanned from 1856-1880, resulted in a huge number of portraits, both of young girls and eminent Victorians – from Lord Tennyson to Price Leopold. For his portraits he would track down desired subjects, which in the case of young girls meant visiting fêtes and parks, in the hope of 'bumping into' a potential sitter, as well as requesting invites to family homes.[49] The resulting photographs were arranged in photo albums by Carroll, often with the sitter's signature inscribed beneath the frame. With the publication of four nude portraits of girls in the 1970s, the response to Carroll's photographs has been coloured by the strange relationship to his child-models, with his insistence on the proprietary of his images in his diaries and letters.[50] The underlying sexual attraction of his young sitters has been explained as "innocent love": "Beautiful little girls had a strange fascination for Lewis Carroll. This curious relationship, which may best be described as innocent love, ceased in the majority of cases when the girls put up their hair."[51] The euphemistic tone of this explanation characterises the response to Carroll's portraits, which acknowledges the "fascination" whilst side-stepping its sexual component. Lindsay Smith has argued that what was at the core of Carroll's desire was an obsession with the miniature, with the little girl standing in as a kind of fetish object, containable in the photographic frame, encased in a photo album. As Carol Mavor has put Carroll's depiction of Alice in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*:

> She is a keepsake of sexual indifference. She wards off fears. She is a pocket phallus (Alice phallus). At the same time, however, she embodies sexual difference, a possibly dangerous difference that he involuntarily acknowledges and fears. He must therefore simultaneously ward off this acknowledgement by fetishing her as not different at all.[52]

In both the story and the photographs, the character of Alice becomes a projection around which the shifting personas of Charles Dodgson the photographer, Lewis Carroll the writer, Charles Dodgson/Lewis

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[49] Helmut Gernsheim, *Lewis Carroll Photographer* (1949), New York: Dover Publications, 1969, p. 19.

[50] In Gernsheim's book on Carroll, published before the publication of the nude photographs he says "… we must be grateful to him for having stipulated that after his death they [the nude photographs] should be returned to the sitters or their parents, or else be destroyed. Naturally none of them were pasted in his albums, and as far as I know, none have survived." p. 21. Whilst Gernsheim defends the innocence of Carroll's nude portraits, in this quote he is also at pains to distance them from the rest of his photography.

[51] Ibid., p. 18.

[52] Carol Mavor, *Pleasures Taken: Performances of Sexuality and Loss in Victorian Photography*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995, p. 34. Mavor also links photography with childhood, saying "… photography was invented hand-in-hand with our modern conception of childhood. The child and the photograph were commodified, fetishised, developed alongside each other: they were laminated and framed as one." p. 3.

Carroll the man with his child friends, the desiring adult, circulate. The fact that Carroll uses different names for different activities shows a fascination with the possibilities of fragmenting and projecting identity, something that he seems to delight in doing both in his writing and his photography. Many of his portraits are taken in costume, or are posed in a way that suggests the subject caught in the middle of either playing, hiding, sleeping or dreaming. As Gernsheim has noted, Carroll's portraits differ from the commercial portraiture of the period, which were mainly posed against set backgrounds, stiffly facing the camera in best dress:

> A glance through any old photograph album will immediately show how much Lewis Carroll's portraits are at variance with the incongruities produced by contemporary professional photographers. There is no forcing of children into the pompous settings so beloved by their parents: in his pictures, surroundings and accessories always look natural.[53]

This desire to document a fictionalised reality relates Carroll's work to Gaskell's, although their photographs are not closely related stylistically. Carroll's images such as the diptych *Alice Liddell as "The Beggar Maid"*, and *Alice Liddell Dressed in Her Best Outfit*, taken in the summer of 1858, stage scenes in which the viewer is drawn in by his child-model's gaze (fig 2.6). In this pair of images, the doubling of Liddell as a coquettish beggar and as a demure middle-class girl appears to provide cover for the eroticised presentation of Alice in her disturbingly revealing rags.[54] Rather than directly referencing Carroll's photographs, Gaskell's works take on the literary devices of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* to create their engagement with the model's performance. Just as Carroll/Dodgson splits himself into the photographer and writer (much as it seems he could split his sexuality, apparently separating his fascination with his child-models from his persona as decorous gentleman photographer), Alice in Gaskell's photographs becomes a pair. Carroll appears in *Alice in Wonderland* as the narrator of an unreliable character, caught within a world in which nonsense becomes normality. Dodgson/Carroll present the stories created in both text and photographs as evidence of the 'reality' of his construction of the girl as a site for fantasy and a sexuality that is defiantly at odds with the adult world of procreation and

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[53] Gernsheim, *Lewis Carroll Photographer*, pp. 32-33.
[54] In the repetitious images of his child-models, especially Alice Liddell and Xie Kitchin, the obsessive archive of portraits begins to contain similarities to the fetishistic performances photographed by Bellmer, relating to the performance space of the portrait as discussed in chapter one.

responsibility. As Nina Auerbach has noted, this construction was not peculiar to Carroll: "Even Victorians who did not share Lewis Carroll's phobia about the ugliness and uncleanliness of little boys saw little girls as the purest members of a species of questionable origin, combining as they did the inherent spirituality of child and woman."[55] With this combination of a personal obsession with pre-pubescent girls and a societal impulse to use the young girl as a signifier of purity and innocence, the queerness of both Carroll's and Gaskell's fascination with the character of Alice becomes more focused; with the surrealism of the story, the unreliable narrators circulating in and around it, and the diffuse, ambiguous sexual identifications of both its narrators and characters providing a frame for the performances enacted in both text and photograph.

> When I used to read fairytales, I fancied that kind of thing never happened, and now here I am in the middle of one! There ought to be a book written about me, that there ought![56]

Alice in her adventures in Wonderland is constantly wondering aloud to herself about the predicament she finds herself in. Normally for comic effect, her asides to the reader continually reference the fact that this is a story that is being read, an adventure that takes place in the imagination of the author and the reader. With the photographs of Dodgson/Carroll in mind, it is difficult not to be reminded of the male author who is constructing this fantasy world to charm his young companions. In the first manuscript, titled *Alice's Adventures Underground*, a portrait of Alice Liddell is pasted onto the last page, so that as Alice realises that her adventure was just a dream, the reader (who in the case of this manuscript was intended to be Alice Liddell herself) appears in the story, fixing the fantasy to the reality of this little girl, who we are told "[t]hen she thought, (in a dream within a dream, as it were,) how this same little Alice would, in the after-time, be herself a grown woman…"(fig. 2.7).[57] The nostalgia and desire of the author is displaced onto the fictional reminiscences of the character of Alice, who is fantasised as being the 'real' Alice Liddell. In Gaskell's photographs, the conversations that Alice has with herself are turned into performances with the camera, the author (Gaskell) making her presence felt in the same way to Carroll. The constructed 'reality'

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[55] Auerbach, *Romantic Imprisonment*, p. 131.
[56] Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, p. 43.
[57] From manuscript *Alice's Adventures Underground*, shown in Gernsheim, *Lewis Carroll Photographer*, plate 12.

of the images – the documentation of the performances for the camera – creates a space within the pictures that is similar to that of documentary photography, where the viewer is compelled to both empathise with the character depicted, and to self-consciously assume the position of the photographer, who is both setting up and documenting the scene for the camera. Here, the performances depicted are fantasies, but the way in which they are acted out dispels the viewer's fantasy that these are product of the model's imagination, and forces the acknowledgement that they are the product of the photographer's, and to some extent, the viewer's projections.

In *Untitled #1 (wonder)* Alice swims in the pool of her own tears, her body distorted under the water (fig. 2.8). Her mary jane shoes are enlarged, and her yellow dress and blue pinafore shrink, replicating the telescoping of the literary Alice's body as she tries various cakes and potions. In *Untitled #2 (wonder)* one Alice leans over the other, squeezing her nose, mouth open, apparently ready to perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation (fig. 2.9). Both Alices have wet hair and faces, as if they were both the Alice swimming in the pool of tears, but now one has to save the other. In *Untitled #3 (wonder)* Alice is lying at the base of a flight of stone steps, with only her legs and arm visible (fig. 2.10). The perspective of the picture makes it unclear at first whether Alice is about to fall or has fallen. Her body is cut out of the picture frame, her arm and dress out of focus, her shoes and white stockings sharp in the severely flattened depth of field. It appears that Alice has fallen not down the rabbit hole, but down the garden steps. Descriptions of the photographs somehow turn them into illustrations, with potential sources for the imagery being found in the story of Alice. When catalogued as series of actions however, the mouth, teeth, hair and legs of the models take on symbolic functions in their own right. If the series of images are thought of as performance documentation, then what is shown is a series of 20 key moments in a larger event – as in a story or a film. The glimpse of an unfinished hem in one photograph lingers as a reminder of the site of documentation, the performance being enacted for the camera: undermining the slicker, more filmic cropping and lighting of other images. Whilst each photograph contributes something different to the fragmented narrative, I am going to focus on just 2 images: the resuscitation image, *Untitled #2 (wonder)*, which will stand in for the images of Alice doubled; and *Untitled #13 (wonder)*, in which Alice holds false teeth on her lap, which will stand in for the images of mouths and hair (fig. 2.11).

Out of the five photographs featuring both Alices, *Untitled #2 (wonder)* is the most ambiguous in its tone. Three of the other images are pictures of violation: Alice is made to eat soap in *Untitled #17 (wonder)*, one Alice holds another's head on the ground in *Untitled #18 (wonder)*, and in *Untitled #15 (wonder)* the hair of one Alice is grasped in the mouth of the other (fig. 2.12). The last doubled image, *Untitled #8 (wonder)*, shows the two Alices lying side by side, eyes shut, perhaps dreaming the dream of wonderland. *Untitled #2 (wonder)*, which seems to be a companion piece to Alice swimming in the pool of tears, sees Alice bringing herself back to life. As so often in Gaskell's images, what seems to be the rational description for the scene is undercut by the cropping, lighting and proximity of the camera to the models. The Alice lying on the floor has her mouth slightly open, her eyes shut, patches of moisture on her face highlighting her rosy cheeks and downy skin. The rescuing Alice has her face held perhaps six inches away from her double, her open mouth and downcast eyes mirroring the expression of the prone Alice. Her hair is also wet, but her face appears dry, her eyelashes do not have the same dewy quality as her double's. (At this point I realise that I have the urge to write sister each time instead of double. The fact that the two models are real-life twins seems to underline the sibling relationship at play in these images). The upright Alice holds her double's nose, and has her other hand beneath her neck, in a gesture that is part practical manoeuvre, part caress. Just as in a filmic close up, the lighting in this image hits the sides of both girls' faces, the point of highlight drawing attention to the prone Alice's open mouth. It is as if the two Alices are looking in a mirror at each other – except that their eyes are closed in anticipation of the embrace that is just about to come. Like the cut to fade in old movies where the hero and heroine embrace and the light dims, this shot incorporates an anticipated kiss that is coded to be more than a simple resuscitation. Here the kiss of life is layered with the sexuality of the photograph's lighting and framing; the focus on the girls' perfect skin with its glistening wetness, is too redolent of pornographic images to be written off as accidental. Just as children play doctors and nurses, here these two teenage Alices appear to play children's games that take on a tone of sexual ambiguity in the sensuality of their enactment. If the Alices are read as sisters or friends rather than simply fragments of the same person, then the scene has the mock-seriousness of pre adolescents 'practising' kissing on each other. However, the sexualisation of the Alices marks the performance with an exploration of sexual intimacy that is not just a childish game,

anymore than the fantasy of Carroll's narrative is just a nonsense tale. In relation to the portraits by Dodgson/Carroll of his own fantasised Alices, these photographs seem to depict the sexual undertones of his fascination with young girls, fixating and fetishising both their prettiness and their sexualised play.[58]

In the world created in *wonder* Alice can only play with herself, with this image of Alice bringing herself back to life / about to embrace herself enacting a scene of autoeroticism. However, the reality of the two Alices being played by twins – which is apparent in the series in the slight differences between the two girls – compels the viewer into seeing the image as a queer image of two girls about to kiss. Here sexuality and identity collapse and multiply in a manner similar to the contortions that Alice's body undergoes in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, so that describing exactly the dynamic of the photograph becomes tangled in itself. To describe the scene as lesbian feels overdetermined, but to avoid the sensuality of the embrace between the two girls, or simply to describe it as autoerotic or narcissistic also feels incomplete. Gaskell contains a number of contradictory narratives in her doubled Alice images: that these two girls are siblings, fighting with each other, (or acting out Alice's desire to box her own ears in Carroll's version); that these two girls are projections of the same character; that the two girls are playing a series of games with each other in which they enact pseudo aggressive and eroticised power struggles; that the two girls are performing fantasies for a voyeuristic narrator/director. Again and again in the images the girls' beauty and youth is fetishised in the use of close-ups and directed lighting. The Alice from Carroll's fantasises comes alive as an older, more knowing girl than the very young Alice Liddell, or the freshly innocent Alice in the famous illustrations by Tenniel. The dreaming Alices in *Untitled #8 (wonder)* again use the device of mirroring to emphasise their fetishised beauty. Lying on the grass, they appear as two mannequins, ready to be put to whatever use is desired. Here the manipulations of the photographer comes to the fore, with the image's composition replicating the perspective of a viewer coming on the pair, crouching down, contemplating their passive forms with breath held. Here the "innocent love" of Carroll for his sitters becomes both a voyeuristic act, with an eroticism that is dependent on the distance between the

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[58] Carroll' simultaneous fascination in his model's sensuality, and his simultaneous disavowal of his sexualised interest can be seen in this quote: "I *wish* I could dispense with *all* costume. Naked children are so perfectly pure and lovely; but Mrs Grundy would be furious – it would never do." Lewis Carroll in a letter to Harry Furniss, quoted in ibid., p. 21.

photographer and his models, and an identification with these actors of a fantasy, the screen for the

viewer's projections.

> The Cat only grinned when it saw Alice. It looked good-natured, she thought: still it had *very* long
>
> claws and a great many teeth, so she felt that it ought to be treated with respect.[59]

In *Untitled #13 (wonder)* the sexualised vocabulary widens to incorporate the symbolism of the mouth and

teeth, a recurring image in the series. In this image a pair of false teeth are held on Alice's lap, with the

opening of the teeth appearing as if Alice is making the plastic mouth talk to her, or as an echo of the

resuscitation scene, with the imminent embrace also being an examination. In a drawing by Gaskell, a

group of girls peer into the enlarged mouth of another girl, as if trying to find what is kept inside (fig.

2.13).[60] Other images in the series that use the mouth as a focal point are *Untitled #10 (wonder)* in which

Alice puts a hard boiled egg in her mouth; *Untitled #15 (wonder)* where one Alice eats the other's hair, her

bottom row of teeth jutting out from the mane held across her face; and *Untitled #12 (wonder)* in which

Alice has her head held back, eyes closed, a single strand of hair pressing against her top lip (fig. 2.14).

Here the themes in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* of eating and drinking things to change size, as well

as the mysterious Cheshire Cat's grin are condensed into the image of the toothy mouth, which is both

aggressive and seductive. The positioning of the false teeth in Alice's lap underlines the connection

between the teeth and the vagina dentata, with the orality of this series of images being linked to an

aggressive sexuality, based on incorporation and destruction. By presenting the false teeth in *Untitled #13*

(wonder), the otherness of this set is put into play with the doubling of the Alices, so that here the teeth are

not part of Alice, but are a prop or screen through which she can literally talk to herself. As Nina Auerbach

has explored, the Cheshire Cat is the only character in Wonderland who is aware of his own madness,

with the focus on the mouth throughout the story providing an alternative sexual frame from the equation

of Alice with the phallus: "By a subtle dramatisation of Alice's attitudes toward animals and toward the

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[59] Carroll, *Alice's Adverntures in Wonderland*, p. 75.
[60] Gaskell is the only artist discussed in this study who publishes sketches along with her photographs. As preparatory material, these drawings map out the manipulations of bodies and outfits that are then enacted in her photographic work.

animal in herself, by his final resting on the symbol of her mouth, Carroll probed in all its complexity the underground world within the little girl's pinafore."[61] In Gaskell's images, the mouth becomes not only a receptacle for the cakes and potions that change Alice, but as a symbol of both the vagina and a destructive orality that wishes to consume everything in its path. This is compounded by the image of Alice about to eat a boiled egg – which does not appear in Carroll's story, but within the chain of signification between mouth and sexuality, cannot help in my mind but link with the image of the egg in Bataille's *Story of the Eye.* Here the egg is both an eroticised object in its own right, and is put into a chain of images that link together the eye, the egg, the testicle, the sun, milk, sperm and urine.[62] The pornographic story of the three teenagers Simone, Marcelle and the narrator is an exploration of sexuality and violence that attempts to destroys every moral represented by the family and heterosexual sex. In the climatic scene, Simone places an eye in her vagina and the narrator recounts: "I even felt as if my eyes were bulging from my head, erectile with horror; in *Simone's* hairy vagina, I saw the wan blue eye of *Marcelle*, gazing at me through tears of urine."[63] Here the eye represents a merging of identities between Simone and Marcelle, as well as a picture of the vagina as a consuming orifice, linking back to Gaskell's image of Alice placing the egg in her mouth. Whereas Bataille uses extreme pornographic images, Gaskell's photographs imply a sexual connotation in the picturing of the mouth and hair. Alice is not just swallowing a potion to make herself bigger or smaller, she is demonstrating a consuming sexuality and aggression, with her body fragmenting, represented by false teeth, an egg, strands of hair, a twin. Gaskell's position in the scene, as viewer and narrator, takes up the position of the male author who uses the precocious, attractive girl as a site of identification and a performance of a perverse sexuality. Whereas in the literary format, the author can pretend to enter the persona of the girl, in Gaskell's photographs the character(s) of Alice remain suspended in uncertain territory – between evocative symbols in a fantasy and actors in a documented performance.

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[61] Auerbach, *Romantic Imprisonment*, p. 148.

[62] See Roland Barthes, "The Metaphor of the Eye" (1963), in Georges Bataille, *Story of the Eye*, Joachim Neugroschal trans., Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982, p. 119-127. Originally published in French as *Histoire d'Oeil*, 1929. In relation to my previous discussion of Bellmer, and the importance of repetition in surrealist imagery, his illustrations for *Story of the Eye* provide another link between his construction of the female body and Gaskell's. Also, his interest in alternative modes of signification, with his rearticulations of the female body, reinforce my thesis that Gaskell's use of her models can be seen as presenting an symbolic vocabulary that does not conform to a Freudian schema.

[63] Bataille, *Story of the Eye*, p. 67.

In the companion series to *wonder*, *override* features a group of seven girls, ranging from pre to early adolescents. Gaskell has described *override* as being an exploration of the changes of size in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*:

> I think that in *override* I had got more specific in terms of her size, playing out something that I thought was really rich, but hadn't followed up in *wonder.* There was something nice about multiple parts of herself trying to push her or make her bigger. It felt like if I could divide her personality into seven then it would make it easier for her to have that self struggle.[64]

The ten photographs in this series focus on the bodies, rather than the faces, of the girls, shot in much harsher twilight tones than the *wonder* photographs, the outfits swapping colours so that the blouses and skirts are blue and the pinafores are yellow. The images consist primarily of one girl being held, pulled or pushed by the rest of the group, as if they are trying to stop the changes that are occurring to the fictional Alice. In *Untitled #29 (override)*, Alice stands in the centre, her head pulled sharply back by the hunks of hair held by the other Alices, who cannot be seen except for their arms (fig. 2.15). The twilight sky provides a luminous backdrop to the scene, with the camera held low, looking up at the captive Alice. A button on her blue blouse strains, and the cloth pulls over her breasts. In a number of the images the childish costume seems to barely contain the no-longer childish Alices, with their younger counterparts holding and pulling on their arms, legs, and in this case, hair. In one of the most sexualised images from this series, *Untitled #24 (override)*, one girl lies on the floor, holding open her shirt, whilst another one leans over her, her head in the other's blouse (fig. 2.16). A third girl also holds the shirt open, her hair dropping down as she peers inside. This image corresponds to one of Gaskell's drawings, in which the two girls peer not into the third's blouse, but into her mouth (fig. 2.17). In this photograph, the open blouse becomes another version of the sexualised orifice of the mouth, the girl's head almost swallowed by the opening. In the photograph, the three different sets of arms frame the hidden chest, with the sexual connotations of the awkward almost-embrace of the girls echoing the imminent kiss in the resuscitation image in *wonder.* Gaskell's explanation of this image provides a rather different point of reference:

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[64] Gaskell, in conversation with the author. Elsewhere Gaskell has described making the photographs and her interaction with her models: "[b]asically I posed them and then crawled around with the camera as if I were one of the girls. It was so strange – the girls loved it." Quoted in Robertson, "Quest for Alice".

"Gaskell said that her interest in the act of hiding in public prompted the pose. 'I wanted it to look like mothers who cover their breasts with a shirt while they feed their babies.'"[65] Here the different Alices play at mother and baby, with the difference in the model's ages becoming a generational play between adult and child, merging maternal relations with lateral ones. In this all-female environment, the group explores and fragments each others' bodies, with the aggression acted out underlined by the tactility of the images, with the sensuality of the model's hair, the awkward fit of their bodies in the costumes and the tangling of their arms and legs. Here the (pre)adolescent girl stands in for a sexuality and identity that is in a severe state of flux, a site of anxiety around normal parameters of sexual identity and conformity, a theme that recurs in Gaskell's later series *resemblance*, where the group of girls try to create/disarticulate one of their peer's body. Gaskell presents a performance of cultural signifiers around the attractive adolescent girl, disrupting their passivity and bringing to the surface a history of their symbolism as potent receptacles of psychic disorder. Whilst Alice in Carroll's version wakes up and finds her violent fantasises have been just a dream, here the Alices are allowed to perform the symbolic functions of the literary Alice's changing size in a way that does not contain their disruptive potential.

Hysteria, possession and the adolescent girl

… the [photographic] frame is experienced as figurative, as redrawing the elements inside it.[66]

Leading on from Gaskell's presentation of Alice, I want to consider more generally the depiction of the adolescent girl as a site of psychic disruption. The adolescent girl in the nineteenth and early twentieth century is pictured as developing from a state of seductive passivity into a focus for hysterical activity that has to be controlled in order for her to pass into adult feminine identity. Here the fantasy of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, when read as the destructive potential of the girl reaching adolescence, is

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[65] Robertson, "Quest for Alice".
[66] Krauss, "Photography in the service of Surrealism", p. 19.

transcribed into the scientific diagnosis of hysteria, mixed in with cultural narratives linking excessive female sexuality with witchcraft and possession.

By considering the importance of hysteria for constructions of gendered and sexual identity, as well as its role in the birth of psychoanalysis, the photographic performances of hysteria documented at the Salpêtrière during the 1870s-1890s can be seen as a record of an interaction between author, viewer and model that resonate with Gaskell's photographs, with the emphasis on scientific objectivity echoing the use of 'realist' modes in gothic fiction to validate the unreliable narrator. The figure of the hysteric also links with the concept of the uncanny, which Freud links to displays of madness and epilepsy, perhaps thinking of Charcot's depictions of *hysterie epilepsie*: " the uncanny effect of epileptic fits, and of manifestations of insanity, because these excite in the spectator the impression of automatic, mechanical processes at work behind the ordinary appearance of mental activity."[67] It is this distance between the actions of the body and the mental processes that generate the actions that allay the hysteric with the performer or the automaton. Juliet Mitchell's discussion of hysteria traces a link between hysteria, surrealism and postmodernity:

> The Surrealists made their minority manifesto from the tenets of hysterical flamboyance, passion
> and demonstration. Today the social situation which favours a conscious, public enactment in place
> of private driven symptoms is best summed up in the philosophy of post-modernity which eschews
> metanarratives, truth, representation in favour of fragmentation, the proliferation of desires, the
> ascendancy of the will and the act and language that gets one what one wants. This is the
> valourisation of performance and performativity.[68]

Mitchell's connection provides a link between the surrealist's interest in hysteria and the uncanny, and the contemporary embodiment of hysteria (as she sees it) in the interest in performance and performativity. I would argue that this interest is also based in a return to the construction of the psychoanalytic model, which, as has been pointed up by numerous writers, has its beginnings in the study of hysteria. Peggy Phelan asserts that "[t]he psychoanalytic session, at least as it was conceived in these early case

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[67] Freud, "The Uncanny", p. 226.
[68] Mitchell, *Mad Men and Medusas*, p. 133.

histories, involved the acting out, the performative elaboration of the symptom."[69] Hysteria can be seen as presenting a visual performance of symptoms, but a performance that is complicated by the hysteric's problematic relationship to simulation and reality, as well as the relationship between doctor and patient. Mitchell states that "[h]ysteria involves a relationship – one cannot be a hysteric on one's own".[70] Later she builds on this by saying: "The hysteric is an empty vessel, free to be flooded with the other: there is too much of the 'other' in the empty body of hysteria."[71] Here the hysteric is seen as in large part reacting to the wishes of the 'other', so that the performance of symptoms does not relate exactly to the mental experience, the body of the hysteric instead providing a space of projection.[72] This relates to the discussion of the treatment and display of hysterics in the nineteenth century, as Sander Gilman has explored: "As they selected patients for study who were extraordinarily suggestible, many of these patients were able to sense the 'correct' manner of responding."[73] In relation to Gaskell's photographs, the structure of hysteria and the figure of the hysteric come together. In Gaskell's presenting of her literary sources, and the acting out of the fictional characters' fantasies, her working process correlates with the description given again by Mitchell of "the fantasies of his [the hysteric's] mind are the actions of his body."[74] In Gaskell's photographs, what is made explicit is the collapse of identifications between the performer, the photographer, the author and the viewer. The characteristic emptiness of hysteria is presented both in a way Gaskell's models are made anonymous, automaton-like, and also the way that the position of Gaskell as the photographer/author is evacuated in deference to her source material, and the perspectives of her quoted authors. Equally, the sexuality presented in her images registers as 'uncanny', or perverse, and can be described in terms of hysteria through both the hysteric's sexualisation

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[69] Peggy Phelan, "Dance and the History of Hysteria", in *Corporealities Dancing, Knowledge, Culture and Power*, Susan Leigh Foster ed., London: Routledge, 1996, p. 90.
[70] Mitchell, *Mad Men and Medusas*, p. 59.
[71] Ibid., p. 230.
[72] In his discussion of hysteria, David Lomas notes the importance of simulation, saying: "Simulation, we shall see, operates by confounding the distinction between semblance and reality, between authenticity and the inauthentic, ersatz, copy." This links with my earlier discussion of doubling in surrealist photography, the uncanny and the performative nature of gender. In *The Haunted Self: Surrealism, Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 56.
[73] Sander L Gilman, *Seeing the Insane*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1982, p. 200.
[74] Mitchell, *Mad Men and Medusas*, p. 34.

of violence, and inability or refusal to resolve the Oedipal complex: "instead she identifies with her father to possess her mother, and with her mother to possess her father."[75]

Horror movies and ghost stories that picture the young girl as a psychic receiver, somebody with a heightened sensitivity to the paranormal, and/or with inner emotions of such violence that they manifest themselves have particular resonance with Gaskell's work and with the figure of the hysteric. In many of the films that Gaskell references as influences, the supposedly innocent child or woman is revealed to be the conduit for forces that may or may not be part of them – whether these forces are of evil, the devil, or of sexuality.[76] Whilst this study does not engage with the influences of the cinematic on the artists discussed, in the case of Gaskell, horror films in particular seem to provide narrative and performative influences that go beyond a visual link of the use of large-scale colour photography and the cinema screen. Here a brief consideration of the film *Carrie*, directed by Brian DePalma, 1976, is informative when considered as a filmic portrait, drawing out similarities between the figure of Carrie and the models in many of Gaskell's photographs. In *Carrie*, it is both the story of a young girl hitting puberty, which to her appears strange and foreboding against the maniacal Christian moralising of her mother; and the styling of the film as somewhere between a soft porn movie, a teen romance and a gothic tragedy that relates to Gaskell's photographs and her approach to narrative. The opening sequence, which shows a nude Carrie in the shower, eyes shut in reverie, is abruptly broken by her finding blood between her legs, causing her to scream and literally break down, crouched, crying in the corner of the gym room shower (fig. 2.18). Her classmates, who realise that it is only her period, proceed to bombard the foetal Carrie with tampons and sanitary towels. The scene is somewhere between shocking and ridiculous, with each element carefully planned to titillate and to confront. It is the self-conscious staging of this scene of puberty that sets the symbolic value of Carrie's femininity as a force that is both part of her and totally alien to her, with an

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[75] Ibid., pp. 186-187. Here the hysteric's sexuality is pictured as a point of refusal, with hysterical identities mimicked rather than inhabited. The closeness of seduction and aggression in hysteria is for Mitchell explained through a consideration of lateral relationships, which she sees as being characterised by a love/hate ambivalence: "The sibling relationship is important because, unlike the parental relationship, it is our first *social* relationship"; "It is this love/hate ambivalence which comes into play in relation to siblings or near-peers that characterises hysteria." p. 20.

[76] Bonnie Clearwater, in her catalogue essay on Gaskell, runs through a list of influences that Gaskell had supplied her, which included *Carrie*, *Sister My Sister*, *The Bad Seed*, *Mildred Pierce*, *All About Eve*, *Dead Ringers*, *Village of the Damned*, *Lolita*, *Fantasia* and *The Exorcist*. Bonnie Clearwater, *Anna Gaskell*, North Miami, FL: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998, p. 6.

emotional force that is out of synch with reality. At the same time, director Brian DePalma's trademark

tastelessness in the voyeuristic depiction of Carrie as defenceless and naked, places the viewer in line

with the ruthlessness of the peer group who torture her, and in the end, escalate the presence of her

psychic powers. As Mark Kermode noted about the contemporaneous *The Exorcist*: "[f]or the first time in a

mainstream movie audiences witnessed the graphic desecration of everything that was considered

wholesome and good about the America Dream – the home, the family, the church, and, most shockingly,

the child."[77] Just as the nineteenth-century hysteric was characterised by the adolescent girl, in horror

movies such as *Carrie*, it is again the onset of puberty that manifests itself with a destructive, sexualised

force, here externalised into supernatural events.[78]

In relation to Gaskell's work, *Carrie* is significant not only as a narrative of a girl finding she has psychic

abilities that eventually destroy her, her school hall, her home and her mother, but also the way this story

is presented. For much of the movie, nothing shocking really happens, until the final scenes. Gaskell's

photographs evoke a similar atmosphere to the one that pervades Carrie's home, with the violent

undercurrents between mother and daughter, and the eroticised presentation of Carrie. Carrie's dress: the

long blonde hair with middle parting, the plain, girlish skirt and blouse combinations, the long legs with

pulled up white socks and round toed shoes, are all props that appear in Gaskell's photographs, signifying

both girlishness and a Lolita-style sexuality. One sequence, in which Carrie's mother drags a begging,

crying Carrie into a small, closet altar to pray for forgiveness has particular similarities to Gaskell's framing

in the way Carrie's arms are pulled and dragged by the mother, with the camera angles and lighting

creating a claustrophobic, murky atmosphere (fig. 2.19). Carrie's mother begins the scene by forcing

Carrie to repeat passages from a text called "the Sins of Woman". Carrie's mother interprets the onset of

Carrie's menstruation as a self-inflicted impurity, and refuses to converse with her daughter other than to

compel her to pray. In terms of horror, the actual scene is rather tame – no one really gets hurt, there is no

blood, and Carrie ends the scene leaving the closet and thanking her mother. In terms of the film's

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[77] Mark Kermode, *The Exorcist*, London: BFI, 1998, p. 9, quoted in Claire Doherty, "Between Darkness and Light: Perception of the Paranormal", *Contemporary Visual Arts*, issue 23, 1999, pp. 36-41; p. 38.
[78] Elaine Showalter notes that many of the hysterics at the Salpêtrière were adolescent girls with domineering parents and forceful characters. "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender", in *Hysteria Beyond Freud*, Sander Gilman, Helen King, et al, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

atmosphere however, the claustrophobia draws the viewer into the building impotent fury that seems to consume Carrie. In the very next scene, she stares at herself in the mirror, which breaks through the force of her emotions. These physical manifestations of emotional states are compelling not because they reveal the 'inner' truth about Carrie, more that they are presented in the film as symbolic of a frustration against authority and a confusion about identity. As Claire Doherty has noted about art that draws on these horror narratives:

> It refers at first glance to the paranormal subject, but actually is fascinated by the cultural context in which and for which that subject is generated. Our response is carefully manipulated. The spectacular or sensational qualities of the original are removed or diluted – what remains is a series of triggers stripped of context and meaning.[79]

In Gaskell's photographs the models' beauty and dress, the angles of the shots and the colour scheme, all evoke films like *Carrie*, but with a major difference. What is left out of Gaskell's performances is the narrative structure which sets Carrie's psychic abilities into context. Gaskell provides cultural markers that bring to mind such films, but her work freezes only a moment of extreme tension, evacuating the surrounding explanation for the actions.

As a precedent for characters such as Carrie, the figure of the hysteric appears as a cultural signifier of a woman who is not in control of her emotional and sexual impulses, and who acts out emotional states physically. The hysteric also draws on a longer history of the witch and possession by demons, which is fed back into horror movies such as *Carrie*, with the Victorian construction of the female hysteric explicitly linking performances of unacceptable behaviour with an excessive and dangerous sexuality. However, in terms of Gaskell's models, I do not want to imply that they *are* hysterical, rather I want to consider that they are acting out the *poses* of hysteria. In this way the links between the use of the literary unreliable narrator, the filmic conventions of the psychic catalyst in the form of the young girl, and the photographs

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[79] Doherty, "Between Darkness and Light", p. 38. Doherty discusses work by Susan Hiller, Douglas Gordon and Anna Gaskell, amongst others, noting the link between horror movies and early theatrical presentations of the paranormal, such as spirit photography from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. She links the poses of the medium with those of the hysteric in Charcot's famous images, a lineage that I will explore in more detail.

and theorising of the hysteric can be seen in correspondence to one another. Here it is the performance of a symptom, rather than the symptom itself that is being represented.

To explore these ideas I will consider images of Augustine, an adolescent hysteric photographed by Charcot at the Salpêtrière in Paris. Four photographs, taken from volume II of *Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière*, 1878, were published in an article celebrating "The Fiftieth Anniversary of Hysteria", in the surrealist journal *La Révolution Surréaliste*, accompanying a text by André Breton and Louis Aragon (fig. 2.20). In their text Augustine is eulogised as the perfect representation of the hysteric, romanticising hysteria as "a supreme means of expression."[80] Earlier in the text they ask:

> Does Freud, who owes so much to Charcot, remember the time when, according to the survivors, the resident doctors at the Salpêtrière mixed up their professional duty with their taste for sex, and when at dusk the patients either met these doctors outside the hospital or admitted them to their own beds?[81]

For the surrealists, the hysteric was an extension of their idealised *femme-enfant*, with the adolescent, seductive hysteric providing a link to their interests in madness, the unconscious, sexuality and the uncanny. Their prurient comments about Freud and the relationship between the patients and doctors at the Salpêtrière again highlight the importance of the projections and sexualisation from both sides, with the scientific objectivity of the psychoanalytic engagement restaged as an eroticised encounter.

Whilst the surrealist presentation of these photographs sensationalises their erotic content, the original framing of the images in the *Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière* presents the images as medical evidence, alongside long personal and medical histories. The format of the case studies in these volumes is to present a patient's case by a text, accompanied by a portrait of the patient whilst 'normal', and then a series of photographs of the patient during a hysterical attack. The 'normal' portraits follow a conventional portrait style, with the women dressed in sombre clothes, their hair neatly braided, their

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[80] Louis Aragon and André Breton, "The Fiftieth Anniversary of Hysteria", in *What is Surrealism? Selected Writings*, André Breton, ed. and with an intro by Franklin Rosemont, London: Pluto Press, 1970, p. 321. First published as "Le Cinquantenaire de l'hysterie 1878-1928", *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 11, 15 March 1928, p. 21.
[81] Ibid., p. 320.

posture conforming to that of a studio portrait (fig. 2.21a). The photographs during the attack present the

women in a rather different light, often staged in a bed, with hair loosened, attired in a nightdress or sheet,

the image often hand-touched to provide clarity to the blurrily captured movement (fig. 2.21b). In an essay

on Charcot's photographs of hysterics, Sigrid Schade pulls apart the theory of hysteria from its

representation, with the coercion and staging put in place by Charcot.[82] As the surrealist's framing of the

photographs acknowledges, here the unreliable narrator again appears in the guise of the doctor, showing

to the world through his photographs the 'reality' of the hysteric, played by his female patients. Schade

recounts how the hysterical patients were in the same ward as the epileptic patients, arising in the display

of hysterical symptoms imitating the convulsions of epilepsy, which Charcot explored under the heading

l'hystério-épilepsie. Added to this were the interventions of Charcot, who applied, "electric shocks, loud

noises, pressure to the ovaries, and the use of ether and hypnosis" to induce hysterical fits.[83] Rather than

recording the 'facts' of hysteria, Charcot created a performance of symptoms that were photographed as if

they were documentary evidence.[84] Augustine was one of his favourite patients, and was 15 year old when

she first arrived at the Salpêtrière, fitting in this context where the adolescent girl becomes a signifier of

anxieties about control, authority and identity.[85] These performances were manipulated further by Charcot

by the images that were hung in the Salpêtrière: "the patients were confronted with images, engravings

and photographs pinned to the walls in 'surprising extravagance'; they represented Charcot's iconographic

preferences, and specifically included exorcism scenes."[86] Here the cultural history of the hysteric as being

possessed by the devil, and the link between the hysterical woman and the witch are made apparent to

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[82] Sigrid Schade, "Charcot and the Spectacle of the Hysterical Body The 'Pathos Formula' as an aesthetic staging of psychiatric discourse – a blind spot in the reception of Warburg", *Art History*, vol. 18, no. 4, December 1995, pp. 499-517.

[83] Ibid., p. 510.

[84] Georges Didi-Huberman explores the link between the theatricality of the photographs from the Salpêtrière, and the conventions of the photographic portrait, in his classic study of hysteria: "The fact that the photographic portrait required not only studios and make-up (as if to help the light come into its own) but also headrests, knee-braces, curtains, and scenery is a good indication of the terms of the paradox: an existence was authenticated, but through theatrical means." *The Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*, Alisa Hartz trans., Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003, p. 62. Originally published in French in 1982.

[85] Showalter, in her discussion of Augustine, provides information on the background to her hysterical attacks, a history that differs sharply from the surrealist's romantic presentation of her attacks as "a supreme form of expression": "Beginning at puberty, she had been subjected to sexual attacks by men in the neighbourhood, and at the age of 13, had been raped by her mother's lover…". Showalter says that it was after this incident that her attacks began. "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender", p. 312. Another detail about Augustine – which may or may not be true – is that she apparently escaped from Salpêtrière dressed as a man, and was rumoured to have spent the rest of her life in Chile as a cabaret performer and impresario. Her escape is remarked on in Didi-Huberman, *The Invention of Hysteria*, but no source for this information is given.

[86] Schade, "Charcot and the Spectacle of the Hysterical Body", pp. 508-509.

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the very patients meant to be suffering from the condition, feeding these connotations back into their representations of their symptoms. For Freud, hysteria was in part due to the unsuccessful repression of sexuality during puberty. He says that the little girl's sexual activity has a "masculine character" and "a wave of repression in the years of puberty is needed in order for this masculine sexuality to be discarded and the woman to emerge."[87] The hysteric has not undergone the necessary repression, and so still experiences her sexuality as active, which in Freud's schema reads as masculine and socially disruptive: unnatural. Psychoanalysis and psychiatry attempted to exorcise the ghost of women's excessive, active sexuality, which was in part a figment of the doctors' anxious imagination about what might happen if the controls of normative heterosexuality were relaxed.

Pierre Janet, an early analyst of hysteria who trained under Charcot, acknowledged that many of his hysterical patients who were suffering from double personalities were mediums. This strange fact is offered as not being a problematic in his observations of their symptoms, but as a naturally occurring relationship, as he saw that the voices and spirits that mediums professed to channel were in fact aspects of the unconscious.[88] The figure of the medium provides a link between the scientific presentation of the hysteric, and the cultural anxieties that surround her, that of the witch, and the possessed.[89] Here the sensationalised female body, as in the surrealist's presentation of the hysteric, figures again in the guise of scientific investigation. Photographs and textual accounts of spiritualism proliferated during the Victorian period, with the phenomenon of materialising mediums becoming fashionable in the early decades of the twentieth century. These mediums, rather than simply conversing with spirits, would 'materialise' spirit forms and ectoplasm, often appearing from their body, or from the traditional cabinet in which the medium would conduct the séance. Rather than the 'spirit photographs' popular in the late nineteenth century, in which spirits would reveal themselves on the photographic plate, now the medium became the woman's

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[87] Sigmund Freud, "On the Sexual Theories of Children" (1908), in *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. ix, trans and ed. by James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, London: The Hogarth Press, 1959, p. 217.

[88] Referred to by David Lomas, *The Haunted Self: Surrealism, Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, pp. 66-67. Lomas explores how Janet saw that an underlying hysterical disposition was present in his patients who showed multiple personalities, seeing mediums as being perfectly suited to develop such split personalities. His source is Pierre Janet, *L'automatisme psychologique*, Paris: Editions Félix Aican, 1889.

[89] As Janet notes, "No one now will deny that the possessed, who in former times rolled on the floor in convulsions, and bent before their priests, were hystericals", *The Mental State of Hystericals* (1901), Caroline Rollin Carson trans., Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1998, p. 226.

body. For example, in photographs of Mina 'Margery' Crandon, c 1925-1929, she is shown taking on the persona of her dead brother Walter, who she would imitate in voice, as well as more bizarrely materialising his hand from between her legs (fig. 2.22a). On both sides of the Atlantic these women were celebrated and debated in spiritualist circles, with a need for authenticity creating a pseudo-scientific discourse that is not dissimilar to that of Charcot's documentation of hysterics. Again the indexicality of the photograph was used as the proof of the images' authenticity, presented as documentary evidence along with long, scientific accounts of the events. Like the hysteric, the medium was normally hypnotised before communing with the spirits, so the role of the doctor was echoed in the presence of the medium's hypnotist, who, in the case of Margery Crandon, was her husband. As the surrealists acknowledged in Charcot's photographs, these images of mediums often have a sexual undertone, as in the shot of Walter's hand on the stomach of Margery (fig 2.22b). In the name of thorough investigation, it was usual practice for mediums to be searched before séances, with documentation of the medium semi-naked acting as 'proof' that the materialisation was actually coming from the medium's body, and not simply being concealed in her clothing. The performance of the medium took place under controlled circumstances, and the participants in the séance were often required to sing or hold hands whilst materialisation was taking place, most probably to mask the sound of regurgitation, which is the most likely method through which materialising mediums concealed the 'ectoplasm'.

The documentary style of photographs taken of ectoplasm and materialisation differ from the earlier spirit photographs, which had been popular in the second half of the nineteenth century. These earlier images took the exposure time of the photograph as a period onto which supernatural presences would reveal themselves on the photographic plate, their presence only becoming known once the plate was developed. As Karl Schoonover has noted:

> The ectoplasm phenomena implies a different conception of photograph, valuing the camera less
>
> for its paranormal powers than for its mechanical extension of human sight…. [w]e find ectoplasm

photographs addressing an audience for whom the dramatisation of indexical registration does more than any other discourse of realism to legitimate photographs as documentary evidence.[90]
In his discussion of ectoplasm images, he focuses on photograph's role as an indexical medium as being utilised to prove the phenomenon's authenticity, compounded by comparisons between the ectoplasm and the photographic process: the fact that the materialisations can only occur under dim, red light, and are destroyed by bright white light; their appearance only for a brief moment and the appearance of spirit images on the surface of the 'photographic' surface of the ectoplasm. For my comparison between the figure of the hysteric and the medium, his discussion is useful in the way he links the scientific, objective recording of the camera with the revealing of phenomena, the capturing of a fleeting event. In Charcot's images the scientific nature of the endeavour was never in doubt, with the photographs often being touched up to provide clarity, rather than leaving them untouched as proof of authenticity as in the spiritualist images. Charcot aimed to provide a vocabulary of the hysteric's body, to uncover its mystery by categorisation. In contrast, the documentation of the medium focuses on the capturing of ectoplasm, with the images of the medium in the throes of her trance naturalised rather than categorised. The anxiety to 'prove' objectivity is central in the images of medium, with the structural confines of Charcot's schema beyond most of the observers' remit or capabilities. In the more chaotic compilation of images (there are numerous accounts of images not coming out or equipment not working at vital moments in the literature) what is recorded is the relationship between the observers and the medium in the séance, a performance that is erased in Charcot's carefully framed images.[91]

To consider the performance of the medium further, I want to look at the documentation of the medium known as Eva C. [92] Eva C was observed over a period of 4 years by an investigator called Baron von

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[90] Karl Schoonover, "Ectoplasm, Evanescence, and Photography", *Art Journal*, Fall 2003, p. 33.
[91] Thanks to Dr Caroline Arscott for pointing out the potential differences between the situation of Charcot's photographs and those of the twentieth-century materialising mediums. In Charcot's photography, the women's poses quote from classical art history, with the photographs often titled to categorise the movement: with the "Attitudes Passionnelles" falling under "Menace, Appel, Supplication Amourese, Erotisme, Extase, Hallucinations de l'ouie, Crucifiement" etc.. Photographs of the materialising mediums are focused on capturing a fleeting event, exposing the dark space of the séance with the camera's flashlight.
[92] Eva C was an abbreviation of Eva Carrière, which was a pseudonym for a woman who had previously performed under the name Marthe Béraud. It appears that she changed her name after her séances were exposed as fraudulent. For accounts of her mediumship, see Ruth Brandon, *The Spiritualists: The Passion for the Occult in the*

Schrenck Notzing, who despite the obviously fictitious nature of many of her performances, repeatedly

defended her authenticity, publishing a long treatise from which these images are taken, called *The

Phenomenon of Materialisation*, 1913.[93] Schrenck Notzing appears as yet another unreliable narrator –

posing as an objective observer, but in actual fact allowing his need to believe in the supernatural events

to cloud even the most obvious deception. It seems likely that Schrenck Notzing would allow himself to

believe in Eva C at least partly because of the sexual atmosphere of these séances. In his descriptions,

the examination of Eva C often includes vaginal and anal examinations, along with accounts of the

medium stripping off clothes whilst under hypnosis. Schrenck Notzing describes Eva C as "hysterical", with

her actions under hypnosis appearing to act out an 'excessive' sexuality, like Charcot's hysterics, as well

as paranormal activity. The character of Eva C (already under acting under a pseudonym) provides a

screen onto which observers such as Schrenck Notzing could project onto, a medium in both the sense of

conducting spiritual phenomena and as a medium for sexual fantasy. The third character in Schrenck

Notzing's account is Juliette Bisson, who is described as Eva C's "protectoress".[94] According to Schrenck

Notzing, Bisson's presence both in and outside the séances became increasingly important, with her

taking over the role of hypnotist and examiner in many cases. As a much older woman (Schrenck Notzing

records that she had been married for over 30 years), Bisson seemed to take on the role of mother for the

much younger and emotionally volatile Eva C.[95] In two recent accounts of the relationship between the two

women, they have been described as lovers, with the eroticised accounts of Eva C's trances by Bisson

going some way to backing this up.[96] Whether they were lovers or not, Bisson was most definitely Eva's

accomplice in the materialisations, with her descriptions of the séances that she attended alone forming

some of the most outrageous texts in his book. Bisson's photographs and accounts within *The

Phenomena of Materialisation* form a story within Schrenck Notzing's story, recounting private séances in

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nineteenth and twentieth centuries, London: Weidenheld and Nicholson, 1983 and Malcolm Gaskell, *Hellish Nell: Last of Britian's Witches*, London: Fourth Estate, 2001.

[93] Baron von Schrenck Notzing, *Phenomena of Materialisation*, EE Fournier d'Albe trans., London: Keagan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co, 1920. First published in German in 1913.

[94] Ibid., p. v. Juliette Bisson took Eva C into her house in Paris, becoming the central figure in the presentation of the séances. After her husband died in 1912, she and Eva C moved into a flat together.

[95] Schrenck Notzing notes that Eva C is 23 at the writing of his book, so it would seem that she had been performing as a medium from her mid- to late-teens.

[96] See Brandon, *The Spiritualists*, p. 15 and Gaskell, *Hellish Nell*, p. 91. Schrenck Notzing describes the relationship between the two women as being intimate, with Eva C calling out to Bisson whilst in trance state. However, he also describes their relationship in rather less flattering terms: "…one might compare her [Eva C's] relationship to Mme. Bisson with that of a faithful dog to its master." *The Phenomena of Materialisation*, p. 39.

which Eva C performed only for Bisson. During these private séances, Eva would perform naked, with descriptions of ectoplasm appearing and disappearing to and from her breasts, navel and vagina. The photographs that accompany one of these accounts are rather disappointing compared with the animated account of the ectoplasm's voyage across Eva's body (fig. 2.23). In her description, Bisson recounts how "[a] large, flat, dark-grey patch appeared on her breast, white at the rims. It remained for some time, and then disappeared in the region of the navel. I clearly saw it being reabsorbed there." In her photographs, the active movement described in the text is replaced by stringy material hanging limply from Eva C's breasts. Bisson goes on to recount how the ectoplasm entered Eva C's vagina, with a spirit face appearing on the material.[97] There are no pictures to accompany this highly fantastical passage, with the ectoplasm acting almost as a lure to Bisson as she peers at its changing shapes. Recounted as letters and reports to Schrenck Notzing, Bisson's contribution to *The Phenomena of Materialisation* highlights the fascination with the female body that underlies the scientific enquiry into the ectoplasm that appears from the mediums' orifices. Like Charcot's images of hysterics, the photographs rely on the beliefs of the viewer to maintain their documentary, scientific integrity. Looking at these photographs today, there is no doubt as to their fictitiousness, but what is striking in terms of Gaskell's work is the way they visualise cultural fears about the unnatural potential in the female body, and the way documentary modes of photography were used to authenticate the images. In all of these examples, the adolescent, the medium and the hysteric act out the symptoms that are, in part, instigated by the manipulations of the narrator – whether this is the doctor as in the case of Charcot, the accomplice, the director or author. From Augustine to Eva C to Carrie, the adolescent girl or young woman is used as a setting in which to enact hysterical symptoms, a site of uncertainty that can contain the radically destabilising forces by a performance that allows both narrator and viewer to project anxieties and aggression onto this transitory, other figure. Within these representations of the adolescent and the hysteric, sexuality becomes a signifier and catalyst for broader upheaval, so that sexuality is aligned with evil and possession by outside forces. It is not a coincidence that in the horror movies loved by Gaskell in the 1970s the dramatic enactment of a female sexuality that is dangerous, alien, anxiety inducing and seductive finds its most compelling host in the adolescent girl.

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[97] Ibid., p. 116.

Fairytales and fantasies: *half life*

To conclude this discussion of the 'unnatural' potential signified by the adolescent girl, I want to consider Gaskell's series *half life*, 2002. Talking about the genesis of the photographs she said: "I prefer the idea that you or I, or any viewer, might imagine numerous faces or bodies that could inhabit the ghostlike figures in the photographs."[98] The source material for this series also explores the notion of imagined characters and the power of identification (both real and hysterical). In the story of *Rebecca* the young wife of Mr DeWinter imagines the presence of the dead Rebecca as creating a mocking, judgemental context for her own attempts at being the new Mrs DeWinter. In "The Turn of the Screw" the governess sees or appears to see the demonic ghosts of her predecessor and her lover. In both stories young women are left in a state of crisis when faced with their predecessors – who are pictured as rivals, powerful presences. In both stories the heroines are motherless, so there is also an identification with these strong women as maternal figures who are threatening rather than comforting. The dead women figure as characters that the heroines have to either live up to or somehow overthrow, as in Gaskell's series *resemblance*. In *Rebecca* and "The Turn of the Screw" one of the subtexts is the implication that these dead women are the creations of the heroines, forming imagined rather than actual threats to them. The adoration and fear of both the young Mrs DeWinter and the young governess are compounded by their older female accomplices in the creation of their fantasies: Mrs Danvers, the devoted servant of Rebecca in the du Maurier story, and Mrs Grose, the housekeeper in "The Turn of the Screw". Both older women operate within the stories as the imparter of knowledge, feeding the heroines' growing paranoia in the face of their ghosts. Here, again, is the theme of identities merging and struggling, with a hysterical identification between the heroine and her imagined rival/predecessor forming the central tension within the narratives. There is also a homoerotic component to the women's fantasises, so that in *Rebecca* the identification with the dead Mrs DeWinter is overlaid with a desire for her.[99] This overlap between identification and

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[98] Gaskell interviewed by Drutt, *Half Life*, p. 72.
[99] See Rhona J Berenstein, "'I'm not the sort of person men marry': Monsters, Queers, and Hitchcock's *Rebecca*" for a discussion of the different levels of desire and identification in *Rebecca*. In *Out in Culture: Gay, Lesbian and Queer Essays on Popular Culture*, Corey K Creekmur and Alexander Doty eds., London: Cassell, 1995, pp. 239-269. See also Patricia White, "Female Spectator, Lesbian Specter", in *Uninvited: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Lesbian Representability*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999.

desire is a central motif in the performances of Gaskell's models, queering and externalising the internal search for identity that characterises many of her source stories. Whilst both the new Mrs DeWinter and the governess are women in their early twenties, their positions within the stories are that of emerging characters, which is in line with an adolescent, struggling to assert her own identity in the face of parental and societal norms. The link between the paranormal and the unnatural is also a resonance that runs through representations of the adolescent or the young woman, as I have explored earlier. In terms of *Rebecca*, for example, the object of the new Mrs DeWinter's heterosexual desire, her husband, is absent for much of the story, with the real focus being on her engagement with Mrs Danvers and the 'ghost' of Rebecca.

Gaskell's photographs show a single model within a series of grand interiors, with the focus being on the peripheral presence of the body – with strands of hair, shadows, blurred body parts and silhouettes forming the bulk of the images. The series was installed in the Menil Collection, Houston with Gaskell being inspired by the 'presence' of the collection's founder, Dominique de Menil:

> I like the idea of Dominique de Menil still being very present, somehow lurking around, manipulating the board members, and influencing curators and anyone in power…. There may also be an undercurrent of fear in this scenario, as Dominique watches over people padding carefully around her space – aware of her vibrating presence, larger than they are, larger than life.[100]

Here again is the theme of a powerful woman influencing a younger generation – an imagined presence, and in Gaskell's hands, an eroticised identification between mother figure and daughter. Here the hysterical protagonist imagines a complex of identifications, which range from murderous impulse, to admiration, to crippling envy and fear. The viewer is bound up in this performance as it is left ambiguous which place the viewer should take up – an identification with the model performing, or the photographer constructing the fantasy, or the imagined all-powerful ghostly presence, which seems to merge with the position of the narrator, who directs the narrative and holds its secrets. One of the reoccurring symbols in Gaskell's work is her use of the model's long hair as a kind of living, virile presence. In *half life* the model's hair is focused on to the extent that in *Untitled #90 (half life)*, the only part of the model that is within the

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[100] Gaskell interviewed by Drutt, *Half Life*, p. 72.

frame is a tangled hank of curly dark hair (fig 2.24). When I asked Gaskell about the importance of hair in her images, she replied by telling two stories:

> When I was little I knew a girl who had surgery because she chewed her hair. She ate so much of her hair that she got a hairball, and they had to remove it. It was trapped in her stomach and she couldn't digest it. Something like that connects to the story of Rapunzel, and this other story about Rossetti's wife Elizabeth, who was buried with his poems. He had to exhume her body to get his poems as he needed the money, and when they opened the coffin her long red hair had just kept growing and growing and growing. I like the idea of these two stories – where hair is something that keeps on living, but at the same time is something that also almost killed my friend.[101]

Gaskell filters her ideas through stories that resonate with fairytales and fantasies, where the inanimate come alive and the strangest things happen. More prosaically, she also went onto to explain that hair is also an important signifier of identity, with its malleability and personal associations. In her photographs, hair becomes an important part of the model's bodily presence, the long skeins used as a signifier of a young, attractive girl, as well as a disruptive, subversive, sexual presence. In Gaskell's drawings the dark space up the girls' skirts is represented by a curly, pubic mass of pen strokes, linking adult sexuality and maturity with the long hair of her models' (fig 2.25). Gaskell's use of hair as a primary sexual signifier evokes the vagina, and a female sexual vocabulary, becoming especially potent when mixed with her use of the mouth and skirt as consuming orifices. Here aggressive sexuality does not figure as masculine. Just as the models act somewhere between a substitute for Gaskell herself and as mannequins, hair is situated between being dead and alive, attached to the head but unable to convey any feeling, except at its roots.

In *Untitled #88 (half life)* the model is seen from the back, her long hair cascading over her shoulder, concealing all but the buttons on her silk blouse, and a glimpse of the capped sleeve (fig. 2.26). An interior lit by chandeliers stretches out in front of her, with the camera seeming to be positioned directly besides her. The colour of her hair tones with the dark wood of the doorway and furniture, whilst the pinky yellow of her blouse echoes the lighting with its soft yellow hue. In *Untitled #97 (half life)* the model leans forward,

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[101] Gaskell, in conversation with the author.

her face covered and shadowed by her hair, framed by a large ornate glass ceiling (fig. 2.27). Rather than

the doubling and splitting of identity that is created in Gaskell's other series by the use of multiple models,

in *half life* it is as if the architecture itself is providing the echoes and mirroring. The shadow of the

chandelier is placed above a doorway, dark against the cream walls of the room. It is as if by searching for

the other presences in the rooms, the shadows, entrances, doorways and staircases form their own

vocabulary of implied viewers, and doubled identities. In *half life*, the model's hair and shadows take on a

life of their own, just as the ghostly presences in *Rebecca* and "The Turn of the Screw" appear to be

independent of the heroines, but are partially resolved as being evoked by the heroines themselves.

Conclusion: Down the rabbit hole

In considering Gaskell's photography, there is the temptation to get taken down the many paths that are

presented by her source material. Within any one story, there are different versions, different authors,

different mediums. In presenting this material Gaskell offers the viewer clues through which to enter her

images, but also offers them up as ruses and riddles, as the links between her source material and the

finished photographs are often opaque, bringing up more questions than they answer. The biggest clue

that Gaskell leaves in this long list of further reading is the attention that should be paid to the formal

construction of the narratives that seduce her, with the unreliable narrator leading the reader everywhere

except for the truth, and the format of the story within a story foregrounding the artificiality of even the

most realist text. In her melding of the visual style of the 1970s horror movie, with its exploration of

suburbia as a containing the dark unconscious of the "American dream", and the gothic novel, with its

literary feints and the use of 'realist' modes to convey the story, from the letter to the fireside tale, Gaskell

points to the necessity of the viewer being consciously involved in the pretence that is the narrative, whilst

simultaneously being seduced by it. Her models perform abstracted gestures that seem as if they should

join up to form a coherent whole, but attempts to unify the images too closely always results in an excess

of signification. The gaps within the narrative of Gaskell's practice concern the 'real' details of the work,

from the names of the models to the actual site of the photographs to the instructions given to the models by the artist. In the literature on *half life* we learn that the model was a Kate Spade employee from New York called Julie Piechowsky, and the six locations that were used to create the seemingly singular interior; for *wonder* we are told the twins are girls that Gaskell knew from her hometown, with the forest setting for a number of the works apparently being in Iowa, where Gaskell grew up.[102] Next to the huge amount of literary and filmic references given for the works, these details are very sparse, and Gaskell herself does not like to talk about her models, preferring to talk instead about the conceptual framework behind the different series. It seems important that both Gaskell and her models remain elusive to the viewer, so that any personal signification does not affect the glossy surface of the photographs. This is held in tension with the presentation of the images as performances and interactions between artist and model, with the construction of the images allowed to disrupt the narrative fantasy, in a similar manner to the fictions within a fiction used in Gaskell's source material.

The adolescent girls who Gaskell uses to present her narratives are emptied out of individuality, with their performances evoking an interaction with the viewer that is both distanced and emotionally charged. The engagement with the models is created through the use of evocative camera angles and choreographed colour schemes, from the costumes to the setting to the lighting. In this way, Gaskell's photographs offer the viewer a similar experience to that of Bellmer's photographs of his dolls, in which their artificiality is explicit, whilst at the same time elided in the fantasies of animation that are presented. Here the performative crosses over with the performance, so that Gaskell's models or Bellmer's doll becomes an enticing coquette because they/it are performing the identity of an enticing coquette. My foregrounding of the seductive performance here is not accidental, for one of the unspoken precedents for Gaskell's work is the pornographic photograph, with its combination of complicit fantasy and 'documentary' presentation. For the seduction to work, the photograph has to convince the viewer that what is being viewed is at some level presented for his/her pleasure, and that the model is performing for that reason. The structure requires an identification between the performed scene and the viewer in a way that accepts that this is a

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[102] See Hay, "Photographs on a Wall, Doors to a Haunted Mansion"; Squiers, "Anna in Wonderland" and Robertson, "Quest for Alice".

fantasy but is also a reality that can be experienced. In a similar way the surrealists used the figure of the *femme-enfant* as a site onto which they could project an identity that was both magical, mythic and titillating, with merging of the woman and child providing a safe, passive screen onto which to project their anti-authoritarian fantasies. In Bellmer's version, the doll becomes literally a screen, an alienated site of identification that is manipulated by the artist, who at the same time is caught up in the fantasy that he creates. Bellmer's photographs differ from Gaskell's not only in the use of a doll rather than people, but also his presentation of the images in small book format, so that the experience of viewing them was mainly a private experience – somewhere between a sacred artefact and a pornographic text that has to be kept hidden. Gaskell's large-scale prints operate in a reverse manner – whereas Bellmer's work was seen privately, the narrative between the image constructed in the viewer's head – Gaskell's images are installed in the gallery space to evoke the mental space of fitting together the different images to construct an imaginary, fragmented narrative. The viewer has to physically relate to the work, with the changes in scale between the different prints and the different heights at which the photographs are hung creating a correspondence with the performance of both the models and the movement of the artist with the camera (fig. 2.28).

This physical movement around and within the images provides a clue to the use of the models' bodies in the photographs as generating their own subtexts. The re-symbolisation of the models' bodies allows Gaskell to explore alternative narratives within her source material that focus on the doubling and merging of identities and identifications, with the unreliability of the texts being reflected in the malleability of the models', photographers and viewers' interaction and identifications. Here the female body appears as one that is sexualised not around the Freudian schema of the phallus, but of an oscillating set of objects which appear as aggressive, sexual, maternal and child-like. Just as the adolescent girl is used as a site that signifies a state between child and adult, a site of uncertainty and excess that is not limited to a nostalgic identification, but appears as a wider rebellion against conventional sexuality and identity, Gaskell's coding of her model's bodies slips between conventional and idiosyncratic representations. The models' hair, legs and tights are set against the orifices of the mouth, blouse and skirt, so that bodies and clothes are used in tandem to effect this disruptive symbolic system. The models are coded within the environments they are

photographed in, so that the hand of the photographer and the cultural significations that are being alluded to are kept in the forefront of the viewer's mind. Doorways stand in for the dark recesses of the model's skirts, shadows stand in for the long strands of hair and hands, the lighting matches clothes to walls, the trees against the sky echo manes of hair falling across faces and down shoulders. The passivity of the young girl is set against the fantasies of the disruptive sexual adolescent, with the interaction between the models and the photographer acting out an all-female dynamic that merges friendship and play with envy, sexuality, maternal enactments, murderous impulses and unruly female bodies. Just as the hysteric has been used as a symbol both of female instability and disruption, when in reality representations of the hysteric have been heavily coded by a history of societal control and anxiety around the supposed subversive potential of sexualised women, Gaskell's photographs oscillate between a fantasy that is performed to seduce the viewer and a documentation of the symbolic representations that she constructs through the performance of her models. The hysteria that is presented in Gaskell's images is one that is informed by filmic, literary and scientific references, enacted not to present a scheme or structure of desire or identity, but to implode the chain of signification and send the viewer into a series of fictions within fictions, using the seductive indexicality of the photograph and the fantastical structures of the fairytale and horror story to compel the viewer to identify with the performances presented.

Baby butches and reluctant Lolitas: nostalgia and desire in the work of Collier Schorr
and Hellen van Meene

> Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul. Lo-lee-ta: the tip of the tongue taking a trip
>
> of three steps down the palate to tap, at three, on the teeth. Lo. Lee. Ta.[1]

These are the opening words of Vladimir Nabokov's novel: a poetic invocation of the subject of the

narrator's obsession. Here Lolita can be seen to be a construction of the narrator, to be broken down and

put back together in ever more erotic combinations. This novel is not told through the eyes of Lolita at any

point, instead she is a site of fantasy into which Humbert Humbert pours the entirety of his nostalgic

memories of his adolescent love affair and his inability to live with a woman who does not come up to his

fantasised heights of perfection. Whilst the adolescent girl is the centre of the erotic narrative, her agency

within the novel is subsumed within the first person narrative of Humbert Humbert. The focus of the novel

is not simply the character of Lolita, but the way in which she is presented for the reader, as explained in

the text that prefaces this onomatopoeic introduction. A fictionalised editor of the manuscript, John Ray Jr,

PhD, is presented as the doctor who diagnoses the complaints held within the patient's case history –

indeed he says "As a case history, 'Lolita' will become, no doubt, a classic in psychiatric circles."[2] Humbert

Humbert is framed as a pathological pervert, a specimen of abnormal desires. Nabokov plays with the

viewer's expectations by framing his novel as fact, as the memoir of a truly perverted character. The

viewer is asked to take up the position of moralising psychologist, before being plunged head long into the

purple prose of Humbert Humbert, whose fantasies are persuasively and self-consciously articulated. This

chapter will consider the way in which Hellen van Meene and Collier Schorr frame their photographic

portraits as an awkward, performative act between photographer, model and viewer, similar to the way

that the relationships of reader to Humbert Humbert, Nabokov, John Ray Jr, PhD, and finally Lolita herself,

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[1] Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, (1959), London: Penguin, 1980, p. 9.
[2] Ibid., p. 7.

are presented as a set of imaginative identifications that are complicated by the layers of fictional distance and fantasy. Just as the photographic space and repetition in the work of Schorr and van Meene breaks down the engagement with their models as one of individual subjectivities, so the narrative presented by Nabokov questions the viewer's expectations of how to identify with his fictional characters, and the impossibility of maintaining a distanced, scientific relationship to the text, as in the parodic introduction of John Ray Jr.

In the portraits of Collier Schorr and Hellen van Meene a fantasy of adolescence is explored, with the young men and women who populate their images shot in warm light, mostly outdoors, in seductive and disturbing poses and costume. I will be considering a small section of both of these photographers' work, paying particular attention to their relationship with their models, and the interaction between nostalgia, desire and melancholy in their images. Whilst their images can be seen to draw on the voyeuristic iconography of the fashion photograph and pornography, I want to show how both these artists complicate this narrative of desire by inserting an identification with the models that activates a nostalgic relationship with the images that undercuts or queers the objectifying gaze. It is in this nostalgic, desiring viewing position that the use of the adolescent becomes significant, as a cultural site of longing, and of an idealised state of being. As Philippe Ariès has suggested "the twentieth century recognises itself in its adolescents."[3] The evocation of Lolita in my title points to the mediated position of the desired adolescent woman, seen in the novel by Nabokov only through the eyes and words of the infamous Humbert Humbert, unlike the impersonation of the fictional Alice by Lewis Carroll as discussed in chapter two. A construction of adult male fantasy, the character of Lolita is a combination of culturally dangerous paedophilic desire and an extension of culturally ordained heterosexual voyeurism, with the ultimate passive object of desire being situated in the just legal female adolescent. Van Meene's portraits play with this boundary, complicating it by the appropriation of this structure by the young female photographer, who refers to her models as "simply material", or as convenient "objects". Collier Schorr situates herself and her

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[3] Philippe, Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, Robert Baldick trans., London: Pimlico, 1996, p. 29: "It is as if, to every period of history, there corresponded a priviledged age and a particular division of human life: 'youth' is the priviledged age of the seventeenth century, childhood of the nineteenth century, adolescence of the twentieth." Originally published in French as *L'Enfant et la familiale sous l'ancien regime*, Paris: Librairie Plon, 1960.

models according to a slightly different dynamic, explaining how the young men and women in her work function in part as alter-egos, but are also part of a larger project of realising an alternative adolescence. Talking about her work she says:

> One of the roots of my work was that I always wanted to steal into my brother's life. I always saw myself as his older brother, but I was his sister and I wanted to do the things that he got to do but didn't seem to want to do as much. I think I've tried to recreate those things… I'm creating a boy's world from the emotional centre of a woman.[4]

Central to my reading of this work will be a focus on *identifications* rather than *identity*, arguing that the viewer is positioned in such a way that a complex of identifications are activated within these photographic portraits, rather than the images presenting a fixed identity – either of the photographer or the model. Rather than the traditional definition of a voyeuristic gaze as a detached, controlling male subject looking at a passive female object, the identifications in these images encourage an oscillation between voyeuristic desire and nostalgic identification, so that the viewer has to negotiate a series of queered positions in which the adult female photographer constructs seductive images of the teenage female subject. Returning to the frontal poses of the photographic portrait as discussed in chapter one, the identifications enacted in the work of van Meene and Schorr operate through a different engagement with the performance space of the photograph than the narrative loops and fragments in much of Gaskell's work, although issues of doubling and repetition link the visual strategies employed. To explore how these identifications are inscribed in these contemporary portraits, earlier examples of photographic portraiture that depict the sexualised adolescent will be considered, alongside examples from the history of documentary photography and fashion photography, widening the dialogue around the photographic portrait to spaces outside of the studio.

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[4] Collier Schorr, quoted in "Collier Schorr", Susan Sollins, *Art: 21 Art in the Twenty-First Century*, vol. 2, Marybeth Sollins ed., New York: Harry N Abrams, 2003, p. 98.

Emotional attachments: identification, narcissism and nostalgia

In her book on the subject of identification, *Identification Papers*, Diana Fuss explains the relationship between identification and identity in a way that is useful for my discussion:

> Identification inhabits, organises, instantiates identity. It operates as a mark of self-difference, opening up a space for the self to relate to itself as a self, a self that is perpetually other. Identification, understood… as the play of difference and similitude in self-other relations, does not strictly speaking, stand against identity but structurally aids and abets it.[5]

Fuss explores identification as "an embarrassingly ordinary process, a routine, habitual compensation for the everyday loss of our love-objects."[6] Central to the idea of identification is that it is an ongoing process, one that is never resolved, so that the notion of a stable identity is only ever a fiction. This attention to the disruptions and shifts that are caused by identification provides a way into the question of female spectatorship that goes beyond the polarised choices as explained by Mary Ann Doane: "… the female spectator is given two options: the masochism of over-identification or the narcissism entailed in becoming one's own object of desire."[7] I want to consider how nostalgia and narcissism operate within the portraits of Schorr and van Meene in ways that allow the viewer to construct spectator positions and identifications that are not defined by this binary. I will be looking primarily at two models who re-appear in Schorr's and van Meene's photography: Karin and Barbara. Through these portraits, I want to consider the issues of recreating an alternative adolescence, a nostalgic fantasy that is shot through with the voyeuristic discourse of the teenage girl as Lolita, queered through the desiring gaze of the female photographer for the female model, and the narrative of melancholia that can be read in many of the images.[8]

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[5] Diana Fuss, *Identification Papers*, New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 2.
[6] Ibid., p. 1.
[7] Mary Ann Doane, *Femme Fatales: Feminism, Film, Psychoanalysis*, London: Routledge, 1991, p. 32.
[8] Fuss points to the fissures in the Freudian schema which opposes desire and identification, pointing to ways in which the ways in which identification can queered: "Even Freud is unable to keep desire and identification completely straight. In "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917) Freud defines identification as a form of desire, "a preliminary stage of object-choice… the first way." More recently, Borsch-Jacobsen has described desire as a type of identification: "desire is precisely a *desire to be a subject*."" *Identification Papers*, p. 12, quoting Mikkel Borsch-Jacobsen from his book *The emotional tie: psychoanalysis, mimesis, and affect*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993, p. 24.

First, a brief background to Schorr's and van Meene's work. Both artists have been taking photographs since the mid-1990s. Schorr is a New York based artist who first worked in mixed media in the 1980s and 90s before turning to photography. Her project since the mid-1990s has been the presentation of photographic portraits that work through the different interfaces of photographic genres, from documentary, studio portraiture, fashion and pornography. Hellen van Meene is a younger artist, based in the Netherlands in her hometown of Alkmaar. She is now in her early 30s, and has worked exclusively in photography since the beginning of her career, when she was only a little older than the models she was photographing. Van Meene's untitled photographs have almost exclusively featured adolescent girls, with her work as a whole forming a series that examines the construction of femininity in adolescence. She composes images that are very beautiful, full of details that at first appear to be incidental, but when read across her work as a whole, form a vocabulary that complicates initial readings. A similarity between the photographers is the way in which they choose their models from friends and acquaintances. Although Schorr is based in New York, she primarily takes photographs in Germany, using the family of her girlfriend as her main pool of adolescent models. Van Meene uses models from her hometown in the Netherlands, although in recent years she has taken commissions in other cities, such as her Japan series, taken in Tokyo. In this chapter, the images discussed will be taken from the period 1995-1999, when the adolescent female model was a central motif in both of the photographers' work.

To set the scene, two images by Schorr and van Meene provide an introduction into some of the ways in which their photographic strategies overlap and then split apart. In both of these portraits, the models' shirts are a central aspect of the composition – the Schorr photograph is titled *Two Shirts*, from 1998 (fig. 3.1). The importance of clothing is something that both artists explore as a way into the difficult construction of identity that is enacted in their images. In van Meene's image, *Untitled*, 1998, Barbara's shirt appears to be wet, sticking to her body and revealing her breasts underneath the thin fabric (fig. 3.2). In Schorr's image, Karin wears her girlfriend's much smaller shirt over her own, the fabric rucking up around her arms. In both photographs, the shirts operate to focus the viewer's attention on the models' bodies, and the way their costumes code their presentation for the camera. In van Meene's image, the device of the wet shirt to reveal the flesh underneath is disrupted by the awkward pose of Barbara's arms

– held out by her sides as if she is waiting for her shirt to dry, or as a gesture of acceptance of the viewer's gaze. In Schorr's image, the sultry stare of Karin brings out the humour and eroticism of the image – her butch body is revealed by the layering of costume, just as Barbara's body is revealed by the wet cloth. Schorr has said about the image: "Karin was wearing an American army shirt and she made a joke of trying on Michelle's little shirt on top. To me it was an amazing image, because she was trying to fit into a girl's shirt and the layering was a perfect metaphor for trans identification."[9] In her book *Female Masculinity*, Judith Halberstam argues for a variety of butch and transgender identities that do not rely on a negative construction of female masculinity as somehow imitating heterosexuality or representing a mistaken masculine identification that is somehow conservative.[10] Instead, Halberstam argues for what Schorr's photographs seem to enact visually, for a flexible construction of gender identification that incorporates a set of terms around masculinity that are not linked to biological sex or normative definitions of masculinity. In the figure of Karin, Schorr constructs an idealised baby butch who is both masculine and vulnerable, confrontational and enticing, with her adolescence providing a way into her posturing that allows the viewer to read her as both a radically queer identity and as a continuation of the traditionally nostalgic figure of the tomboy or androgynous boy. Through a nostalgic identification for the romance and desire performed by Karin, a way into a queer set of identities is encouraged and framed for the viewer. This is echoed in a different register in van Meene's image, where the awkwardness of the pose and the tactile wetness of the cloth encourages an identification with the way the model feels as she stands there, the gaze of the camera turned on her body.

In his book *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia*, Fred Davis explains the etymology of the term:

> Nostalgia is from the Greek *nostros*, to return home, and *algia*, a painful condition – thus, a
> painful yearning to return home. Coined by the Swiss physician Johannes Hofer in the late
> seventeenth century, the term was meant to designate a familiar, if not especially frequent,

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[9] Collier Schorr, email interview with the author, December 2004. Another article quotes Schorr as saying her earlier appropriation work revolved around "the notion of a secondary adolescence to replace a closeted primary one." Mira Schor, "Contemporary Feminism: Art Practice, Theory and Activism – an Intergenerational Perspective", *Art Journal*, vol. 58, no. 4, Winter 1999, pp. 8-29, p. 26.
[10] Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998.

condition of extreme homesickness among Swiss mercenaries fighting far from their native land."[11]

During the twentieth century, the term shed its relationship to home, referring more to a homesickness for the past. Davis explores how: "[w]hile the nostalgic reaction can feed on any *prior* period in life, in Western society it is adolescence, and for the privileged classes early adulthood as well, that affords nostalgia its most sumptuous banquets."[12] Whilst Davis does not go beyond cliché in his summation of adolescence as the most important site of nostalgia, his comment does provide a way into the temporal dynamic that is set up in Schorr's and van Meene's photographs. The photographs are a combination of the structures of self-portraiture, through the use of the models to stand in for an aspect of the self – the nostalgic and narcissistic identifications that are activated within the photographic space – and the structures of the voyeuristic image, in which the usually female object of desire is emptied of subjectivity in order to be consumed by the spectator. This combination produces a queering of the traditional modes of spectatorship, producing a homoerotic engagement between the viewer (identifying as both the photographer and model), as well as keeping this engagement at a distance through the doubling or spectralising of the photographic encounter. By redeploying the voyeuristic structure so that the relationship is between the older woman artist and the younger woman model, rather than older man and younger woman, narcissistic and nostalgic identifications can more easily take place, whilst both artists continue to highlight the eroticised, sometimes sadistic engagement of the photographer with model, and the ways in which the model's subjectivity is emptied and flattened. Whilst nostalgia normally has a conservative quality – trying to return things to "how they used to be", in these photographs I would argue that the nostalgia provides a barrier to the images being read as unquestioningly narcissistic, as the generational gap between photographer and model imposes a power dynamic that is more easily read through a voyeuristic mode.

Narcissism is also employed in these images in a way that is disruptive rather than reactionary, with the intimacy between photographer and model allowed through this identification. I will be exploring the

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[11] Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia*, New York: The Free Press, p. 1.
[12] Ibid., pp. 56-57.

dynamic of narcissism in greater detail later in this chapter, but for the moment, I want to briefly consider

Judith Butler's comments on narcissism in relation to embodying terms that define identity, as a way of

undermining them. In *The Psychic Life of Power*, her discussion can be seen as a way of re-considering

performativity:

> Called by an injurious name, I come into social being, and because I have a certain inevitable
>
> attachment to my existence, because a certain narcissism takes hold of any term that confers
>
> existence, I am led to embrace the terms that injure me because they constitute me socially.… As
>
> a further paradox, then, only by occupying – being occupied by – that injurious term can I resist
>
> and oppose it, recasting the power that constitutes me as the power I oppose.[13]

Here narcissism is seen as mode of self-preservation, a way of reworking reality by inhabiting what at first

appears to be defining identity negatively. By returning to the supposedly simplistic narcissistic

engagement of the female photographer photographing the female model, over and over again, I will

argue that both photographers utilise narcissism and nostalgia together to provide a multiple set of

identifications within each image.

Karlheinz Weinberger and EJ Bellocq: personalised portraits

Before exploring the issues of narcissism and nostalgia in more detail, I will first consider the ways in

which subcultural portraiture allows unconventional identities to be expressed through costume and pose.

As Paul Willis has explored in relation to motor-bike groups: "… certain styles and activities within a

minority culture, far from being meaningless or random, may in fact perform something like the same

expressive function that language does in the more familiar (to the middle classes) culture."[14] Both

Schorr's and van Meene's photographic styles work within a history of fashion photography, with the

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[13] Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997, p. 104. This comment comes after a discussion of agency within Foucault, exploring how the idea of a "reverse discourse" can only be articulated by a consideration of the psyche in combination with Foucault's construction of the subject: "The question of a suppressed psychoanalysis in Foucault – raised by Foucault himself in the reference to a "cultural unconscious"… might be raised more precisely as the problem of locating or accounting for resistance." p. 87.

[14] Paul E Willis, "The Expressive Style of a Motor-Bike Culture", in *The Body as a Medium of Expression*, Jonathan Benthall and Ted Polhemus eds., London: Penguin, 1975, pp. 233-252, p. 234.

seductive colours and compositions recalling that of the magazine spread. The fashion photography they

reference can be traced to a specific lineage that draws on a documentary style in the capturing of

subcultural modes of dress and expression, epitomised in recent history by the *i-D* parade of street

photographs from the early 1980s, in which people were stopped in the street and photographed. Central

to these images is the appropriation of a flattened photographic space that draws on both the studio

portrait and the classificatory photograph from criminal and medical archives. In a spread of photographs

from an early issue of the *i-D*, c 1981-1984, the shallow photographic space focuses the viewer's attention

on the outfit of the model, with both the body and the costume of the model photographed for the explicit

purpose of being checked out by the viewer/reader (fig. 3.3). This is coupled with the identifications that

are activated by the fashion photograph, in as much as these images are meant to give the viewer a

potential self to identify with, and aspire to. The documentary style of the *i-D* fashion photograph crosses

over from fashion to the collector of images, the obsessive archive of a particular type of person, or

community, with obvious links to the Boston school of photographers such as Nan Goldin, or the early

work of Larry Clark. Often, the rise of a documentary style of photography in fashion is dated as starting in

the 1990s, with spreads such as Corrine Day's 1990 photographs of Kate Moss in *Vogue*, and the work of

photographer's such as Wolfgang Tillman and Juergen Teller dominating the style magazines such as

Dazed and Confused, *The Face*, *i-D* and *Purple*. However, these photographers were drawing on a trend

that was established during the 1980s, paralleling the development of the style magazines in which they

first found their home.[15] Whilst the early images of people on the street do not have the seductive quality

of later fashion imagery, the structural engagement between photographer, model and viewer are mapped

out in these images. In an example of a spread from the mid-1980s, by Ellen von Unwerth, the way a

documentary style has allowed the construction of a faked intimacy between the model and the

photographer can be seen (fig. 3.4). [16] This spread, which features a boyish looking girl, standing in the

street, about to go to bed, utilises the same fragmented narrative style employed by Schorr and van

Meene, with the link between the images being the performance staged between model and

photographer, rather than telling a coherent 'story'. Freed from the confines of the magazine's six or eight

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[15] For a concise critique of this historical amnesia, see Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Dressing Down", *Artforum*, May
2004, pp. 193-196, on the MOMA New York exhibition *Fashioning Fiction in Photography since 1990*, 2004.
[16] Ellen von Unwerth, *The Face*, no. 66, October 1985, pp. 98-99.

pages, Schorr's and van Meene's series of photographs multiply with a variety of locations, costumes and models that take apart the fantasy of intimacy whilst maintaining the seductive coding of the encounter staged for the viewer.

A precursor to this work that helps to explore the ambiguous relationship between model and photographer found in Schorr's and van Meene's work is that of Karlheinz Weinberger, a Swiss photographer who was also interested in documenting the style and eroticism of the adolescent.[17] Weinberger was an amateur photographer who begin his career in the late 1950s taking photographs for the Zurich-based gay magazine *Der Kreis* (The Circle), as well as being the unofficial 'court photographer' for the *Der Kreis* social club, taking photographs at the many balls and parties.[18] In two examples of portraits from this era, there is a playful posing for the photographer and a complicity in the knowledge that these images are being taken to be examined and admired by a small group of peers, in a similar way to the early *i-D* portraits (fig. 3.5). In 1958 he became fascinated with the coverage of rebellious teenagers – gangs of adolescents who modelled themselves on American idols such as Marlon Brando in *The Wild Ones*, or James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*. At this time Weinberger was 37 years old, and working in a warehouse. To get his models, he cruised a young man in the street and asked him to his house to take his photograph – showing how narratives of desire and documentation were intertwined in his photography, from the initial contact to his eroticised presentation of his models. In two examples, one featuring a full length portrait and one a close-up of a model's crotch and elaborately painted belt buckle, Weinberger's ability to make eroticised documentary images of the rebellious youth in the 1950s and 1960s can be seen to share a number of characteristics with Schorr and van Meene (fig. 3.6). Weinberger's images often concentrate on a homoerotic engagement with the rather effeminate young

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[17] For a history of Karlheinz Weinberger's photography, see *Karlheinz Weinberger Photos 1954-1995*, Ulrich Binder and Pietro Mattioli eds., Zurich: Museum für gestaltung and Andreas Züst Verlag, 2000.

[18] Weinberger's photographs for *Der Kreis* were published under the pseudonym *Jim*. His photographs for the magazine were mainly of bodybuilders, or provocative portraits of attractive young men that implied some kind of pick up narrative. The conventions of erotic photography learnt through these photographs were to be developed in his photographs of the young rebels he befriended a few years later: "In his images of men in quotidian environments – at a gas station, in a parking lot, on an attic, on a sidewalk of a thoroughfare – Weinberger discovered an approach all of his own. The photographs seem to be traces of actual erotic encounters in all of their immediacy. Their documentary appearance is reinforced by the fact that it remains unclear whether the model followed the directions of the photographer or chose his pose himself. This essential ambiguity sexually charges the suggested relation between photographer and model." Martin Jäggi, "Chasing Weinberger", *Karlheinz Weinberger Photos 1954-1995*, p. 35.

men that he befriended, focusing on details of the costume of these 'rebels' in a way that takes apart the machismo and replaces it with a desiring gaze that appears to mould the models to suit the photographer's fantasies. These groups of adolescent men and women used Weinberger's apartment as a place to hang out, allowing Weinberger to take their photographs in his makeshift studio and out and about in the streets. Unlike photographers such as Clark and Goldin, Weinberger was not part of the groups he photographed, rather they were characters that fascinated him and who he made friends with so as to take their photographs. Weinberger's focus on the model's dress underlines his interest in their construction of identity and sexuality in a similar way to the images of Schorr and van Meene. With the makeshift background often stopping short of the photographic frame, revealing the domestic interior in which the photographs were taken, the focus of these images is concentrated on the model, as if the rest of the photograph is superfluous to the postures and mannerisms being performed in the confines of Weinberger's living room. The lamps that appear in the foreground of these images direct the viewer's gaze into the photograph, forming sight lines that echo those of the camera, heightening the fetishistic engagement with these young men's bodies. In another pair of images, a model is posed against a wall in a bedroom, the white backdrop dispensed with, so that he seems to have simply appeared in the room, a fantasy figure in the middle of a domestic scene, the image of James Dean on his belt echoing with the framed celebrity portraits on Weinberger's desk (fig. 3.7a). In the second image, a different boy is shot at closer range, adopting a pose that appears to echo his identification with his idol, Elvis, whose image hangs around his neck, drawing attention to his open shirt and hairless chest – at odds with the swagger of his posture (fig. 3.7b). The two images take part in a fragmented sequence, a fantasy of seduction with the object of lust changing with each frame. Disrupting this are the gaps within these performances, the girlishness of the second model's full lips and drooping eyes undermining the masculinity of his pose. Rather than the teenager being a cohesive symbol, Weinberger's models provide a locus of performances and costumes that construct an eroticised and potentially queer identity and set of identifications. Although Weinberger's models were not necessarily gay, he photographs them in a way to reveal their potential queerness for the viewer, layering their performance of rebellious masculinity with what may or may not be an unintentional homoeroticism. Although Weinberger also took photographs of adolescent women, it was in his pictures of young men that the full force of his eroticising gaze can be seen (fig. 3.8). Quoting from

his early career as a photographer of his own gay subculture, Weinberger makes the viewer aware of the projections of the photographer onto his model, a collaboration that is part nostalgic fantasy for these less than perfect rebel boys, and part erotic framing of their gaudily decorated bodies.

Retreating further back into the history of photography, the domestic interiors and unconcealed backdrops in Weinberger's portraits can be seen in the famous Storyville portraits of EJ Bellocq. Taken around 1912, what is interesting about these works is that they also use the same devices of creating a shallow space between the photographer and model, with the informality of the setting emphasised by the use of obvious backdrops or domestic interiors (fig. 3.9). Whilst in the work of Schorr and van Meene the backdrops are not rolls of paper or sheets, their use of barriers just behind their models quotes this close engagement that can be found in this history of the amateur photographic portrait as well as the studio portrait, as discussed in chapter one. Bellocq's portraits operate on the edge of the intimate subcultural portrait and the objectifying pornographic image – just as the work of Weinberger does – but with female subjects rather than male. In Bellocq's photographs, the queering that takes place in his image is not a presentation of a potentially queer model, but in disruption of the traditional voyeuristic engagement between male photographer and female model, so that desire is overlaid with identification. The prostitutes shown in the Storyville portraits appear to be in relaxed, often humorous poses, contrasting the blanking out of the model's identity that is found in most conventional pornography. In a number of the portraits, the models have been literally erased from the photographic plate, with their faces scratched out. Who did this it is not clear, but many commentators suspect Bellocq's brother. The uncanny refusal of subjectivity that this scratching enacts is made uncertain in one image, with the scratching not quite matching up with the model's face (fig. 3.10a). The almost decapitated naked body of the model contrasts with the conventional portraits seen on the wall behind her – perhaps Bellocq's commentary on the history of images that he was contributing to. In many of his images conventional portraits of women are shown in the background, from the straightforward studio shot to soft glamour images. In a few cases, these walls of photographs form the subject of the photograph, strengthening the assertion that Bellocq was making his photographs in dialogue with this already codified vocabulary of photographic portraits (fig. 3.10b). These commercial images are held in tension with his own compositions, which implicate the viewer in the close relationship

and voyeuristic compulsion that seems to be signified by the photographer's compositions and repetitive images. This device can also be seen in the portrait by Weinberger in which the model's James Dean belt buckle visually echoes the portraits on the desk next to him, contextualising his pose within a vocabulary of the rebellious young man, and highlighting the disjuncture between this commercial fantasy and the performance being photographed. The young women photographed by Bellocq, although not all teenagers, operate in a similar way of providing both sites of identification and desire for the viewer as do van Meene's modern day Lolitas and Schorr's baby butches and androgynous boys. A structural similarity in all these photographer's work is the use of the shallow photographic space and the importance of incidental props, scenery and costume that activate an identification with the model. Returning to the partially scratched image by Bellocq, the naked body of the model contrasts with the prim looking high heels. Like the two shirts worn by Schorr's model Karin, these shoes focus the viewer's attention on how the model feels – the contrast of naked body and confined feet, or the rucking of fabric under the arms. These small moments are highlighted again and again as a way of imaginatively entering into these photographic engagements beyond the voyeuristic gaze into the camera's lens.

This imaginative identification with the model as a trope that crosses over the work of Bellocq, Weinberger, Schorr and van Meene can be illustrated by comparing two examples – a portrait of Barbara by van Meene and a nude by Bellocq (fig. 3.11a and b). In the portrait of Barbara, the viewer is made aware of the physicality and experience of Barbara by the awkward position she is put in – her top is around both her body and the tree she stands by. Quoting from the stands and props used in early photography to hold the models still for the long exposures, this image illustrates van Meene's interest in the limpness of her model's poses, which I will be exploring in more depth later in this chapter. In the image by Bellocq, a similar identification with the model is activated by the use of the odd position and domestic interior. The model's knee rests on the chair that is in much sharper focus than the model herself. The heavily patterned wallpaper behind her forms a backdrop that tones in with the carving on the chair, and the patterned floor covering, making the model's body become simply one decorative element within the interior scheme. The model's long hair and jewellery focus attention on the nakedness of her body – so that rather than appearing to be a naturally occuring image – as in a traditionally voyeuristic

scene – her nakedness is articulated as being solely for the purpose of the photograph, and therefore for the photographer. Just as the pose of Barbara indicates van Meene's controlling presence in the portrait, here the model's pose and costume is also used as a way to locate the viewer in this ambiguous voyeuristic engagement. Returning to the figure of Lolita, in Nabokov's narrative, the possession of Lolita by Humbert Humbert is for the most part of the book a fantasy. Lolita lives out her life without her interior world affecting the infatuated narrator. Van Meene, when explaining her intentions in taking her photographs, stated:

> The photographs are not meant to be portraits, which is why they have no titles. It is not my intention to give expression to their personality or state of mind. Nor do I want to sketch a sociological image of contemporary youth or girls at the moment of puberty. I look for a certain mood in the pictures, in which the girls almost figure as actors. As a matter of fact I treat my models as objects which you can direct and guide. They are simply material for me.[19]

When van Meene describes her relationship with her models as being as if they are "simply material" she appears to be articulating a parallel interest in the way that their performances are read to the literary devices of Nabokov, rather than a presentation of series of individual subjectivities.[20] Van Meene uses an identification with the physical experience of the model to disrupt the voyeuristic narratives, whilst illustrating how voyeuristic identifications between women do not necessarily to produce a male-identified spectator position, but instead produce a series of identifications with and for the models that are based on a performative experience of both the photographer's and model's positions. In terms of a queer set of identifications, the strategies described here return to Butler's comments about embodying an "injurious term" to oppose it: what Foucault's calls a "reverse discourse". As Judith Halberstam explains, a "reverse discourse" can be described as the process when "one empowers a category that might have been used to oppress one – one transforms a debased position into a challenging presence."[21] The imaginative identification with the model activated within these images allows a combination of voyeuristic

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[19] Hellen van Meene, "Interview by Karel Schampers with Hellen van Meene", www.hellenvanmeene.com.
[20] Van Meene expanded on this notion of the model as an object, saying "My models perform in my photos. Because I ask them how to pose. But the way their expression is is something of course I cannot control. And that is a good thing otherwise there is no chemistry between me and the model. Interaction is very important!… In some work it felt as if I just shaped the body as a clay figure around the tree." Hellen van Meene, email interview with the author, 30 August 2005.
[21] Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, p. 159.

identifications with the seductive image presented alongside a nostalgic or narcissistic identification with the model as a younger self, or a fantasy of a self that could have been.

Interlude: returning home and the style of documentary photography

From the self-assured stare of Karin to the evasive sideways glance of Barbara, the differently pictured adolescent body is presented in Schorr's and van Meene's photographs as something in construction, mediated through costume, pose and attitude. The shallow photographic space that the models are posed in places the viewer in close proximity to these performances of desire and identity, emphasising that these images are the outcome of the collaboration between the photographer and model: that to create a Lolita, there has to be a Humbert Humbert watching. This photographic space quotes from a number of portrait genres: from painting, documentary photography, fashion and pornography. I want to expand the history of the documentary portrait that these works can be seen to quote from – using as a focus Collier Schorr's engagement with American documentary photography – so that their photographic vocabulary is extended beyond the specific, subcultural works of Bellocq and Weinberger.

In 2001 Schorr curated an exhibition titled *Overnight to Many Cities*, which covered photography from Walker Evans to the present day, focusing on FSA colour photography and 'straight' colour photography from the 1970s and 80s, featuring photographers such as Stephen Shore, Joel Meyerowitz, Joel Sternfeld, as well as underground figures such as Weinberger. One of Schorr's starting points for the exhibition was to propose a loose history of photography that took the focus away from the staged photography as providing the historical influences for contemporary art photography, as in contemporaneous exhibitions such as *Settings and Players*, shown at the White Cube, London in 2001. Explaining the theme of travel in the exhibition and its relationship to documentary photography, she says:

> What makes a travel picture? The fact the photographer went to a foreign place or that that place
> is foreign to the viewer?

Everything I learned in the 80s told me that only poor people could and should represent one

another. Martha Rosler's crucial Bowery (sans the alcoholics) series attested to that. The same

went for people of colour and women. Anxieties about scopophilia, co-option and fetishisation led

to important writings and projects that took apart notions of the work of documentary

photography. On the other side of the art world, however, straight photographers were beginning

to parse out their roles. Some like Joel Sternfeld and Stephen Shore (who taught at the

Kunstakademie in Dusseldorf) were pushing into suburbia, documenting something in progress

that was completely the product of white male middle class growth, with none of photography's

traditional interest in the disadvantaged and vulnerable Other. Yet, can images of suburban

sprawl have political undertones?[22]

Schorr's concept of travel in the exhibition is meant not only to include travel photographs, but also to

examine the notion of 'home', using the idea of the tourist as a way into the role of the photographer.

Schorr's focus on the idea of home also links the exhibition's theme to the notion of nostalgia, with its older

meaning of yearning for home, of homesickness. The literal travelling through places is multiplied in the

exhibition to cover travelling to different times, nationalities and identities, with Schorr commenting "I

wanted to liberate the idea of going places and being places. I think, for me, photography essentially lets

you travel someplace…. There are different subtle sections in the show, but they are all fundamentally

about landscape – there is war, and there is poverty and sexuality."[23] Although at first this linking of place

and identity might seem rather difficult to grasp, when the images in the exhibition were viewed, it became

apparent that for Schorr what was important was the role of the photographer standing outside of the

place they were photographing – whether it was the farmlands and homesteads in the FSA landscapes, or

the rosy glow of Joel Meyerowitz's portraits of adolescent girls, as in *Dominique, Soft Late Night, Good

Grey Peach Pink Top (Brooklyn Heights)*, August 4, 1981, with the position of tourist linking with a

yearning, a nostalgia for places and positions that the photographer could not inhabit, except through an

act of imaginative identification (fig. 3.12a).

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[22] Collier Schorr, statement to accompany exhibition *Overnight To Many Citites*, 303 Gallery, New York, 2001;
Photographers Gallery, London, 12 April-4 June 2002.
[23] Collier Schorr, interviewed by the author in "Travelling without Moving", *Untitled*, no. 28, Summer 2002, pp. 46-49,
p. 48.

A number of the photographers in the exhibition resonate with Schorr's own work, providing a history for

her own engagement with portraiture and documentary photography. The works in the exhibition, such as

Meyerowitz's sultry portraits, or Larry Clark's intimate, sexualised young men in his *Tulsa* series, 1971,

(fig. 3.12b) bring to mind the often-quoted comment by Walker Evans, on the subject of documentary, and

its relationship to style:

> Now, I believe, I want to go back for a minute and say that the word 'documentary' is a little
>
> misleading. It should be accompanied by the word 'style,' because a documentary photograph
>
> could be a police photograph of an accident, literally; but documentary style is what we're
>
> interested in.... This style does seem honest. It isn't always so, but it seems so.[24]

This relationship between documentary photography as quoting a history of the photograph as a

document, and the necessary appendage of the word 'style' to describe the function of a particular

photographic vocabulary, allows us into the construction of the photographs of Schorr and van Meene.

Evans's comments also highlight the complications in the use of the documentary style reflected in

Schorr's comments regarding the depiction of suburbia as potentially being political, with an ambiguity

arising from the move away from what she calls "photography's traditional interest in the disadvantaged

and vulnerable Other."[25] Schorr's and Evans's comments are by no means new thoughts on the history

and connotations of documentary photography. By the beginning of the twentieth century the idea of

documentary already had a complex stylistic and political history, one that then converses with the history

of the studio portrait, the art photograph, the fashion photograph and the amateur snapshot. In Evans and

James Agee's seminal collaboration *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, 1941, the self-conscious position of

the documentary photographer is already set up to be taken apart, with one critic explaining how "… Agee

and Evans created a kind of antidocumentary that used documentary form in order to subvert its

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[24] Walker Evans, "Walker Evans, Visiting Artist: A Transcript of his Discussion with the Students of the University of Michigan" (October 29, 1971), in Beaumont Newhall, ed., *Photography: Essays and Images*, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1980, p. 320. Evans is quoted by Leslie Katz in an almost identical statement: "Documentary? That's a very sophisticated and misleading word. And not really clear. You have to have a sophisticated ear to receive that word. The term should be *documentary style*. An example of a literal document would be a political photograph of a murder scene. You see, a document has use, whereas art is useless." Leslie Katz, "An Interview with Walker Evans" (1971), *Photography in Print* (1981), Vicki Goldberg ed., Alburquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2003, pp. 359-369, p. 364.
[25] See note 13.

premises."[26] The text by Agee, explaining the intrusion and discomfort felt by the middle-class writer examining his working-class subjects, alongside Evans's deadpan photographs, uses literary and photographic conventions that play at the edge of fact and fiction, echoing Nabokov's tactic in *Lolita* of setting up the narrative as 'real' as a way to engage the viewer and to expose their expectations and prejudices.[27] Within the history of American documentary photography, the narrative became hybridised as photographers such as Evans were absorbed into fine art institutions, with his exhibition at the New York Museum of Modern Art in 1938, along with the publication of his seminal *American Photographs*, sealing his entry into the art photography canon.[28] In his discussion of Evans, Alan Trachtenberg describes Evans's use of series and incidental details in a manner that I have already discussed in terms of the work of Weinberger and Bellocq:

> The analogy extends to what has been called the 'literariness' of Evans's clear, bright, and open pictures. With his eye for signifying detail, for the accidental revelations in juxtaposed objects, including written signs, and with his wit in laying one picture next to another, Evans set out to prove that apparently documentary photography could be as complex as a fine piece of writing, as difficult and rewarding in their demands.[29]

Trachtenberg continues in his analysis of Evans's documentary style by discussing the point of view that is established through his series of images:

> For Evans discovered – and it has the force of an invention in photograph – that the literal point of view of a photograph, where the camera stands during the making of the picture, can be so treated in an extended sequence or discourse as to become an intentional vehicle or embodiment of a cumulative point of view, a perspective of mind, of imagination, of moral judgement.[30]

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[26] T V Reed, "Unimagined Existence and the Fiction of the Real: Postmodernist Realism in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*", *Representations*, 24, Fall 1988, p. 160.

[27] James Agee's text reads in a similar way to the persuasive and deceptive narrative of Nabokov, simultaneously warning and seducing the reader: "Since it is intended, among other things, as a swindle, an insult, and a corrective, the reader will be wise to bear the nominal subject and his expectation of its proper treatment, steadily in mind." James Agee and Walker Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941), London: Peter Owen, 1965, p. xv.

[28] "Evans understood the impersonal sociology of the event: 'More than I realised it established the documentary style as art in photography. For the first time it was influential, you see. The Museum is a very influential place'." Allen Trachtenberg, "A Book Nearly Anonymous", *Reading American Photographs*, New York: Noonday Press, 1989, p. 238. Quote from Walker Evans taken from "Tape-Recorded Interview with Walker Evans, Oct. 13 1971, Interviewer: Paul Cummings", typescript, Archives of American Art, p. 34.

[29] Ibid., p. 240.

[30] Ibid., p. 250.

All of these elements form the performative engagement that is presented in the work of Schorr and van Meene, with Evans's use of seriality and identification breaking down the voyeuristic or paternalistic gaze that had been constructed in the dominant strand of social documentary, following from the depiction of the working classes by early essayists such as Jacob Riis.[31]

In his essay on "The Rhetoric of the Documentary Style", Russell Roberts discusses the legacy of Evans and states how "The change in the cultural currency of these images influenced a new generation of social documentarians including Lisette Model, Diane Arbus and Gary Winograd. Documentary's overtly critical edge was softened as a result."[32] I want to suggest that this "softening" is actually the acknowledgment of the photographer's presence and individual subjectivity within the photograph, dispelling the fantasy of the documentary photograph as an objective document of reality.[33] This highly charged relationship between photographer and model, which draws the viewer in and quotes from a documentary style, is one that both Schorr and van Meene quote from, to engage the viewer in the performances staged for and behind their cameras.

In Evans's book *American Photographs* one obvious theme was that of "Americaness", a consideration of what made a photograph American, and what made the places depicted American. Returning to Trachtenberg, he suggests "Just as dates do not matter in the flow of images in Evans's book, neither do places. In the logic of the book, all places are 'here'."[34] This merging of time and place in Trachtenberg's comment points to the similar merging of time and place in Schorr and van Meene's work, with the nostalgic identification relating to both a lost time and place. In Schorr's exhibition, this relationship was explored through the focus on travel, with landscapes exhibited alongside portraits in a manner that she

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[31] For a critical history of social documentary, including a discussion of Riis's theatrical lectures, see Maren Stange, *Symbols of Ideal Life: Social Documentary Photography in America 1890-1950*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

[32] Russell Roberts, "A Matter of Fact: The Rhetoric of Documentary 'Style'", in *Fabula*, essays by Patrick Henry and Russell Roberts, Bradford: National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, 2003, p. 16.

[33] This is a reading of the way in which documentary photography intersected with the fine art institution, and does not engage with histories of photojournalism and reportage, which maintained a rather different photographic vocabulary. I am interested here in the way that the documentary photographers who interested the fine art establishment used the 'documentary style' to create particular engagements between viewer, photographer and model.

[34] Trachtenberg, "A Book Nearly Anonymous", p. 252.

has often employed in the installation of her own work (fig. 3.13). In Schorr and van Meene's photographs, the settings that predominate are of fields, parks, gardens and domestic settings. When featured in interior spaces, van Meene's models appear to be trying to either push their way out, as in an image of Barbara pressed up against a plate glass window, or collapsing against barriers against the outside world (fig. 3.24b). Schorr concentrates on spaces of relaxation and socialising outside the home – the park, the field – just outside the domestic realm, but not yet the wilderness.[35] For Schorr, issues of national identity and location cross over with those of sexuality, with her use of the history of German Jews paralleling her interest in the merging of gendered and sexual positions:

> The work is about conflicting obsessions – twinship and opposition. It's about people who look
> the same but aren't, about boys that look like girls or girls that look like boys, or boys that look like
> athletes and aren't, or boys that look like soldiers and aren't. It's a metaphor for the Jew and the
> German – German Jews thinking they were the same as Germans and yet being so different – for
> the way in which Jews and Germans are so linked together because of the Holocaust.[36]

The idea of a 'hereness' in the photographs of Walker Evans describes the way in which the location of Schorr and van Meene's photographs are constructed so that the viewer is encouraged to imaginatively enter into the scene, providing a doubling between the actual location in which the viewer is looking at the image, and the fantasised time and place of the performance between the photographer and model. This 'hereness' can also be seen in van Meene's series of photographs taken in Tokyo in 2000. In one image, a girl stands in front of a tree, her hair caught in its branches, her eyes totally black (fig. 3.14). The use of models in a different cultural setting seems not to produce a difference of register in the models' identity – in fact what is interesting in these images is the similarity of presence to the models from van Meene's home town.[37] Rather than this appearing through the device of doubling, as in Schorr's photographs, van Meene's emptying out of the models' subjectivity allows this lack of cultural specificity. When discussing her approach to photographing her models, van Meene remarked that she could as easily be taking

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[35] For a discussion of the heterotopic spaces of Schorr's photographs see Kate Stretch Parker, *Teenage Kicks: identity, representation, and the adolescent*, unpublished MA Dissertation, Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 2002.
[36] Schorr, "Collier Schorr", *Art: 21 Art in the Twenty-First Century*, p. 104.
[37] The issue of representing models of different ethnicities is an issue that requires further discussion, especially within the context of the predominance of middle-class white models in the work that I am considering in this thesis. One way of considering van Meene's use of Japanese models would be to investigate the relationship to the fascination with orientalism in nineteenth-century Western painting and photography as another set of eroticised terms through which to present the desirable female subject.

photographs of chairs as of adolescent women.[38] This equation of her models with a piece of furniture

points to emptiness that is a consistent trope in her images – as if the models were indeed furniture or

dolls, so that time and place also become objects to rearrange, rather than fixed locations or periods. In

this image the uncanny aspect of the model's emptiness is translated quite literally in a ghostly register,

with the black eyes giving the model an appearance of being a ghost, with her hair being the most

animated aspect of the portrait, literally held in place by the strands attached to the tree. Just as nostalgia

is a concept that references not just a lost time but also a lost home, van Meene and Schorr multiply the

locations and identifications in their images to produce spaces in which fantasies of identification can take

place, troubling national identities along with those of gender, sexuality and age.

Portraits of Karin: complicating narcissism

This identification with the model through doubling can be seen in the work of Schorr in an early series of

photographs, from 1994-1995. *Horst Condrea*, 1995, shows the androgynous boy, Horst, a nephew of

Schorr's girlfriend, who is the model for this series of images (fig. 3.15). He is pictured in an idyllic

landscape setting, posed wearing only his jeans and a small amount of lipstick and eye make-up. His

uncomfortable posture echoes that of van Meene's overtly feminised models, held by the camera's gaze in

a pose that seems unfamiliar and awkward. When asked about her concentration on adolescent male

models, Schorr says "You know, people say, "How come you don't take pictures of girls?" And I say, "Well

I do, I just use boys to do them.""[39] This flexible gender signification is a reoccurring motif in Schorr's work

with Karin, as in the image *Two Shirts*. This series with Horst is linked explicitly with self-portraiture, with

Schorr herself appearing in a darkly lit black and white image, *The Last to Know What it is Like to be a*

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[38] Cited in Joanna Woodall, "At the Threshold", in *The Citibank Private Bank Photography Prize 2001*, Louise Hayward ed., London: The Photographers' Gallery, 2001, pp. 41-64; p. 57.
[39] Collier Schorr, "Personal Best", interview with Craig Garrett, *Flash Art*, vol. 37 no. 234, January-February 2004, p. 83. For a discussion of the use of the male model as a 'surrogate' for female agency and desire, focusing on lesbian representation, see Liz Kotz, "Erotics of the image", *Art Papers*, vol. 18, no. 6, November/December 1994, pp. 16-20. Kotz argues for a specific use of the male body in the work of female artists that posits an identification that is different from earlier forms of male drag, such as the Shakespearean use of young boys for female roles. In this use of the male body, it is the female artist who chooses to use the male body, often utilising a vocabulary of gay male eroticism.

Traitor, 1994, slipped into the series of images of Horst in a sleight of hand that reveals the photographer's position and troubles the objectifying gaze as Schorr comes from behind the camera to perform the fantasy of adolescent boyhood that forms the subject of the series (fig. 3.16). Here the link is made explicit between the actual adolescence of Horst, and the merging with a fantasised adolescence of the adult Schorr.

In a following series from 1995-1996 that focuses on the model Karin, Schorr moves away from making this identification with herself so obvious. However, the use of her image in the series around Horst point to a narcissistic identification with at least some of her models. Discussions of narcissism can end up enforcing conservative narratives around the depiction of women, and in the representation of queer identities, because of the Freudian construction of homosexuality and femininity as being essentially narcissistic, and therefore for Freud, immature. However, in my discussion of identifications rather than identities, the merging of narcissistic modes of desire with voyeuristic modes presents a way into undoing the normative logic of Freudian sexuality. In his essay "On Narcissism: An Introduction" Freud constructs two ways of loving:

> A person may love -
>
> 1. According to the narcissistic type:
>
> (a) what he himself is (i.e. himself),
>
> (b) what he himself was,
>
> (c) what he himself would like to be,
>
> (d) someone who was once part of himself.
>
> 2. According to the anaclitic (attachment) type:
>
> (a) the woman who feeds him,
>
> (b) the man who protects him,

and the succession of substitutes who take their place.[40]

For Freud, there is the healthy (heterosexual) kind of identification – with the same sex parent – that sublimates any erotic attachment, and turns all desire towards the parent of the opposite sex. Whilst he also acknowledged a primary narcissism present in everyone, for Freud there is an increase in narcissism for women in puberty, which he explains in terms of heterosexuality by saying "it seems evident that another person's narcissism [the woman's] has a great attraction for those who have renounced part of their own narcissism [men] and are in search of object-love".[41] He also comments that children and animals are mainly attractive due to their narcissism and "inaccessibility", linking femininity with infantilism, in need of direction. His categories of love, set out above, show how he positions identification and desire in opposition to each other, whilst within his text he acknowledges the inadequacy of this formulation. Outside of the narcissistic mode, the two models of desire are based around feelings for the paternal man or maternal woman. In terms of my analysis what is interesting here is the way that same-sex identification and desire is acknowledged but then infantilised, as a phase of immature sexuality. In Freud's construction, homosexual desire is always about love for the same (and the self), whereas heterosexual desire is about love for the (opposite sex) parent. Adding to this the linking woman with the figure of Narcissus in the history of art – gazing into the mirror, enthralled by her own image, unaware of the viewer – and the narcissistic position incorporates love of the self, homosexual desire and feminisation. The figure of Narcissus in the myth is an adolescent whose love for his own image causes his death, so that Freud's incorporation of this myth into his theories of sexuality have a moral tone in which the narcissist is doomed, unable to distinguish between himself and his (homosexual) love-object.[42] Within Freud's

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[40] Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction" (1914), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. xiv, James Strachey trans. and ed. with Anna Freud, Vintage: London, 2001, pp. 73-102; p. 90.

[41] Ibid., p. 49.

[42] Another way into this discussion of narcissism might be to consider the 'gender trouble' that has been enacted in the history of art in the evolution of the male adolescent Narcissus into the narcissistic woman gazing in the mirror, conflating the figures of Narcissus and Venus. In terms of Collier Schorr's use of androgynous adolescents of both genders, the figure of Narcissus becomes one of the ambiguously gendered adolescent, and a figure who puts subjectivity into question, as the love-object is the self and one who appears like the self. Here questions of 'sameness', when figured across the similarly styled boys and girls in Schorr's photographs subvert the stereotypical construction of same sex desire as love for the self. This subversion resonates with Juliet Mitchell's construction of laterally defined identities and relationships, in which the struggle for individuation from peers and siblings defines identities, rather than desire or aggression towards parental figures. For Mitchell this does not break down into homo- and heterosexual identities, but rather to construction of gender that is not reliant on binaries of male/female or homosexual/heterosexual: "I want to suggest that the term 'gender' (at least in the Anglo-Saxon world) has come to

formulation 'the same' is constructed along gender lines, with the imperative towards heterosexuality forced into being by the 'active' desire of the man. Any other desire or identification outside of the heterosexual matrix can be written off as narcissistic and infantile, theorised only in terms of inadequacy. The dynamic between the young model and older photographer in both Schorr's and van Meene's work parodies the narcissistic mode in the creation of an unequal interaction between two women which incorporates the four categories of narcissistic attachment: "(a) what he himself is (i.e. himself), (b) what he himself was, (c) what he himself would like to be, (d) someone who was once part of himself". At the same time, this dynamic also sends up the male mode of active desire, which Freud sees that some women can imitate:

> There are other women, again, who do not have to wait for a child in order to take the step in development from (secondary) narcissism to object-love. Before puberty they feel masculine and develop some way along masculine lines; after this trend has been cut short on their reaching female maturity, they still retain the capacity of longing for a masculine ideal...[43]

The neat categories of Freud's theories are collapsed into each other, with the identifications taking place between photographer and model quoting supposedly contradictory modes of desiring. Whilst Freud admits that some women can desire within a 'masculine' mode, the only way for this to manifest itself within 'normal' femininity is through maternity. In the images by Schorr and van Meene, the nostalgic identifications that take place with the adolescent model replace the gendered voyeurism of the male spectator and female model, so that a temporal dynamic disrupts the Freudian homo- and heterosexual paradigms. Whilst neither artist is explicitly addressing these Freudian constructions of identity, the ways in which their images interrogate traditional notions around the construction of the artist, model and viewer in portraiture and self-portraiture can be examined by reading their re-signification of identifications in tension with a Freudian economy of desire and identity.

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prominence even within psychoanalytic discourse because what is being described is not the maximal difference between mothers and fathers but the minimal difference of sibling sexual relations, which themselves are only a shade away from narcissistic economy in which the other is the self…" p. 111. Juliet Mitchell, *Siblings: Sex and Violence*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003. Thanks to Mignon Nixon for pointing out this line of enquiry. In terms of discussions around narcissism and male gay identities, see Steven Bruhm, *Reflecting Narcissus: A Queer Aesthetic*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

[43] Freud, "On Narcissism", p. 90.

In the series of Schorr's photographs featuring Karin from 1995-1996, a more ambiguous combination of identifications are produced than in the earlier Horst project, continuing the conflation of a number of identifications with and for the model, merging the narcissistic with the voyeuristic in a multiplication of the Freudian positions that ultimately force the rigidity of the definitions to collapse. Schorr has described Karin as an "Icon", explaining how she "was definitely an alter-ego, but she was also an Icon, something that didn't represent me, but represented a kind of unattainable beauty and confidence."[44] This quality of an Icon can be seen in the work of both Weinberger and Bellocq, with their admiring gaze turned on their subjects in a combination of desire and homage. Like Humbert Humbert's soliloquies on the perfection of Lolita, here we have a photographic equivalent, in which the adolescent once again becomes the site for an idealised space of projection for the viewer. Rather than the dirty old man looking at the young girl, here the desire is both for the idealised butchness of Karin and for a fantasy of a queer adolescence in which the baby butch gets the girl. Karin stands in for a female masculinity that is celebratory, confrontational and very sexy, in a similar way that Weinberger's rebellious young men are posed as if each and every one *is* James Dean. In the series which features Karin dressed in a chest binder and pants, she is photographed in the German landscape in a series of playful and aggressive poses. In *Defensive Tight End, Lindenfeld*, 1995-1996, Karin's crouch and stare is set off when seen next to another image, *In The Garden (Torso)*, 1995, in which Karin is posed in a tighter frame, and appears to be staring down at the see-through binding that constricts her breasts (fig. 3.17). The dark tree cutting off the background and the raised arms and averted gaze all make this second image more recognisable within the lexicon that van Meene uses, with the voyeuristic gaze apparently being courted by the poses of the models. Seen within the series of images, these portraits of Karin form a kind of dialogue around the representation of the sexualised adolescent female, who at some points appears to have total control of her body and the viewer's reaction, and at other times seems to fall into a romanticised contemplation that creates a fictitious voyeuristic space for the viewer. The images as a series comprise of a performance that is performed not just by Karin, but Schorr the photographer, as they collaborate on the construction of the different personas and identifications that the viewer is left to oscillate between, forming narrative links

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[44] Schorr, email interview with the author, December 2004.

in a similar way to the portraits of Weinberger, with the location and composition framing the series of boys who pose in front of his lens.

In a following series, Schorr documents Karin alongside her girlfriend Michelle. An image from this series, *South of No North*, 1995, is perhaps the most conventional portrait in the set (fig. 3.18a). What this shot demonstrates is the series' use of seductive colouring and warm light that visually appears to signify the nostalgic rosy glow of a fantasised adolescence. In an image that forms a partner to the earlier shot, Karin and Michelle are pictured in a still from Schorr's film *Tremelo Americana*, 1998-1999 (fig. 3.18b). This short film shows Karin playing the role of returning soldier, with her identity remaining ambiguously masculine throughout, as she meets and embraces Michelle. Here the homoerotic iconography of the military uniform is combined with the female masculinity of Karin's butchness, creating a queer space in which homo- and heterosexuality are collapsed into a set of vantage points, a question of reading bodies rather than strict boundaries. These double portraits offer another way into the photographs for the viewer, with the representation of the relationship between Michelle and Karin enacting a fantasy of adolescent love, offering the viewer a number of potential sites of identification. In the images in which Karin's gender is made ambiguous, the seemingly heterosexual scene is overlaid with the realisation after viewing a number of the photographs that this romance is taking place between two women. Rather than being simply an affirmative image of lesbian love, Schorr's photographs queer the viewer's expectations, revealing that rather than homo- and heterosexuality being polar opposites of each other, the potential for a whole spectrum of identifications is present at all times. Just as the narcissistic identification with her models is overlaid with nostalgia, here queer desire is pictured as straight and gay, with the viewer's assumptions and identifications activating various narratives that may or may not be borne out by close examination of the images. In these images, the echo of Judith Butler can be heard in her comments on the relationship between homo- and heterosexuality:

> Is it not possible that lesbian sexuality is a process that reinscribes the power domains that it
> resists, that it is constituted in part from the very heterosexual matrix that it seeks to displace, and
> that its specificity is to be established, not *outside* or *beyond* that reinscription or reiteration, but in
> the very modality and effects of that reinscription. In other words, the negative constructions of

lesbianism as a fake or a bad copy can be occupied and reworked to call into question the claims

of heterosexual priority.[45]

A final image from Schorr's series of photographs of Karin returns to the first series shot in the German

countryside, a photograph entitled *The Purloined Dick*, 1995 (fig. 3.19a). Paired with a portrait of Barbara,

Untitled, 1999, in which she wears a similar outfit, the ways in which the two photographers utilise their

models' bodies and costumes to different effects can be seen (fig. 3.19b). The humour of Schorr's

engagement with her model is shown through the packing of Karin's y-fronts with socks – a parody of a

masculine identity and privilege – with the flowery pants showing beneath the y-fronts operating as a

similar disturbance between gender signifiers as Karin's breasts, showing through the binding that is

meant to conceal them. The pose in which Karin, lying down on the grass, has the photographer leaning in

over her, should read as stereotypically voyeuristic, but like the title, the pose is appropriated and re-

modelled, so that Karin's slight turn of the head and cool stare challenge the viewer to objectify her. Karin

maintains her subjectivity through her pose, so that she appears to be comfortable in being both an object

of desire and a subject of identification. This use of the scantily clad model in a field is utilised in a rather

different way by van Meene than by Schorr, although the implications of clothing and pose on identity

function in a similar structural manner. Barbara's pose has her bending down, a hair braid appearing to be

weighing her body down. As in the earlier pair of images by the two artists, Barbara's gaze is averted,

contrasting with the stare of Karin. Comparing their expressions here, they share a blankness that seems

to indicate their awareness of being photographed, a visual cue to the viewer of the performance that is

being witnessed – neither model colludes with a fantasy of their photograph being taken unawares. In van

Meene's images her use of clothing is often one that indicates the hand of the artist in the construction of

the image, as well as the constrictions of femininity that are enacted. In this image, it is as if the braid is a

signifier of femininity that is literally weighing Barbara down. In what appears to be a sister image, van

Meene depicts Barbara lying down in a field, her hair caught on a barbed wire fence (fig. 3.20). Posed

within the lush greenness of the field, what is picked up in these images is the artificiality and constrictions

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[45] Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination", in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, Diana Fuss
ed., London and New York: Routledge, 1991, p. 17.

in the compositions. In this second image, the barbed wire fence provides a literal barrier, with the strand of hair held in the wire appearing to hold Barbara in position. Van Meene's compositions foreground small moments of constriction – ones which are so minimal that they would be ineffectual except for the models' apparent inertia. Rather than appearing as an erotic semi-nude, Barbara's pose and clothing in the first image, with the braid weighing her down, focuses on the effect on the model's body, compelling the viewer to relate to what it must feel like to *be* Barbara, rather than just want to desire her, recalling Bellocq's nude in her awkward high heels. Just as Humbert Humbert's fantasy of Lolita is shattered at the end of the novel when he goes to visit her, careworn and pregnant, in van Meene's images the idealised image of the adolescent girl is set alongside the awkwardness and bodiliness of the models assuming these positions. Rather than the vigour of Schorr's nostalgic engagement with Karin, van Meene explores a limpness in her models that produce a different set of identifications between the photographer, model and viewer.

Melancholy and gender identification

Hellen van Meene's models often look as if they have had the life sucked out of them, or have been posed in such a way so as to remove their own intentionality, replacing it with that of the photographer who the viewer presumes is also the composer of the scene. A number of images emphasise this lifeless quality: a girl lies with her head half-submerged in a sink of water, her eyes closed and her mouth open; another lies in a sofa, the cushions balanced precariously on top of her (fig. 3.21). In other photographs, the poses emphasise the awkward position of the model's body, as in an image in which a boy lies with his head in a metal basket, whilst in another a girl is awkwardly balanced with her leg hanging over a clothes line (fig. 3.22). Van Meene plays with the absurd in the composition of her images, with a disturbing edge given to the photographs by the lifelessness of the girls.[46] Joanna Woodall, in her discussion of van Meene's work, has remarked how the figure of melancholy seems to be quoted in her prone figures.[47] Melancholy is traditionally depicted as a woman, weighed down by her emotions. In van Meene's work, this is taken to

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[46] The male model in fig. 3.22b is one of a small number of images in which van Meene uses a feminine boy as her model.
[47] Woodall, "At the Threshold", p. 53.

an almost ridiculous level, as in these images and that of Barbara where a hair braid provides the focal

point of the weight, so it appears as if the models have wilted, their subjectivity physically vacated through

the act of taking up a pose. To think through this idea of the melancholic in terms of van Meene's models

being reluctant Lolitas, Judith Butler's construction of gender as a form of melancholy is useful.[48] Butler

makes her argument in the context of trying to understand what she calls "the cultural predicament of

living within a culture that can mourn the loss of homosexual attachment only with great difficulty."[49] She

defines melancholy within Freud's terms as an unresolved grief for a lost object, which is then

incorporated into the ego as an identification. She explores this in the context of gender by explaining:

> If the assumption of femininity or the assumption of masculinity proceeds through the
>
> accomplishment of an always tenuous heterosexuality, we might understand the force of this
>
> accomplishment as the mandating of the abandonment of homosexual attachments or, perhaps
>
> more trenchantly, the *pre-emption* of the possibility of homosexual attachment, a certain
>
> foreclosure of possibility that produces a domain of homosexuality understood as unliveable
>
> passion and ungrievable loss.[50]

Within this construction of gender, the reluctance of van Meene's models can be read as a way of

signifying a fundamental ambiguity towards the heterosexual matrix that these performances of femininity

implicate them within. This use of melancholia by Butler builds on her performative construction of gender

as a way of undoing heterosexuality and homosexuality as thought out through a binary logic.

Terry Castle draws on these ideas of repetition and resignification in her argument for the radical nature of

homospectrality in the privileging of female bonding and the queering this produces in heterosexual

narratives, as explored in chapter two.[51] In terms of van Meene's work, the assumption of the position of

the voyeuristic male-identified spectator is also an act of expropriation, which is doubled up with an

identification with the model presented – the oscillation between the presentation of the model as subject

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[48] Judith Butler, "Melancholy Gender/Refused Identification", in *Constructing Masculinity*, Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis and Simon Watney eds., New York: Routledge, 1995, pp. 20-36.

[49] Ibid., p. 22.

[50] Ibid., p. 24.

[51] This spectral quality in van Meene's work also has echoes with the structure of identification as Diana Fuss describes it: "Identification, in other words, invokes phantoms. By incorporating the spectral remains of the dearly departed love-object, the subject vampiristically comes to life. To be open to an identification is to be open to a death encounter, open to the very possibility of communicating with the dead." *Identification Papers*, p. 1.

and object. In Butler's discussion of melancholia, she takes this idea of replication and repetition and examines it in a more psychically invested light – so performativity cannot be collapsed into performance. She argues that a melancholic identification is at the origin of gender identity, with gender itself being a kind of melancholy, with a failure to mourn the same-sex oedipal love object creating the extremities of masculinity and femininity: "If one is a girl to the extent that one does not want a girl, then wanting a girl will bring being a girl into question; within this matrix, homosexual desire thus panics gender."[52] The spectral aspect of homospectrality can be understood within this context as an unacknowledgable queerness, an identification that is constantly made invisible/ghostly by the doubling in the images of the models as subjects and objects, rather than an engagement between two subjects. As Butler says later in her discussion "In this sense, the 'truest' lesbian melancholic is the strictly straight woman, and the 'truest' gay male melancholic is the strictly straight man."[53] Rather than reading the images as being straight or gay, and opposing Schorr's construction of a butch lesbian adolescence with van Meene's construction of a straight feminine adolescence, I believe that there are structural similarities in both artists' work. These points to a construction of a queer set of identifications that question the binary logic of homo- and heterosexual as oppositional, as well as the Freudian incompatibility between being and having. Reworking the nostalgic identification in place in Schorr's images as a melancholic identification, the limpness of van Meene's models resist the voyeuristic gaze by paradoxically giving into it to such an extent they appear to have no life at all.[54]

Many of van Meene's compositions recall the sadistic poses of Hans Bellmer's doll, as discussed in chapter two, with the adolescent body pulled apart and put back again in a compulsive, performative act. Rather than a body, Bellmer's compositions disarticulate the mannequin into a composition of body parts, emptying out its fantasised subjectivity, whilst maintaining a sadistic exchange in the evocation of a 'real' girl that is being photographed. In van Meene's images the violence done to the models is of the same fantasy nature; the viewer is made aware of the constructed nature of the images, whilst the seductive

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[52] Butler, "Melancholy Gender/Refused Identification", p. 25.
[53] Ibid., p. 33.
[54] This lifelessness is not simply due to a gender melancholy, but I would argue that this is an important component. In van Meene's images, the structure of the photographic portrait as having a integral deathliness appears to be interrogated. For more discussion of the photographic portrait and its relationship to deathliness, see chapter one.

lighting, colours and proximity to the model creates an uneasy voyeuristic position. In terms of a spectrality in these images, it is not so much that the models appear as ghostly, but that they appear not be quite 'alive', as if they are somehow psychically dead. In Bellmer's photographs, the repetition of scenes in domestic interiors and gardens create a similar type of performative narrative, with no specific story told across the images, except for the obsessive encounter between the artist and the model. Bellmer projects a subjectivity into his doll, whilst at the same time apparently trying to find ways to take it apart, oscillating between an identification with his doll – standing in for his imaginary feminine self – and a sadistic voyeuristic position. Although it is always apparent to the viewer that his images are staged encounters with a doll, the actual experience of looking at the photographs creates a more disturbing and intimate engagement. In an image already discussed in relation to Gaskell's work, a hand caresses the cheek of the doll, and her expression seems to take on a guarded, apprehensive quality (fig. 3.23a). The props that make the doll appear 'real' – the hat, wig, shawl – act to produce a disjuncture with the exposure of the doll's mechanical interior, the essential emptiness of her image, echoed in a drawing in which a girl pulls back her own skin to examine her insides, as if to try and find her literal self (fig. 3.23b). In Bellmer's second series of dolls, a reoccurring motif is that of hanging legs, the body completely collapsed into a multiplication of signification, the fantasy of the doll's subjectivity played against the revelation of its inanimation.

Returning to van Meene's images of Barbara continue the visual motifs of melancholy and lifelessness, and allow a further consideration of the way in which van Meene positions herself in relation to one of her most often used models. As quoted earlier, van Meene sees her models "as objects which you can direct and guide. They are simply material for me."[55] This denial of her models' subjectivity points to the fundamental difference in van Meene's work to that of photographers such as Nan Goldin and Larry Clark,

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[55] Van Meene, "Interview by Karel Schampers with Hellen van Meene". It seems as if Bellmer and van Meene construct a particular version of their relationship to their models in contradiction to the 'expected' relationship between artist and model. For Bellmer, the doll is framed by the artist as an alternative self, an object that is imbued with subjectivity. For van Meene, her strategic denial of any identification or subjectivity of her models' allows her to side-step any critical interpretation of her using her models as surrogates for her own self-image. In these two defensive stances there is a great self-awareness of the paradigms of the male artist as voyeur, and the female artist as self-portraitist. In my argument, both artists' relationship with their models are constructed within a similarly ambivalent oscillation of identification and objectification. Thanks to Mignon Nixon for pointing out the defensive element in both artists' self-presentation.

in which their intimacy and friendship with their photographic subjects is important to the construction of some kind of documentary authenticity. Van Meene's refusal of this relationship with her models points to the way these images operate on the cusp of the pornographic image and the photographic portrait, with her models enacting physcially the emptying out of subjectivity that is performed on the plates of Bellocq's Storyville images in which the faces have been scratched out. Van Meene focuses on the 'object' status of her models as she does not see them as operating as conventional portraits. Talking about her work with Barbara van Meene explains:

> I use my models as 'objects' because, for example, in the Barbara series she was a figure in my idea. She had a face that worked very well for my ideas at the time…. It is not a specific portrait about her as a person. This is why the models can become objects. In some work it felt as if I just shaped the body as a clay figure around the tree.[56]

This emptiness in the images is set up in contrast to the repetition of models such as Barbara, who is pictured over and over again, implying some kind of personal relationship between artist and model. It is this balance on the edge of emptiness and intimacy, subjectivity and objectification that van Meene appears to be interested in. Discussing her choice of Barbara as a model, van Meene explains that she asked Barbara to model for her after Barbara came into the photography shop where van Meene was working. At the time, Barbara was 25 years old – older than many of van Meene's models, and a year older than van Meene herself. Van Meene was interested in the way that Barbara appeared to be much younger than she actually was, speaking about their collaboration as follows:

> I was always the one with the ideas and she always followed, sometimes I had to persuade her, but in the end she always trusted me. I would never do something or suggest a pose when a model would feel unhappy! With her I felt she was interesting because she could change into someone else in a different scene, that was intriguing about her, she looked young but was not so young in reality.[57]

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[56] Van Meene, email conversation with the author. When I asked van Meene about Bellmer's work, she said that she found it fascinating, but pointed out that there is always a level of interaction in her own photographs, precisely because she cannot completely control or obliterate her models' subjectivity.
[57] Ibid.

The ways in which van Meene balances the combination of intimacy and objectification can be seen by comparing two images (fig. 3.24). In *Untitled*, 1999, Barabara is posed next to a plate of pear slices, as if she was simply one element within this odd still life, a figment of the artist's imagination rather than an actual person. This sense of Barbara vacating herself is continued in an image in which she is squashed against a large plate glass door. The flat reflective surface imitates the photographic plate capturing her presence, as she performs a literal imprinting of her body on the glass. The objectification of van Meene's models is both a making them into objects, as well as a voyeuristic construction of them as the objects of the viewer's desire. Van Meene allys herself with the obsessional mode of portraiture when she says, in the same interview: "I arrange everything, to the smallest detail, such as the nail polish on their fingers."[58] Just as the viewer can project him or herself into the compositions of Bellocq or Weinberger, with their particularly attuned sense of costume and setting as signifying their own personal set of interests, so too can the viewer find themselves in the work of van Meene, both as the model reluctantly placing herself in the poses arranged with the artist, and in the position of the artist, constructing the scene down to the "smallest detail". Although the models are used as "material", rather than individuals as in traditional photographic portraiture, the complex of desire, nostalgia and melancholy set up by van Meene's tight control of the photographic space, costume and pose relies on the performative collaboration between artist and model that uses the ambiguity of the adolescent girl as a catalyst. Not yet grown women, her models appear to enact the psychic melancholia of gender identification physically. The adolescent is used as an incomplete site, an 'open structure' as Kristeva puts it, that is overwhelmed by the acts she is required to perform.[59] The proximity of van Meene in the photographic space – she shoots her models from only a few feet away – allows the viewer to imaginatively enter into the photographs, as the models appear at just over arm's length – just out of reach.

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[58] Van Meene, "Interview by Karel Schampers with Hellen van Meene".

[59] Julia Kristeva, "The Adolescent Novel", *New Maladies of the Soul*, Ross Guberman trans., New York: Columbia University Press, 1995*,* p. 135. Originally published as *Les Nouvelles maladies de l'ame*, Libraire Artheme Fayard, 1993. Kristeva describes the adolescent as embodying an "open structure" that allows a complex of identifications to take place, explaining the importance of the adolescent within the imaginary as follows: "The adolescent, like the child, is a mythical figure of the imaginary that enables us to distance ourselves from some of our failings, splittings of the ego, disavowals, or mere desires, which it reifies into the figure of someone who has not yet grown up. Moreover, the adolescent allows us to see, hear, and read these subjective fluctuations." p. 135.

The presence of painting: the Pre-Raphaelite camera

An influence on van Meene's work that has not been discussed up to this point is the history of painted

portrait. Many critics have noted the tradition of Dutch portraiture that van Meene's work can be seen to

draw on in her use of composition, framing and colour palette. When asked about the influence of other

artists on her work, van Meene explained that whilst the history of Dutch painting has been an influence,

she "never made a photo with a specific painting in my head".[60] Rather than emulating the painted portrait,

van Meene's work seems to engage more with the idea of the performance that contributed to the

painting, the experience of the model in sitting for the portrait. With this in mind, I want to consider the

relationship of the painted portrait with the photographic portrait in the work of the Pre-Raphaelites and

Julia Margaret Cameron, as a moment in which photography and painting were in close dialogue with

each other. The way that photography can be seen to perform the idealised representations of femininity

found in paintings in a way that exposes the ideal nature of the painted version is something that strongly

influences van Meene's work, rather than a specifically Dutch history. The reason for choosing Pre-

Raphaelite painting rather than the work of Vermeer is to compare the iconography that van Meene

employs with the particularly Victorian conception of the beautiful woman, and her fictional counterpart, the

Pre-Raphaelite Goddess, as well as drawing on the dialogue between painting and photography that

began during the mid-nineteenth century.[61] For example, John Everett Millais's painting *Ophelia*, 1851-

1852, has many of the characteristics found in van Meene's photographs: the model in a prone position,

the situation in the landscape, the use of flowers, foliage and dress as symbolic aspects of the

composition (fig. 3.25). However, what draws this painting together most closely with van Meene's

photographs is, for me, the stories of Millais's model Elizabeth Siddal, lying in a bath of water, becoming

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[60] Van Meene, email conversation with the author.

[61] Van Meene's relationship to Dutch portrait painting seems to be one of a cultural vocabulary around the depiction of the female model, one which I think feeds through to the nineteenth century in the more hyperbolic and symbolic depictions of women. The Victorian discussion around the status of photography as a science or an art is one that many of the photographers in this study appear to be in dialogue with, revisiting the photograph as a painterly tableaux. I am sure there is a further discussion to be had in relation to Dutch portrait painting, but this is outside the scope of this chapter. The relationship to the Romantic and Pre-Raphaelite artists and photographers in the nineteenth century seems more productive in this context, with the similarity of focus on the young female model and her environment, codified using clothes, flowers, setting and expression.

increasingly uncomfortable. A residue of this discomfort can perhaps be projected into the angle of the hands which protrude from the water in a rather weak manner, as if the pose has been held for too long.

Returning to Michael Bartman's book *The Pre-Raphaelite Camera*, discussed briefly in chapter one, the relationship between painting and photography in the mid- to late-nineteenth century is explored as a dialogue, rather than photography simply being influenced by painting. Looking at the attention to detail in paintings such as Millais's *Ophelia*, Bartman comments that "the final effect is oddly claustrophobic, even hallucinatory."[62] The obsessive rendering of every leaf on a tree, every kind of flower exactly, is discussed as coming out of an interest in the photograph's indexicality, with the numerous flowers painted around the prone body symbolising numerous details of her tragic story: "Millais's *Ophelia* is both a botany lesson and a glossary of the Victorian language of flowers. There are dozens of varieties, some with obvious connotations like the poppy for death, others only the cognizant would recognise, such as the meadowsweet for 'uselessness'."[63] At the same time, in photography the striving to be taken seriously as an art form led numerous amateur photographers to experiment with a more 'artistic' style, distancing themselves from the documentary aspects of the medium.

The use of intricate symbolism and realism in Pre-Raphaelite painting altered in the 1860s and 1870s, with a more romantic, idealised style coming into fashion through the work of Gabriel Dante Rossetti. Rossetti's use of photography as preparatory material illustrates some of the tensions between the painted and photographic portrait. In 1865 he had the photographer John Parsons take photographs of his model and lover Jane Morris. In Bartman's study, he reproduces a number of these photographs alongside Rossetti's paintings (fig. 3.26). In his rather ironic caption to the second photograph of Morris, Bartman comments:

> The photographs of Mrs Morris taken when Rossetti's illicit passion for her was at its height failed to register reciprocal feelings on her part. She appears oppressed by her role as Adored One – but then photography is adept at dramatising partial truths. The photographs are an antidote to

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[62] Michael Bartman, *The Pre-Raphaelite Camera: Aspects of Victorian Photography*, London: Widenfeld and Nicolson, 1985, p. 20.
[63] Ibid., p. 32.

Rossetti's fanciful portrayals of her, but do not present us with the key to a personality which even contemporaries found enigmatic.[64]

In this caption Bartman brings up a number of issues that can be found in van Meene's photography. Here, the solemn pose of Morris undermines the idealised version that Rossetti translates from the photograph into paint. Rather than ethereal longing, Morris becomes a rather awkward sitter, filled with an intensity that is not accessible to the viewer. The relationship of Morris to the iconography of the beautiful woman is explored further by Bartman, quoting Henry James:

'Its hard to say whether she's a grand synthesis of all the Pre-Raphaelite pictures ever made – or they a 'keen analysis' of her – whether she's an original or a copy.'[Henry James] This is the elusive quality of the photographs. We cannot tell ultimately how much she is 'herself' and how much playing up to Rossetti's idea of her.[65]

Rather than the photographs presenting the 'real' Jane Morris, and the paintings presenting the 'ideal' version, the photographs emphasise the impossibility of the 'real' Jane Morris, who is a composite of various viewers' and commentators' desires and expectations. Just as Millais utilises the vocabulary of flowers to tell his story, so the photographer and the model employ a vocabulary of poses and settings to signify the idealised image of femininity. However, whereas in the paintings Rossetti elongates, smoothes and makes elegant, in Parson's photographs Jane Morris holds the poses required but does not appear to hide her ambivalence or disinterest.

The conversation between Pre-Raphaelite painting and the emergence of a self-conscious art photography in the 1860s and 1870s is articulated from a different angle in the photographs of Julia Margaret Cameron. Cameron and her sisters were in the same social milieu as the Pre-Raphaelites, with the concerns in her photographs relating to their philosophies. In terms of van Meene's work, what is interesting in Cameron's portraits is the way in which she inserts her presence into the frame, and the intimate relationship between photographer and sitter. Just as van Meene rarely gives the name of her models, allowing them to become symbolic presences, so Julia Margaret Cameron rarely credited her

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[64] Ibid., p. 138.
[65] Ibid., pp. 136, 138.

portraits of women with their real names, preferring to draw on mythology, literature and the Bible to populate her performances of feminine beauty. In many of Cameron's portraits of women the mythologising of their presence takes place through her use of focus, lighting and treatment of the photographic surface. Rather than the idealising lines of Rossetti, Cameron uses the blurring effects of a short depth of field or restricted light source to bring only certain aspects of her composition into focus. Two images that have this signature are *My niece Julia Jackson full face*, April 1867, and *The Angel at the Tomb*, 1869-1870 (fig. 3.27). *The Angel at the Tomb* features one of Cameron's favourite models, Mary Hillier. Hillier's hair cascades into the space of the photograph, appearing to almost invade the photographic plate. The texture and flow of her hair is in contrast to the stillness of her expression, almost as if her hair was alive and she is in a trance.[66] In *My niece Julia Jackson full face*, Cameron's niece stares into the camera, with only half of her face lit, the play of light and shadow smoothing out the photograph with an almost painterly surface. Whilst Cameron's technique is very different from van Meene in the focus on the tactile surface of the photograph, there is a similarity in the way both photographers insert their presence into the photograph. Whilst Cameron appears to touch her subjects with her camera, through the use of blurring, shallow depth of field and severe shadows, van Meene marks her scenes through the repetition of poses and costumes; the floral motifs, caught hair, awkward limbs. In her photographs it is as if she is re-enacting the photographic session between Jane Morris and John Parsons, with presumably Rossetti directing the images.[67] Rather than an image of a lover, gazing in dreamlike wonder, as in Rossetti's paintings, here the body of Morris remains desirable whilst holding the poses in a manner that

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[66] The importance of the models' hair in both Cameron and van Meene's photographs highlights the symbolism of a female sexuality as has been explored in chapter two. The depiction of hair in relation to the idealised female figure in the Victorian era was ambiguously sexualised, signifying both a purity and innocence as well as a wanton sexuality. Just as the adolescent girl signifies both the innocence of childhood and the evocation of her incipient 'deflowering' or sexualisation, so do flowing tresses in the Victorian imagination hold both a threatening and a pure female sexuality. Elisabeth Gitter explores these associations saying that: "When the powerful woman of the Victorian imagination was an angel, her shining hair was her aureole or bower, when she was demonic, it became a glittering snare, a web, or noose", adding that the "…luxuriance of the hair is an index of vigorous sexuality, even of wantonness." Elisabeth G Gitter, "The Power of Women's Hair in the Victorian Imagination", *PMLA*, vol. 99, no. 5, October 1984, pp. 936-954; pp. 936, 938. In her discussion of the iconography of women's hair, Gitter discusses the "long literary tradition of golden-haired ladies – a tradition that gathered peculiar force and intensity in the latter half of the nineteenth century." p. 936. In terms of both Cameron's and van Meene's photographs, the focus on the hair of the models in numerous instances contrasts with the deathliness of many of the models' poses, and could be seen as allowing the excesses or anxieties of sexuality spill out of the constricting performances of femininity.
[67] The triangular structure of the photographic session between Jane Morris, John Parsons and Gabriel Dante Rossetti also echoes the conceptual structure in place in van Meene's work. Van Meene becomes the professional photographer hired to channel the desires of the artist, channelling the poses and conventions of portraiture through her photographs and collaboration with the models.

evokes the sullen acquiescence of the adolescent. The interior life of Lolita, held from the reader, imagined only in the feverish prose of Humbert Humbert, is projected in these images on the flowing hair and accessories around the resistant expressions and poses of the models. This resistance is not totally absent in the work of Cameron, as can be seen in a portrait of a 20-year-old Alice Liddell. *Pomana*, 1872, shows Liddell posing with a candid expression that recalls her poses for Lewis Carroll almost 15 years earlier (fig. 3.28). Now a rather sullen young woman, with eyes that still have an unnervingly steady gaze, the very earthly Liddell poses as if to simply satisfy the whim of Cameron, rather than being an ethereal Pre-Raphaelite goddess. The contrast between Cameron's portrait of Liddell and the manipulation of light and focus to create a painterly continuity in her portraits of Jackson and Hillier points to an attempt to negate the awkwardness that van Meene appears to privilege. A counterpart to Cameron's portrait of Liddell could be van Meene's untitled image of a young Japanese girl, her hair held in the branches of the tree behind her, and the flowers on her top a commodified version of the young girl as flower about to bloom (fig. 3.14) The resistance to and desire for the beautiful image appears in the performance of both the model and the photographer, rehearsing the clichés of beauty in an aggressively imperfect manner.

The control that van Meene exerts over these conventions can be seen in a recent example of her work, taken in a very short session whilst on a trip to Tokyo in 2005 (fig. 3.29).[68] The portrait of "Eri, 23", as we are told by the caption, is a fairly conventional portrait, a three-quarter-length shot, with the model sitting in front of a fish tank, recalling the Victorian convention of posing the female model next to a desirable object to increase their attractiveness. Eri stares out of the frame, some discomfort perhaps registering in the interlinking of her hands. What this description leaves out of course is the long hanks of hair that van Meene has threaded through the shoulder straps of Eri's dress. The model's waist length hair is transformed through this simple action from a traditional signifier of femininity to a rather disturbing object

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[68] This image is from a series that is outside the main timeframe of this chapter. For this series, van Meene approached girls on the streets of Tokyo, and often photographed them where she saw them, in sessions lasting a very short period of time. It might be noted the fascination in Japan with the character of Lolita, with a profusion of manga about Lolita-style schoolgirls, which has a mainly male adolescent audience, alongside a fashion subculture to dress as a Lolita, or a Goth Lolita, that is less about sexuality, and more about a nostalgia and a certain kind of girlish identity. These two strands appear to engage with the ambiguity around the character of the adolescent girl as an object of erotic fixation and an identity position that refuses adult constructions of gender and sexuality. For examples of this trend see http://www.uta.edu/english/tidwell/
JapaneseFashion/JapaneseFashion--Lolita.htm or Shoichi Aoki, *FRUiTS*, London: Phaidon, 2001.

that appears to be both costume and a strange extrusion from Eri's body. By pinning the hair down, and drawing the viewer's attention to it, van Meene increases the ambiguity of the hair's signification, recalling Elizabeth Gitter's comment that: "If a woman's hair is the text that explains her, clearly it makes hard reading."[69] Rather than the sexualised power residing solely in the model, here van Meene's action makes clear that the eroticism and disturbing nature of the image is constructed through the collaboration and performance of the photographer, model and viewer. The iconography of the Pre-Raphaelite Goddess is reconfigured into the contemporary framework of the Lolita, the space of the feminine translated into the female adolescent.

Performativity, temporality and desire

> Ambiguity is a luxury. With every piece I make, I am aware that my feminism may be difficult to detect.
> Collier Schorr[70]

To find a way to link the nostalgic, narcissistic and melancholic identifications in the photographs of Schorr and van Meene, the dynamic set up between the older woman and younger model needs to be returned to and considered as a temporal dynamic. Elizabeth Freeman, in her discussion of what she calls "temporal drag" discusses the effects of temporality on performativity, and the impact on the construction of gender and sexual identity.[71] Freeman explores the impact of quotation from a generational perspective – using tropes and identities from other historical periods – as a way of inserting a discourse of feminism within

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[69] Gitter, "The Power of Women's Hair in the Victorian Imagination", p. 941.
[70] Collier Schorr, "Collier Schorr", part of a special section entitled "Feminism and Art: 9 views", *Artforum*, vol. 42, no. 2, October 2003, p. 145.
[71] Elizabeth Freeman, "Packing History, Count(er)ing Generations", *New Literary History*, no. 31, 2000, p. 727-744. "Though 'temporal drag' is always a constitutive part of subjectivity, exteriorised as a mode of embodiment it may also offer a way of connecting queer performativity to disavowed political histories. Might some bodies, in registering on their very surfaces the co-presence of several historically-specific events, movements, and collective pleasures, complicate or displace the centrality of *gender*-transitive drag to queer performativity? Might they articulate instead a kind of *temporal* transitivity that does not leave feminism, femininity, other 'anachronisms' behind?" p. 729.

queer performativity. Starting from Butler's construction of performativity as a reiteration that can never be fixed, and so also potentially unstable, she explains:

> … there are iterations, repetitions and citations which are not strictly parodic, in that they do not necessarily aim to reveal the original as always already a copy, but instead engage with prior time as genuinely elsewhere. Nor are they strictly consolidating of authority, in that they leave the very authority they cite visible as a ruin.[72]

Just as Butler has explored the structures of melancholy as a way of holding in place the more liberatory aspects of performativity, here Freeman uses temporality – a quotation not just of other sexual identifications, but historical ones as well – as a way of considering ways of disrupting normative constructions of identity. Freeman considers the importance of the adolescent girl as a site of identification and resistance in the 1990s for many feminists:

> The deployment of the girl in recent queer/feminist videos, 'zines, song lyrics and so on, implicitly critiques radical feminists' repudiation of their own 1950s girlhoods as false consciousness, allowing the politicised adult a more emphatic and even erotic relationship to her former vulnerabilities and pleasures: 'girl' embraces an embarrassing past as the crucial augur of a critical, yet also contingent future.[73]

Here the adolescent comes to stand in for repressed possibilities and identifications which have not fitted into a certain construction of feminism. In Schorr and van Meene's portraits, their engagement with the constructions of female desire and sexuality point to earlier models of sexualised identity, embodying their structures to explore the possibilities of remaking them in new combinations. Schorr, when discussing her relationship to feminist art from the 1980s, explains how she felt that the conversations about femininity were not including her own perspective, saying:

> I felt as though women never discussed each other, but rather, they defined themselves by the battle with men. But that was fine, because the lack of a 'homosocial' (not exclusively

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[72] Ibid., pp. 734-735.
[73] Ibid., pp. 740-741.

homosexual) discourse was what instigated my work. I really just started to make art because I felt like no one was talking to or about me.[74]

Schorr explains her own way of considering the ways in which previous models of identification and desire can be reworked in different historical moments in her discussion of Richard Prince's work *Spiritual America*, 1983:

> … I have thought a great deal about Richard Prince's work, which has linked a crisis within masculinity to that within femininity. I lived for a time with his *Spiritual America*, 1983, the portrait of the prepubescent Brooke Shields. The success of that piece is as a critical commentary about representation and the feminine body in photography and about the look and shape of desire. The secret surprise within that photograph was that its appropriation allowed it to exist. We could look at the image not as it was originally – a pornographic image of a child make with an ambitious mother's permission – but as a critique.[75]

This photograph, of a young Brooke Shields in an incredibly pornographic pose, is reframed by its appropriation by Prince, but also the temporal disjuncture between the image of Shields as a child and her current status as famous actress (fig. 3.30). The image acts a kind of repressed past for both the actress herself, and within the terms of Prince's work in general, of an American cultural imaginary, in which the pre-pubescent girl is a site of Lolita-style fantasy. Schorr's photographs of Karin, and her subsequent work with other adolescent models, present the viewer with a temporal drag that draws the viewer into an imagined past – a fantasy of identity that relies on the nostalgic identification with the adolescent models. Van Meene's portraits also activate this nostalgic identification, but whereas Schorr's images are queered by the use of gender ambiguity, van Meene provides the queering and distancing in her images by the uncanny lifelessness of her models. In both photographers' work, the sexual identifications are overlaid so that voyeuristic and narcissistic modes are fused, again queering the space of the portrait for the viewer, who oscillates between desiring the models and identifying with them.

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[74] Schorr, quoted in Schor, "Contemporary Feminism: Art Practice, Theory and Activism – An Intergenerational Perspective", p. 26.

[75] Schorr, "Collier Schorr", "Feminism and Art: 9 views", p. 145.

Conclusion: hysterical laughter

It is interesting to note that feminism's somewhat anxious question, Is hysteria political or not? more than faintly echoes the binary structure of the hysteric's dilemma, Am I a woman or not?[76]

In the photographs considered in this chapter, the question of the model's subjectivity is problematised through the various identifications made available and the quotations from photographic structures in which the model is presented as an object. Whilst the literary fiction of Lolita is obviously a constructed subjectivity, the style of the narrative is one that strives to convince the reader of the veracity of the events, people and emotions depicted. The photographs of Schorr and van Meene are obviously using 'real' models, but the way in which they are presented is one that complicates the viewer's relationship with their depiction, with an uncertainty of how to relate to them – as image, as love object, as younger self, as nostalgic projection. The hysteric's question: "Am I a woman or not?" becomes in the case of these portraits, not whether the hysteric is simply a man or a woman, but whether she is a woman or an object. As Weinberger's visual rhyming of his models with their costumes and surroundings make them into quotations of the celebrities they admire, as well as objects of desire constructed by the photographer, in the photographs of Schorr and van Meene the repetition of models who look similar, or are posed in a similar manner, operate in a comparative way to dislocate the representation from the individual depicted. When installed in a gallery space, van Meene's images are framed in a similar format and size, either 39 x 39cm or 29 x 29cm, and are often placed in a row along the wall, so the individual images appear almost as a strip of film. This repetitious format encourages the viewer to engage with the images one by one, the individual scenes building up into a fragmented narrative that is driven by the various costumes, poses and scenes that the models are pictured in. As discussed earlier, this format extends that of the magazine spread, with the narrative drive of one image after another creating visual links across the series. Schorr's photographs are often conceived of as series of works, installed in a more variable style, with the different sizes and positions of the photographs on the wall forming a wider photographic space than that of the individual frame, often mixing in landscape and still lives along with the portraits, so that the theatrical

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[76] Fuss, *Identification Papers*, p. 117.

nature of the portraits are extended and set within a more amorphous scene. Important for both is the way in which the individual images are in conversation with each other, so that the effect of the work is only properly felt when more than one of the series is viewed. This is emphasised in van Meene's work, which is often exhibited as one long series of works that is constantly added to, rather than individual suites.

The serial nature of these works relates to the archival aspect of photographers such as Weinberger and Bellocq, as the performative nature of the photographs come into view through the repetitions across the series, as well as the 'literariness' of Walker Evans. In terms of temporal resonance, the use of poses and framings that quote these earlier photographic models echo the inclusion of photographs in the work of Weinberger and Bellocq as a way of signifying the coded nature of their images. A more recent precedent for this seriality can be found in the appropriated photographs of Richard Prince, whose series of poses or typologies takes apart the individual fashion and advertising images that form most of his source material, as in *Untitled (three women with their heads cast down)*, 1980, or *Untitled (kids)*, 1980 (fig. 3.31). In Prince's work, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter four, the subjectivities of the models are vacated through the act of re-photographing an existing image, whereas the work of Schorr and van Meene maps this evacuation onto the performance photographed, producing a tension between the documentary aspect of the photograph and the appropriated photographic poses, settings and compositions that flatten the images. From the earlier quote by Schorr about Prince's work *Spiritual America*, one of the important aspects for Schorr about such appropriation tactics is the way that the residue of the emotional affect of the image is overlaid with its critique.

In conclusion, I hope to have shown the ways in which Schorr's and van Meene's portraits draw the viewer into a performative space that combines the nostalgic identifications with their adolescent models with a queered desire for them. Utilising the voyeuristic structures of subcultural and pornographic photography, both artists set up a number of discourses in their images, from the construction of the youthful, sexualised body, to the domesticated photographic space, to the ambiguous signification of the models as alter-egos or objects of desire. The way in which they converse with a history of representation that offers structures to disrupt straightforwardly voyeuristic readings of the young, attractive model can be seen in their

quotations from the photographic space and engagement between artist and model illustrated here by the work of numerous photographers from Cameron to Weinberger. Just as the narrative of Humbert Humbert in Nabokov's novel is a fiction presented as a true account, so these portraits are constructions of obsessional gazes, fantasises of adolescence, a collaboration between artist and model which requires the complicity of the viewer to complete the narratives presented. These baby butches and reluctant Lolitas invite the viewer to enter into the performances presented, but these ambiguous scenarios retain a constant awareness of the cultural histories from which they quote and disrupt, compelling the viewer to question his or her own assumptions about the crisscrossing of nostalgia and desire enacted in the images.

<u>Presenting the performance: the work of Amy Adler</u>

That photography had overturned the judgement-seat of art is a fact which the discourse of

modernism found it necessary to repress, and so it seems that we may accurately say of

postmodernism that it constitutes precisely the return of the repressed.[1]

In Douglas Crimp's 1980 article "The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism", his opening sentence,

quoted above, draws on Walter Benjamin's statement about photography's ability to destroy the aura of a

work of art, with its reproducibility at the base of its revolutionary nature. In Crimp's rewording of

Benjamin's argument, the "return of the repressed" is this structural challenge to the original, to

authenticity, to representation. As Crimp states, the work that he considers postmodern deals with "… the

question of representation through photographic modes, particularly with all those aspects of photography

that have to do with reproduction, with copies, and copies of copies."[2] In the article, Crimp explores the

work of artists such as Robert Longo, Richard Prince and Sherrie Levine, sketching out the parameters of

what has come to be known as appropriation art. He sums up this approach as follows:

A group of young artists working with photography have addressed photography's claim to

originality, showing those claims for the fiction they are, showing photography to be always a

*re*presentation, always-already-seen. Their images are purloined, confiscated, appropriated, *stolen*.

In their work, the original cannot be located, is always deferred; even the self which might have

generated an original is shown to be itself a copy.[3]

One of his examples is Sherrie Levine's now iconic *After Edward Weston*, 1980, a series of nude portraits

of Weston's son Neil (fig. 4.1). Crimp emphasises Levine's borrowing from other sources, her own self

obliterated from the process of making, becoming almost machinic in her piecing together of others' work.

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[1] Douglas Crimp, "The Photographic Activity of Postmodernsim", *October* 15, Winter 1980, pp. 91-102, p. 91.
[2] Ibid., p. 94.
[3] Ibid., p. 98.

Central to Crimp's argument is the notion of presence – as both a presence and an absence, a ghost. For Crimp, Levine's appropriation of Weston's image points out Weston's appropriation of numerous precedents for his classic poses. Crimp goes on to consider the work of Cindy Sherman and Richard Prince, exploring how both artists show the self to be "an imaginary construct".[4] Prince's work reveals the fiction behind the documentary disguise of mass advertising, concluding that "[i]n our time, the aura has become only a presence, which is to say, a ghost."[5]

This version of postmodernism has been well rehearsed, a structural account of how appropriation takes apart the concept of the original and the aura. Rosalind Krauss, in her seminal essay "The Originality of the Avant-Garde: A Postmodernist Repetition", published in 1981, also in *October*, similarly discusses the concept of the original and the copy, exploring how the two terms are interdependent, a relationship repressed within the discourse of modernism and the avant-garde. In the concluding section of the essay, Krauss asks "What would it look like not to repress the concept of the copy?"[6] Krauss's answer to her question is the work of Sherrie Levine, "because it seems most radically to question the concept of origin and with it the notion of originality."[7] Again, Krauss evokes the series *After Edward Weston*, saying that "Levine's act of theft, which takes place, so to speak, in front of the surface of Weston's print, opens the print from behind to the series of models from which it, in turn, has stolen, of which it is itself the reproduction."[8] Levine's work becomes emblematic of the appropriationist strategy at the beginning of the 1980s, heralding a postmodernism in which the artist is involved in cultural deconstruction, the hand of the artist a myth to be dispelled at every turn.

Moving forward to 1990, Crimp publishes an article that returns to Levine's series, and to his earlier argument, considering the political import of appropriationist strategies. No longer in the fictitious studio of

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[4] Ibid., p. 99.
[5] Ibid., p. 100. "That aspect of our culture which is most thoroughly manipulative of the roles we play is, of course, mass advertising, whose photographic strategy is to disguise the directorial mode as a form of documentary." p.100.
[6] Rosalind Krauss, "The Originality of the Avant-Garde: A Postmodernist Repetition", *October* 18, Fall 1981, pp. 47-66, p. 64.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

the cultural worker, de-assembling myths of art history, now the reader is brought into Crimp's bedroom, to look at the images from Levine's series:

> On a number of occasions, a certain kind of visitor to my bedroom would ask, 'Who's the kid in the photographs?' – generally with the implication that I was into child pornography…. The men in my bedroom were perfectly able to read – in Weston's posing, framing and lighting the young Neil so as to render his body classical sculpture – the long-established codes of homoeroticism.[9]

Rather than the copy returning as the repressed, here it is sexuality that rises to the surface of the structural account of postmodernism. Crimp goes on to explore the political import of appropriation strategies in the light of AIDS activism, revising his earlier position with its erasure of the content of the images in favour of their formal manipulation of codes. The timing of this article coincides with the publication of Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, with the relationship of copy and original being revived to take apart received notions of gender and sexuality: "*gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original*".[10] The myth of originality takes on new connotations within this context, no longer simply a discourse around the mastery of the image; this notion of originality also includes a normative structure of identity and sexuality in which deviation from the heterosexual matrix is deemed as either imperfect replication or inauthentic. Levine's rephotographing of Weston's portraits of his son takes on a new set of connotations, so that Levine's position within the chain of signification is no longer simply one of deconstructor. The narratives around desire and identity within the work of Levine and other appropriation artists are considered in an essay by Craig Owens which is contemporaneous with Crimp and Krauss's early postmodern readings. In "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism" Owens discusses how feminist critiques of patriarchy can be seen to intersect with postmodernism, commenting how the modernism/postmodernism debate has been "scandalously in-different" to issues of sexual difference.[11] Owens's discussion highlights the blindness to issues of desire in many postmodern analyses, positioning Levine's work as denying the paternal authority of the artists she appropriates from, concluding that "Levine's disrespect for paternal authority suggests that her activity is less one of appropriation – a laying

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[9] Douglas Crimp, "The Boys in my Bedroom", *Art in America*, vol. 78, no. 2, February 1990, pp. 47-49, p. 47.
[10] Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination", in Diana Fuss ed., *Inside/Out: Lesbian theories, gay theories*, London: Routledge, 1991, p. 21.
[11] Craig Owens, "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism", in *Postmodern Culture* (1983), Hal Foster ed., London: Pluto Press, 1990, pp. 57-82; p. 59.

hold and grasping – and more one of expropriation: she expropriates the appropriators."[12] Howard Singerman takes up Owens's lead in his 1994 article on Levine, explaining how "To expropriate, in the *OED*, is 'to put something out of one's control, to take it out of the owner's hands'."[13] Echoing Krauss's comments on the way in which Levine's work opens up Weston's image and presents it within a psychoanalytic frame, Singerman writes "Levine's Weston is the castrated father, opened up from behind."[14]

Crimp's, Owens's and Singerman's articles reinsert narratives of desire into Levine's images, as well as highlighting the position of the artist and spectator in constructing the images' meaning. As the spectator of Weston's image, Levine's presence within the work is no longer one that is strategically silent, rather she can be seen to speak through her choice of appropriated image. With Butler's idea of the performative, the acts of choosing, reframing and viewing take on significance for a cultural politics that extends beyond a formal discourse of originality. Crimp's discussion in his bedroom places his own personal and bodily history within his reading of the image, complicating this image of a son, taken by a father, rephotographed by a woman, viewed in a man's bedroom by visitors conversant with homoerotic images, rather than, or as well as, the history of art. The clinical dissection of images and meaning that are privileged in Crimp and Krauss's early readings of appropriation art are now set alongside narratives of desire, identity, spectatorship. The psychoanalytic language of these two early articles – repression, repetition, origins – is opened up to consider the political and emotional impact of the images, so that the print, opened from behind by Levine, spills out the series of models that it is based upon, in a performative reading of their inconsistencies, subtexts and presences which are only alluded to in these early essays.

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[12] Ibid., p. 73.
[13] Howard Singerman, "Seeing Sherrie Levine", *October* 67, Winter 1994, pp. 79-104; p. 96.
[14] Ibid., p. 85.

After Sherrie Levine, 1994

One of Amy Adler's first works, *After Sherrie Levine*, 1994, reproduced two of Weston's nudes, as

rephotographed by Levine (fig. 4.2). Adler inserted herself into this exemplar of postmodernity by drawing

the image in charcoal, and then photographing the drawing. Adler destroyed the original drawings, and the

photograph was made as edition of one, a unique print. Here the discourse of the original is reinserted into

the discourse of the copy, via the hand of the artist, something removed from the discussion of Levine's

work.[15] A tongue-in-cheek act of homage, or deconstruction, Adler adds another link to the already

complex chain of signification. Discussing Adler's act of intimate appropriation, Liz Kotz quotes Levine:

> My work is so much about desire and its triangular nature. Desire is always mediated through
>
> someone else's desire.[16]

Here Levine combines the structural quality of appropriation – its always mediated quality – and joins it

with a narrative of desire – with its also always mediated quality. Suddenly, *what* she has rephotographed

becomes important, not simply the act of rephotographing. Susan Kandel follows up this line of enquiry by

proposing an alternative way of viewing Levine's role in her appropriated images:

> Consider Levine, though, not in terms of refusal, liquidation, exposure, nor any other such
>
> correlates, but in terms of enthusiasm, devotion, admiration, love – that is, in terms of fandom.
>
> What Levine dishes up (and gossip is not an unintended metaphor here) is an extended riff upon
>
> her own obsession with a host of men (dead art stars, intellectual celebrities, and so on); or better
>
> yet, a diary that recounts the way she prods their texts into revealing their innermost secrets,

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[15] Levine's original act of appropriation was to photograph from a poster of Weston's nudes, rather than original Weston prints, adding layers of slight difference between the photographic prints (which were not made by Weston), the mass-produced poster and Levine's rephotographing of the poster. The Witkin Gallery in New York had bought the photographic negatives of this series from Weston's son Neil in 1977, and commissioned the photographer George A Tice to make new prints from the negatives, which they subsequently made into a poster. Adler's redrawing of Levine's photograph highlights this chain of reproduction in which these small differences between appropriated material is highlighted rather than suppressed as in most of the discussions of Levine's appropriated photographs. See Linda Weintraub, "Unoriginality: Sherrie Levine", in *Art on the Edge and over: searching for art's meaning in contemporary society 1970s-1990s*, Linda Weintraub, Arthur Danto and Thomas McEvilley, Litchfield, CT: Art Insights, Inc, 1996, pp. 248-253; p. 250. Thanks to James Boaden for reminding me of this.
[16] Sherrie Levine, quoted in Liz Kotz, "Amy Adler: Surrogates", *Artext*, no. 61, May-July 1998, pp. 28-31. Quote from "After Sherrie Levine", an interview between Levine and Jeanne Siegel in *Art Talk: The Early 80s*, Jeanne Siegel ed., New York: Da Capo Press, p. 248.

refashioning them to satisfy her own needs, while merrily flouting the conventions (social, artistic and otherwise) of good taste.[17]

This description of Levine as a fan, whilst seeming rather far-fetched at first, allows the viewer to engage in the content of the material she appropriates, as well as the structure through which she reframes her 'stolen' material. Rather than following Kandel in seeing Levine as a fan, her comments seem more appropriate for exploring the relationship of Adler's work with a history of appropriation art and fandom. Kandel writes her article in 1997, when this reframing of Levine becomes possible after the discussions around postmodernism of the preceding decades, including the articles by Crimp and Krauss discussed here.

A feeling that something had been missing in early accounts of postmodernism, a deconstructive sleight-of-hand which ignored the specificity of the artist and viewer, opened up re-readings of work by Levine and Prince in particular, with considerations of the emotional content of their work. In Singerman's article "Seeing Sherrie Levine", he emphasises the act of seeing Levine's work *again*, returning to the earlier moment in postmodernism to see if there are new ways to enter in to the deconstructive strategies. Singerman's comments illuminate Adler's appropriation of Levine, as he focuses on the effect that seeing Levine as a woman being the maker of canonical images by Weston and Walker Evans, asking "What difference would it make to read Evans's image of Hale County as the works of Sherrie Levine, and to take Levine at her word when she insists that 'because I am a woman, these images became a woman's work'."[18] Discussing the difference in approaches to the work of Walker Evans as opposed to his female contemporaries such as Dorothea Lange, Singerman explores how Evans is seen as a disembodied eye, whereas Lange is seen as identifying with her subjects in a way that assumes a difference in approach based on the photographers' gender.[19] For Singerman, what Levine's appropriation does is tell a story about the way in which works are authored and gendered. Following up Owens's comments of Levine expropriating rather than appropriating her imagery, Singerman points to the way in which the works are

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[17] Susan Kandel, "Sherrie Levine: stalker", *Artext*, no. 59, November 1997-January 1998, pp. 66-70; p. 68.
[18] Singerman, "Seeing Sherrie Levine", p. 82.
[19] "Following Newhall, Cox, Van Dyke, and Kozloff, to read the artist as a woman would be to find the photographer herself deeply within the images." Ibid., p. 91.

loosening the traditional narratives of authorship and identification in the histories of photography with which it engages. In Adler's work, this position as a woman artist, making the images she redraws into "women's work" regardless of their original context, is positioned in relation to the disruptive desires of the fan, who in Adler's work appears as an adolescent subject, identifying and possessing the object of desire through the act of drawing and photographing.

These readings and re-readings of appropriation art at the base of my discussion of Adler's work offer ways into how she reveals the repressed content and performative narratives that are contained within the works that she copies, quotes and subverts. Here the performance space of the portrait photograph is one in which narratives of identity are disrupted through the process of reinscribing both the subject depicted and the artist's investment in the image. When I spoke to Adler about her relationship to the work of Levine and Prince in particular, she replied at first by saying:

> I guess I've always thought that Levine and Prince could be seen through that which they have appropriated. With Levine a character emerges that is very different to Prince, and so in order to locate myself in that I would have to imagine that the character that would emerge would be completely different. It wouldn't be the same character. A lot of that has to do with desire.[20]

This focus on the content, and also the choice of the artist, re-frames the appropriationist strategy, allowing the artist to tell stories that are drawn from cultural residues, a jigsaw of references and performances. When describing her reasons for choosing the images from the series *After Edward Weston*, Adler says:

> I felt like that picture, to me, is the most porous image of her [Levine's] work. It was a way for me to move in and through; I was thinking that there was this sort of character, the father looking at the son, and then she is assuming the role, and I thought that it would be interesting to see if you could

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[20] Amy Adler, in conversation with the author, 3 December 2003. Adler went on to say "I was looking in a Richard Prince book and I saw this guy, in one of his series from the 70s, called mixed couples, and I was like, wait a minute. I thought about it and I figured out who he was, he was a boyfriend of my mother's in the 70s. And then I found this photograph of her with the same guy. And so, it was just degrees of separation."

have intimacy, this body protected by all of these lenses – could I actually be as close to this body as she was, or as he was.[21]

As in Kandel's reframing of Levine's practice through the metaphor of the fan, here Adler focuses attention on the relationship between artist, subject and viewer, revealing a desire to enter into the image in a way that recalls Krauss's description of Levine's image opening up the back of Weston's prints to reveal the models that it is based on. Here the identification of the artist oscillates between the previous artists – both the high modernist and emblematic postmodernist – and the subject of their gaze: the eroticised body of Neil. Liz Kotz, when discussing *After Sherrie Levine* says:

> There's something uncanny about the double-back nature of this process: making a drawing derived from a photograph, and then photographing it. Something muffled and disguised, which speak, indirectly, about the suppressed erotics of the image: a nubile young body posed for our pleasure, a transaction between father and son, artist and viewer, original and copy…. Adler's own 'copy' is incongruously distanced, displaced, and very, very, intimate. By physically handling, touching, meticulously drawing the boy's body, she puts herself in a more proximate relationship to him. Is she the nubile young figure, the object of potentially incestuous desire? Or the onlooker, masking lust under the alibi of Art?[22]

The place of Adler within her work, and within the history of images that she quotes is something that remains ambiguous in her work, with identification and desire tangled up, just as her medium of photography is with drawing, or her own history with that of popular culture and art history.

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[21] Ibid.
[22] Liz Kotz, "Erotics of the image", *Art Papers*, vol. 18, no. 6, November/December 1994, pp. 16-20, pp. 17-18.

Since wow was all we could say when we received *Amy Adler's* mucho bueno drawing of Rider

Strong, we thought you should join in, too. Applaud this *West Hollowood, California* gal, won't

you?[23]

Why look at Adler's work within the context of photographic portraits? Her work is rarely discussed in

terms of drawing, instead contextualised amongst conceptual and photographic art practice. She has been

quoted as describing her process as being "wedging a drawing between two acts of photography".[24]

Elsewhere Adler has said: "As I am working on a drawing, I'm aware of its impending fate – its

imprisonment – in the photograph."[25] The performative acts that define her practice re-enact the uneasy

relationship between photography and painting, or drawing. By drawing a photograph, she denies the

authenticity of her subject matter – it is 'just' a copy. By photographing the drawing she makes the work a

photograph, by destroying the drawing she underlines this loss of the original, the lack of origin that

underlies the postmodern definition of photography as re-presenting the always-already represented.

Mediation and desire are interwoven into her original prints, the discourses of the photograph as the

transparent eye of reality, the copyist of nature, the quotations from the conventions of painting, of art

history, the mechanically reproduced medium, woven together in contradictory combinations.

The trigger for Adler's technique was when she sent in a photograph of a drawing to *BOP* magazine, in

1994, for a page in which the adolescent readers could send in their images of their idols (fig. 4.3). As

Adler explains: "they [the magazine] said do not send in original artwork, so I sent in a photograph of the

drawing. So the flesh of the drawing didn't really matter. Then I realised you don't really see the

drawing."[26] The placing of her photograph of her drawing within the magazine also operates as a return of

the appropriated material to its original source – now mediated by the artist's act of drawing. *BOP* is an

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[23] Caption to Adler's drawing in *BOP* magazine, 1994.
[24] Amy Adler, quoted in "Amy Adler on Amy Adler", www.omnileonardo.com/amyadler.html.
[25] Amy Adler, "1000 Words: Amy Adler talks about *Nervous Character*", *Artforum*, vol. 37, no. 8, April 1999, pp.110-111; p. 111.
[26] Adler, in conversation with the author.

American magazine featuring teen celebrities from television, film and pop – the boys on the cover of the issue in which Adler's picture was included all look uncannily similar to her choice of Rider Strong, a teenage actor from the series *Boy Meets World*. The page in which Adler's photograph was reproduced is titled "P.S. I Love You"; the forum for the readers of the magazine to send in their letters, poems, drawings and photographs. The adoration that this page is filled with, from the mainly adolescent female readers, is the emotional intensity that Kandel explores in her discussion of Levine as a fan. The desire depicted in these pages is for a mythical love object, with the fans' drawings and writings an attempt to capture the object of their affection, in a mixture of desire and identification. Kandel uses the example of slash fiction, a grown-up version of these teenage letters pages, in which the mainly female writers construct homoerotic scenarios for their idols – a favourite being Kirk and Spock from Star Trek.[27] These reworkings of narratives echo Adler's approach to her subject matter, employing the pose of an adolescent or a fan in her exploration of the structures of desire and identification.

With *BOP*, Adler initiates an experiment that concerns itself with the way in which identity is constructed through and in spite of desire and identifications with celebrities, younger versions of the self, fantasies of potential selves, surrogates glanced at in magazines; where the artist can become a West Hollywood gal in a teenage letters page, and a drawing takes on the logic of a photograph. Rather than the breathless adoration of the celebrity subjects in the paintings of artists such as Elizabeth Peyton and Karen Kliminik, here Adler's position within her performative photographs is as self-consciously constructed as the layers of process that lie behind the production of each of her images. The figure of the adolescent is layered with that of the artist, but Adler performs her identities with the same ironic detachment as located in the often told story of Richard Prince looking through the leftover advertising images in his job supplying editorial clippings at *Time Life*, and finding his subject matter held within them. The choice of images, and their deconstruction through the process of appropriating them, sit together uneasily, a narrative made out of pulling apart their original contexts.

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[27] "Slash is, then, most often seen as a form of female pornography, a kind of projection of female fantasies, desires, and experiences onto male bodies." Kandel, "Sherrie Levine: stalker", p. 70.

Just as Richard Prince recrops his images, Adler's drawing acts as a residue of the artist's presence, returning us to Crimp's discussion of presence in his 1980 analysis of appropriation art. Crimp explores three definitions of presence: that of 'being-there' as in performance art, that of 'not-being-there' and 'being-there' – a ghostly presence, an absence that, for Crimp, defines representation – and an excess of being-there, as in his example of Laurie Anderson's stage presence. For Crimp, what is interesting is this double meaning of presence: both presence and absence: "What I wanted to explain was how to get from this condition of presence – the *being there* necessitated by performance – to that kind of presence that is possible only through the absence that we know to be the condition of representation."[28] For Crimp, a particularly postmodern use of photographic strategies is when this absence and presence within the image or artwork is drawn attention to. So, within Crimp's argument, Prince's work becomes interesting due to the way he chooses his material by vacating his position as author, and instead seems to be both absent and present within his works through his appropriation of existing images. It is difficult to say that Prince's work is 'about' cowboys, or luxury goods, without also explaining that his work is 'about' the way in which representation operates within photographic media. Adler's work also plays with this double meaning of presence, with her performance of selecting the image, drawing it, and re-photographing it being, at one level, a structural dissection of the ways in which images are consumed, whilst simultaneously being a performance of this consumption, the acts of selecting, drawing, re-photographing and destroying acting out the identifications that take place performatively in the actions of the fan, the reader, the adolescent.

Adler utilises the labour-intensive homage of the teenage fan as her device in the same way that Prince uses found advertising images. Their choice of images defines the new narratives present in the rephotographed material: cowboys, luxury goods, couples in the case of Prince, androgynous celebrities, young boys, old family photographs in the case of Adler. Adler has described how she 'hires herself' to do

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[28] Crimp, "The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism", p. 92.

the drawings, distancing herself from the drawing as a creative act.[29] For her, the act of drawing contains signification around a peculiarly adolescent engagement with the image, and with identity:

> I guess I've always equated my drawing with this adolescent, the height of your adolescent experience. I feel like most people stop drawing when they are teenagers, it's like the height of most people's experience of drawing. And it's replaced – it's like your virginity is embedded in your drawing. Sex is what ends… like your ability to have what you want is the thing that ends this desire to draw…. I've always loved the ability drawing has to allow me to be all these different characters…[30]

Perhaps it is this conceptual choice of drawing that has stopped Adler's work being aligned with painting or drawing. It becomes a performative process in which to render the artist's engagement with the image, and a cultural history of desire as signified by the adolescent, within the photographic image. Liz Kotz explores how the models in Adler's photographs operate as surrogates, as a way of exploring female desire through male bodies, an inversion of the tradition of male artists using female models to stand in for themselves.[31] Kotz explores this in terms of a strategy of lesbian representation, but this flexibility of identification has been more broadly employed in fan culture to allow access to a remote love object. The choice of model in the *BOP* photograph seems to be more about the image's final location, although Adler's early work circulates around numerous images of young boys and adolescent men, all with a similarly androgynous, sporty appeal. In these early incarnations, Adler's models – both Rider Strong and Edward Weston's son Neil – appear to be chosen for the way that they are presented for the viewer, as objects of a desire that is not normatively heterosexual, as well as for the structural concerns that Adler engages with around the image and the portrait.[32] The intimacy that Kotz identifies in Adler's work is one

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[29] "I was always aware of this servitude involved in drawing, there's always this power involved, with the figure, my executing it. I hire myself to do those drawings, it's labour." Amy Adler, quoted in Kotz, "Amy Adler: Surrogates", p. 31.

[30] Adler, in conversation with the author.

[31] "At times, this surrogacy may take the form of imaging male bodies – male bodies that sometimes, I will argue, function as substitutes or stand-ins for the female. We may be all too familiar with representations of the female body that, ultimately, speak male longing, anxiety and desire, but we are less used to the reverse: a male body that speaks female fears and desires, particularly lesbian ones." Kotz, "The Erotics of the Image", p. 17.

[32] Adler's series *The Problem Child*, 1995, was provoked by finding a volume on child psychology by Alfred Adler, called *The Problem Child.* Although I am not discussing this series here, the chain of (mis)identifications that triggered Adler's choice here can perhaps be seen to start with her identification with the author of the volume, then going on to explore the subject positions of the anonymous boys in her photographs – with the series title giving the mundane activities depicted a rather sinister air. Adler's choice of words – both in her models and titles are often

similar to the performances for the camera enacted by the adolescent models of the other photographers I have discussed – Jones, Gaskell, Schorr and van Meene – an intimacy that is a quotation, an act of identification that is not based on a notion of authenticity, but of repetition. These performances *for* the camera are echoed by the performances *behind* the camera and *in front* of the image by the photographer and the viewer, a triangular structure that Adler places herself within, physically acting out each position in overlapping combinations, with the photograph standing for both the presence and the absence of these performances.

Screen Tests, 1964-1966

> I made my earliest films using for several hours just one actor on the screen doing the same thing: eating or sleeping or smoking: I did this because people usually just go to the movies to see only the star, to eat him up, so here at last is a chance to look only at the star for as long as you like no matter what he does and to eat him up all you want to. It was also easier to make.[33]

The portraits of Andy Warhol are often read as taking apart the traditional concerns of portraiture, a destablising of the individual identity depicted, a distancing of the artistic gesture from the artwork, the foregrounding of the artwork's status as a commodity and a focus on the sitter being a projection space for the viewer. In relation to Adler's work, Warhol's silk-screen and film portraits operate as precedents, from the techniques, repetitions and identifications that take place in his work to his commentary on his artistic practice. The quote above relates to Warhol's series of films in which the sitter was asked to pose motionless for the duration of a single reel of film – 100 feet, or approximately 3 minutes (fig. 4.4). He made over 500 of these *Screen Tests*, with the sitters' performances ranging from an increasing

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triggers to the appeal of certain images, or the narratives that could be seen to be contained within them. The models in *The Problem Child* can be seen as 'brothers' to Neil from *After Sherrie Levine*, a catalogue of boys who are photographed for their adult male author's scrutiny, feminised under the gaze of the adult.

[33] Andy Warhol quoted in Benjamin HD Buchloh, "Andy Warhol's One-Dimensional Art: 1965-1966", in *Andy Warhol*, Annette Michelson ed., October Files 2, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, pp. 1-46; p. 28, first published in *Andy Warhol: A Retrospective*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989. Andy Warhol quote from an interview with Gretchen Berg, "Andy: My True Story", *Los Angeles Free Press*, March 17 1967, p. 40.

discomfort as the time in front of the camera lengthens, to an insolent disregard to the instructions to remain still, with cigarettes being lit or a range of poses and expressions being tried out. These structural portraits play with the interface between photography and film, so that the overall impression when watching a selection of the *Screen Tests* is that they operate as minimally changing photographs, heightening the viewer's sensation of being in front of an image for a duration that is dictated not by his or her own desire, but by the filmmaker's. As explained in Warhol's comment above, the structure of the *Screen Tests* can be read as trying to assign time to the viewer's desire, discarding narrative and action for the sake of contemplation, similar to the act of appropriation in Adler's works where images of celebrities are presented as anonymous models, sites of desire that are strangely undefined. David E James describes the *Screen Tests* in rather different terms from that of Warhol, describing how "The situation is that of psychoanalysis; the camera is the silent analyst who has abandoned the subject to the necessity of his fantastic self-projection."[34] In these portraits, both the desiring, and devouring look of the fan, and the introverted projection of the model can be perceived as their subject. Warhol focuses on a moment of engagement between the viewer and model that is emphasised by the films being played at 16 or 18 frames per second, the speed of silent rather than sound film, stretching the duration of these non-narrative dramas.

In Adler's work, this attention to duration occurs in different ways; from the act of redrawing two images of herself, one looking up, one looking down in *Nervous Character*, 1999, to the act of redrawing herself as an adolescent in *Once in Love With Amy*, 1997 (figs. 4.21 and 4.9-4.10). The act of drawing itself focuses attention on the duration of time the artist has spent with the copied photograph, so in the final photographed drawing, the viewer is made aware of this time with the image that transforms the snapshot into a space of desire. In this way, Adler utilises the qualities of one medium to make another speak differently, in a similar manner to Warhol. As Wayne Koestenbaum has commented: "Warhol's game, throughout his career, was to transpose sensation from one medium to another – to turn a photograph into a painting by silk-screening it; to transform a movie into a sculpture by filming motionless objects and

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[34] David E James, "Andy Warhol: The Producer as Author", *Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989, pp. 58-84; 69.

individuals; to transcribe tape-recorded speech into a novel."[35] This transposition is part of Warhol's strategies to make the structures of image making apparent in his work, so that watching a series of his *Screen Tests* is a strangely self-conscious experience, with the awkwardness of the models reflecting the awkwardness of staring at someone's slowly shifting face over the course of a number of minutes, trapped by the films' duration. For Warhol, desire tends to be layered with boredom, or self-consciousness, or left just to the side of the frame, as in his infamous *Blow Job*, 1964.

Warhol's distancing of his own artistic gesture from the process of making an image was something that began with his advertising work in the 1950s, with even his signature being signed by his mother, the calligrapher on most of his projects. Koestenbaum explains how "For his advertising work and his presentation books, he used a blotting technique, a forerunner of silk-screening: he drew on one piece of paper, and his assistant traced this drawing onto another page and then inked the drawing and pressed it onto yet another sheet. Andy would discard the originals and keep the third-generation imprint."[36] This interest in process is one that can be seen in Adler's work, reworking Warhol's machinic processes through the adolescent labour of a fan making a drawing of their idol as accurately as they can. Like Adler, Warhol utilised the figure of the fan in his work as one who was a consumer in both a commodity sense, and in a sense of consuming, devouring the object of fascination. An avid collector of celebrity publicity shots, film stills and movie magazines from his childhood, in the early 1960s Warhol appropriated images from his archive to create drawings that expose the desire and aggression of the fan.[37] In *Female Movie Star Composite*, c 1962, Warhol put together a kind of ideal star. Each part of the face is indicated with initials, GG referring to Greta Garbo, JC referring to Joan Crawford and so on (fig. 4.5). As will be explored in relation to Adler's appropriated celebrity images, these composite drawings are both an act of adoration and a creative rearticulation to create the perfect object of desire and identification. By conflating the image as an object of desire in both a sexual and economic sense, Warhol plays with the systems of celebrity culture and the way in which the fan both submits to and perverts them.

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[35] Wayne Koestenbaum, *Andy Warhol* (2001), London: Phoenix, 2003, p. 117.
[36] Ibid., p. 42.
[37] See *The Warhol Look: Glamour Style Fashion*, Mark Francis and Margery King eds., Pittsburg, PA: The Andy Warhol Museum, 1997, for more on Warhol's archive of Hollywood memorabilia and the role that this material had in his artwork.

The figure of the teenager was a catalyst for an emerging category of consumer, a distinct cultural identity, in the 1950s and 1960s, creating a niche market that drew on the new rebellious figures of beat kids and rockers, with their celebrity counterparts being seen in the swaggering performances of James Dean and Marlon Brando. Rather than adolescence being a stage between childhood and adulthood, the teenager signified an identity that rejected bourgeois identities, whilst being perfect consumers with their disposable incomes, sartorial uniforms and leisure time.[38] Modern conceptions of celebrity and the teenager grew up together in the 1960s, with the images created by Warhol often conversing with these new, media-created desirable identities.

In 1962 Warhol began photo silk-screening "commencing with a baseball player and then actors Troy Donahue and Warren Beatty. (Although his portraits of Liz and Marilyn earned him the most fame, he preceded female deities with male; his goddesses, not intrinsically women, may indeed be men at one remove.)."[39] These early subjects are echoed in Adler's choices of subjects, portraits of teenage athletes such as *King*, 1994, the anonymous boys in the series *The Problem Child*, 1995, and an out-of-focus Jodie Foster in *Fox*, 1995 (figs. 4.6 and 4.8). Koestenbaum's comments that Warhol's portraits of women "may indeed be men at one remove" points to the queer possibilities in a fan's appropriation of a celebrity's image. The parallels in Warhol's and Adler's choice of subjects points to their interests in the commodified subjects that are desired and identified with by their viewers, but are also transformed through these acts. The use of the medium to keep desire – of the model, viewer and artist – at at least one remove in Warhol's films and silk-screened portraits can be seen in his early portraits of Marilyn Monroe, Liz Taylor and Jackie Kennedy. Warhol's depiction of these tragic figures is both a homage and an emptying out of their individuality, with Warhol's reproduction of a photographic image focusing attention on the commodity status of his work and the subjects that he depicted. Koestenbaum's follows

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[38] This is of course a very simplified account of the birth of the teenager. For the classic discussion of different youth subcultures, see Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, London: Methuen and Co, 1979. Hebdige discusses the different class distinctions between groups of teenagers, from the middle-class beat kids to working-class punks. "We can now return to the meaning of youth subcultures, for the emergence of such groups has signalled in a spectacular fashion the breakdown of consensus in the post-war period."(p. 17) He charts the ways in which youth subcultures represent an "emergence after the War of a generational consciousness amongst the young" (p. 74), examining how the teenager's challenges to the symbolic order were appropriated and commodified.
[39] Koestenbaum, *Andy Warhol*, p. 53.

his comments quoted above with the statement "On August 5, Marilyn Monroe fatally overdosed, and the very next day he silk-screened her needy face".[40] The fact that Warhol silk-screened Monroe the day after her death points to an interest in deathliness and emptiness that has been explored by both Thomas Crow and Hal Foster.[41] In Adler's work this emptiness can be seen in her depiction of her younger self, a self that has been lost. This is made clear in the title *What Happened to Amy?*, discussed below, and is also brought up in her use of anonymous images of celebrities, who appear as vessels for desire rather than independent identities. In the article "Warhol Gives Good Face", Jonathan Flatley explores the way in which Warhol takes apart the structure of traditional portraiture, saying how to sit for a Warhol portrait is to become an object rather than a subject, "or more nearly a commodity, brand 'Warhol'."[42] Rather than a portrait being a representation of the sitter's individuality, Warhol focuses on the fantasy of being a celebrity that is contained within the portrait, as Koestenbaum explains: "Each sitter for Warhol, whether famous or not, longs for a stardom beyond attainment; the portrait mocks – and fulfils – that desire. The sitters are stars and nonstars at the same moment – as boxes, bodies, and rooms were, in Andy's eyes, both empty and filled."[43] Before discussing this idea of the sitters being both "empty and filled" I want to pay attention to the different ways in which Warhol made his portraits. For the images of Monroe, Taylor and Kennedy, he used existing media images, whereas in private commissions he had to first create a photographic image. For his first commissions, rather than working directly with the person who wanted to be rendered as a 'Warhol', he sent his sitter to pose in a photo booth, so that the ready-made image could be achieved without his intervention: "The work of art is conceived of not in relation to a 'real person' but in relation to the process of reproducibility itself, and so we can say that Warhol worked from a model rather than an 'original'. The 'person' disappears from the process as if she had never existed."[44] Here the sitter becomes a commodity, an image, rather than an individual, reflecting the later constructions in

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[40] Ibid.

[41] See Thomas Crow, "Saturday Disasters: Trace and Reference in Early Warhol" (1987), *Modern Art in the Common Culture*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996, pp. 49-65, and Hal Foster, "Death in America", (from *October* 75, Winter 1996), in Michelson ed., *Andy Warhol*, pp. 69-88.

[42] Jonathan Flatley, "Warhol Gives Good Face: Publicity and the Politics of Prosopopoeia", *Pop Out: Queer Warhol*, Jennifer Doyle, Jonathan Flatley and José Esteban Muñoz, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996, pp. 101-133; p. 107.

[43] Koestenbaum, *Andy Warhol*, p. 147. See also the comments in Flatley, "Warhol Gives Good Face": "In dramatising these issues so explicitly, Warhol's portraits departed radically from a portrait tradition in which a portrait was valuable inasmuch as it was a representation of the *individuality* of the person portrayed." p. 107.

[44] Flatley, "Warhol Gives Good Face", p. 109.

postmodern theory of the decentred, fragmented subject. Later Warhol would make a series of Polaroids

to use as the basis of his screenprints, utilising the square format and automatic process so that he

became the photo booth, or the silent analyst, allowing the model to play out their fantasies in front of his

lens. As James discusses in relation to the preparatory photographs for a portrait of Ethel Scull:

> Yet whether she is primping her hair, resting her hand on her chin, or merely sporting her
>
> sunglasses, the 35 poses all seem to be quoted from fashion magazines, a repertoire of glances
>
> and gestures derived from model images, a lexicon of possible selves presented to her own gaze
>
> for approval and endorsement. They are all stills from the movie of Ethel Scull.[45]

The relationship of the commodity to the object of desire is explored in Warhol's work through the ways in

which he processes his images. In this way, the portraits can be seen to be emptied of subjectivity, a

presentation of a commodity, an empty cipher, whilst simultaneously being layered with the possibilities of

a desiring engagement with the model, a site of projection for the viewer reconfigured as a fan. Hal Foster

asks a question in parentheses that links the work of Adler to that of the appropriation artists in the early

80s as well as to that of Warhol: "(What is it, by the way, that renders Warhol such a site for projection? He

posed as a blank screen, to be sure, but Warhol was very aware of these projections, indeed very aware

of identification as projection; it is one of his greatest subjects.)"[46] This tension between a blank screen,

the silent analyst, and the identifications and desire of the fan, hungrily consuming the object of their

desire, is one that Adler addresses in her appropriation of her own photographic archive.

What Happened to Amy?, 1996

One of the most talked about series in Adler's oeuvre is _What Happened to Amy?_, a suite of five images of

Adler as a young girl, taken by an older man on Fire Island, New York (fig. 4.7). The images are drawn in

a sepia toned pastel that underlines the title's tone of a lost history. The title – tongue in cheek, wistful, the

voice of an adult either despairing or admiring – continues the authorial perspective of Adler's earlier

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[45] James, "Andy Warhol: The Producer as Author", p. 62.
[46] Foster, "Death in America", p. 71.

series *The Problem Child*, 1995 (fig. 4.8). In both series the models are presented in mundane situations, with the titles focusing the viewer's attention in a critical or exploratory manner on what clues can be found in the images. In *What Happened to Amy?* the artist's younger self is depicted staring at the camera with a cool look, dressed in a loose sundress, her long hair falling down her back and in a number of the images, covering her face. These photographs become stranger to look at in the context of Adler's later work, in which she pictures herself as an older adolescent, and from recent pictures of herself. The adult Adler can then be seen within these portraits, making the viewer wonder how much of the expression depicted is in the original photograph, and how much is projected back on to this younger self by the artist by her act of drawing. Adler makes explicit that her motivation for making the series was not autobiographical, but was a way of extending her exploration of identifications and subject positions:

> *Once in Love With Amy* and *What Happened to Amy?* were both made in response to very specific structural challenges. With *What Happened to Amy?* I realised that I had this series of photographs taken of me by a stranger which meant that I could effectively stand in two places at once. This was very useful after *The Problem Child* in which I was fixed as the photographer and yet, through the act of drawing was presumably the subject as well. This gave me the opportunity to look more closely at these dynamics.[47]

Like *After Edward Weston*, the 'structural challenge' is emphasised. This challenge can be seen to be one about how images are read in terms of narrative and desire. Here, voyeuristic images of the artist are transcribed by her hand, so she is at once the model, the imagined photographer, the artist, and the rephotographer. The viewer is then left to navigate these points of identification, constructing stories that are left very much imagined – each one exposed as a fiction that is constructed by the viewer, rather than embedded in the image. Are the coquettish poses actually consciously held by the young Adler, or is it the title of the works forcing a wary eye over this odd engagement between the adult male photographer and young girl? How scripted was this encounter – how much of the image has been constructed by the photographer? When Amy stares at the viewer through her hair falling across her face, how much is this a chance moment and how much is the (this?) viewer reading a sexuality into the gaze? Why was this man photographing Amy, and why does the artist have the images? Do these photographs constitute an

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[47] Amy Adler, email conversation with the author, 9 December 2001.

excerpt from a family album or is something else occurring? Adler sets up all these questions, and proceeds to expand on them through her subsequent works.

Seen next to *After Sherrie Levine*, this series of photographs enacts the shift from Adler imaginatively taking the place of the photographer of the pre-pubescent model to nostalgically positioning herself as the model, and then trying to take the place of the older man looking at herself. In the images, the backgrounds are mostly rendered in light, almost sketchy tones, focusing attention on her younger self. One image breaks the contact of the model's gaze into the camera, as Adler is pictured sitting down, hand shielding her eyes, tracing a stick over what might be the sand or earth between her feet. In this image the background is an undifferentiated landscape against which the model appears to almost float, her dress gaping around her wide apart legs. Seen on its own, this image is a straightforward picture of a girl caught unawares, lost in her own reverie. Seen alongside the others in the series, with the serious gaze of Adler staring out of each frame, the absorption of this pose comes across as both faked, an appealing composition for the camera, as well as perhaps presenting the boredom of the young model in front of the camera's lens. This repetition relates to the seriality in Warhol's silk-screened portraits, and the range of performed poses for the camera from which he draws from. In one account of these images, they are referred to as "[a]rtefacts of what Adler had been told was a modelling audition..."[48] Like the photographs of Edward Weston's son, the conventions of the family album are reconfigured into differently coded images of childhood, no longer private images for the sole consumption of family and friends. Instead the images are taken within a different lexicon, with the young Adler adopting a hybrid of poses from fashion spreads and the family album. In one image, Adler stands with her foot on a fence, her body tilted three-quarters towards the camera in a variation of the studio portrait convention for giving female models a flattering twist to their body. Adler gazes out from beneath a heavy loop of hair that sweeps across her forehead and one eye, her hand balanced on the fence in a studied placement that appears to have been under the photographer's instruction. Rather than reconstructing these scenes with models, as in the work of Hellen van Meene, here Adler reconstructs the photographs by drawing them, and then returns them to their photographic source by photographing them. Rather than acting out the scene, taking the place of

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[48] Michael Duncan, "LA Portraiture: Post-Cool", *Art in America*, vol. 87, no. 10, October 1999, pp. 124-131, p. 128.

the photographer, Adler imaginatively re-enacts the scene by her solitary performance of drawing and

rephotographing. The quiet aggression that is often seen as a signature in the work of artists such as van

Meene is also drawn into the process of making the work, with the destruction of the original drawing

acting as a symbolic act obliterating the 'original', preventing a fantasy of an unmediated engagement with

the photographic performance presented.

Once in Love With Amy, 1997

In many ways this suite of photographs is the partner of _What Happened to Amy?_ Book-ending the artist's

adolescence, this series is of a 19-year-old Adler, photographed by an older woman, the artist's then lover

(figs. 4.9-4.10). The series is the most complex that Adler has completed in terms of presenting a narrative

through the images. The first three images show the teenage Adler depicted in black top and grey

trousers, posed on a porch, smiling slightly for the camera in one image. Then, the photographs move

inside, with Adler shown in the process of undressing, holding the gaze of the photographer/viewer as she

undoes the snap on her trousers. Then, Adler is shown naked, lying stretched out on a wooden table, the

photographs revolving around her prone body, producing a circular motion across the set of images, the

table merging into darkness. With this suite of images, the urge to narrativise becomes very strong, the

structural logic of the images fading against the intensity of this performance enacted for the camera.

These photographs are hybrids – the drawn figures of Adler are digitally placed into the original

photographic frame. This disjuncture between the drawn image and the photographic surround is an

awkward one, the background appearing unreal against the two-dimensional Adler. Without the cohesive

surface – either drawn or photographic – these images resist a completely autobiographical narrative.

Instead, the drawn image withholds the original photographic encounter, and instead provides a doubly

mediated version of events. The awkwardness of the young Adler is echoed by the transitional format of

the work – a technique Adler has only used occasionally when making her images. The transitory nature

of this series also echoes the different relationship enacted between the adolescent Adler and the older

photographer. Rather than the young adolescent as in _What Happened to Amy?_ or the pre-pubescent

boys in *The Problem Child*, here the model has, in Adler's words "reached the age of consent". She continues:

> In my previous works all my subjects had been somewhat adolescent and the space between the subject and photographer was charged and tentative. I wanted to find a way for the camera to aggress on the subject and it was a huge bonus when I remembered these pictures because it is exactly what happened. It was not performed, it was real.[49]

The predatory nature of these images make the issue of consent still rather grey, with the confident gaze of the teenage Adler echoing across from her younger self in *What Happened to Amy?*. The young woman takes centre stage, with the resulting tension arising because of the doubling of intentions – does she appear confident as she is performing a fantasy of herself? Just as the figures of celebrities form a fantasy space for the adolescent, who is projecting onto the figure of the adolescent Adler here? The desire and projections of the original photographer, Adler as a teenager, Adler as an adult, re-drawing herself, and the viewer, are layered in the same manner as the drawn image is superimposed onto the photographic scene. The performative encounter before the camera is one in which the young Adler presents herself as a desirable body for her lover, the photographs taking on the narrative of the soft porn spread – from the model fully clothed through to the titillating undressing, with the finale of nakedness being purveyed from every angle. A private encounter is transformed through the cultural narratives that it quotes from, turning it into fiction, quotation, in a reverse manoeuvre of the appropriationist's lifting from popular culture, turning the mundane into the unfamiliar.

The attention that has focused on this series, and *What Happened to Amy?* has, in part, been due to their autobiographical content and heavily eroticised presentation of the adolescent artist. Adler herself appears to be ambivalent about their elevated status, emphasising that they are solutions to particular problems she has posed for herself, rather than being separate from her appropriated images from other sources. They do hold keys to how Adler's work is different from the earlier appropriation artists such as Prince and Levine, as well as the photographic performances of Cindy Sherman, who is also cited within Crimp's 1980 article as using photographic appropriationist strategies. Discussing the issue of using herself in her

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[49] Adler, email conversation with the author.

work Adler says: "I don't think the term 'self-portraiture' applies directly here – or really to any of my work. I'm the subject in only about half my pictures; but rather than seeing myself as the subject, I think I'm playing a part: sometimes I'm the lead, sometimes I'm not."[50] This focus on roles being played helps to describe the way in which Adler's models form a cast of characters that merge and overlap. Her younger selves function as ways in which to enter into voyeuristic photographic spaces in ways that take apart the roles of photographer and model, with the act of drawing the photographs adding an invisible performance by the artist on top of the scenes depicted. Adler returns the viewer again and again to her presence within her work – ambiguous but insistent.

In the most sexualised set of images, in which Adler is posed naked on a coffee table, the photographic ground of the image fades into black. These drawings are stripped of their realistic surroundings, except for the vaguely S&M looking table, with the camera circling around the naked body. Unlike the other images in the series, Adler has her eyes shut in these images, apparently laying herself open for the gaze of the camera. In one image Adler's head lies off the table, her features appearing more like that of a doll than of a person. The recognisable signifiers of Adler – the steady gaze, the blonde hair – are removed. As a series, *Once in Love with Amy* presents a striptease that ends with the model's identity and surroundings literally being erased, so that all that remains is her naked body floating on the table within a black void. It is as if the desire of the photographer has gradually erased all particularity from the scene, so that all that remains is the object of desire, laid out like a sacrifice. In Adler's other work, such a narrative progression is refused, but this exploration of an encounter between photographer and model, mediated through the slavish act of drawing, operates as performance in which the viewer is made uncomfortably complicit with the act of looking as being closely allied to possessing. As Kandel explores, the fan writes about or draws his or her idol as a way of imaginatively possessing the object of their affection.[51] Similarly, Adler's meticulous drawing of her own body combines the temporal and emotional scenes that are being

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[50] Adler, "1000 Words: Amy Adler talks about *Nervous Character*", p. 111.
[51] See Kandel's discussion of slash zines, in which primarily female fans write homoerotic scenarios for their male heroes, in a complex desiring for and projection of their own desires onto their heroes. Kandel, "Sherrie Levine: stalker", p. 70.

performed – from the adolescent Adler presenting herself for a lover to the adult artist Adler taking apart the scene line by line, putting it back together within a conceptual art discourse.

<u>Very Lolita</u>, 1997

In a continuation of her drawing her own archive of images, Adler made the series *Very Lolita*, 1997, based on a series of head shots of herself at 14, taken for an audition for a Broadway play (fig. 4.11). The title of the series comes from the comments made by the director of the play after her audition. Adler says that the inspiration for the series came from looking at a series of headshots of celebrities before they were famous.[52] The discourse of the celebrity runs through Adler's work, with the way in which the characters featured in magazines, films and television function as role models and fantasy selves for the viewer. Discussing the process of drawing these headshots of herself she says: "It's so obvious that I didn't want to be Lolita, so the pictures are kind of off the mark, which was an odd thing to try and draw."[53] Rather than Sherman's enactments of fictional characters, seductive women from generic, Hitchcockian films, Adler uses an enactment that is a found object from her own life, a performance that is, for her, filled with ambivalence. Here the figure of the adolescent stands in, yet again, for the projection of identity and the complex of identifications that make up a sense of self. The 14-year-old Adler in the photographs looks at the camera with the same intensity as her younger self in *What Happened to Amy?*, an expression that can be read as both seductive and aggressively awkward. In *Very Lolita* the artist's drawings float on large white backgrounds, the dislocated heads in the tradition of the fan's drawing of their idol. The ambivalence that Adler recalls feeling is not necessarily obvious in the images, but is crucial to their selection for being turned into artworks. Just as the series *What Happened to Amy?* highlights the disturbingly sexualised

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[52] "Recently I made a piece called *Very Lolita*, which was partly inspired by a collection of head shots I have of young actresses before they were discovered. These actresses rose to stardom, but there are so many similar pictures of girls who didn't. When I was fourteen, there was an open call on Broadway for the part of Lolita. Some adults I knew rallied together and forced me to go. Edward Albee was directing the play, and after my audition, apparently, he scribbled 'very Lolita' on a note pad." Adler, "1000 Words: Amy Adler talks about *Nervous Character*", p. 111.
[53] Ibid.

presentation of a barely adolescent Adler, so too does *Very Lolita* focus attention on the poses that are used to signify the attractive, compliant, adolescent model.

Comparing these works with Sherman's enactments of female stereotypes, what seems similar is a compulsion to explore these roles, to try and understand their fascination. Sherman's performances have become iconic mainly because of their convincing nature – the almost imperceptible oscillation between the 'originals' that she draws upon and the performances she enacts for the camera. Parody does not come near describing the process taking place in Sherman's photography, any more than it helps in a discussion of her contemporaries Levine or Prince. Rather, thought through the logic of the fan, the compulsion to act out these characters becomes redirected towards acting them out as perfectly as possible to enable the possibility of 'becoming' the characters. This potential to become what is desired is set up as an impossible goal, but it is a narrative that runs throughout the images nevertheless. The position of the artist is not one of ironic detachment, rather what is presented is an exploration of subject positions in the face of seductive cultural fantasies of the self. Just as Adler is pictured looking 'very lolita', the ambivalence in these images is one fired not by rejecting this label completely, but as a negotiation of trying to perfect the stereotype whilst remaining unconvinced.

This ambivalence can be explored further through the idea of disidentification. José Esteban Muñoz explains the term as identificatory position in which the subject is not able to identify fully, but rather than resisting the identification completely "neither opts to assimilate within a structure nor strictly opposes it; rather disidentification is a strategy that 'works on and against dominant ideology'."[54] Muñoz goes on to quote Butler: "What are the possibilities of politicising *dis*identification, this experience of *misrecognition*, this uneasy sense of standing under a sign to which one does and does not belong?"[55] The ambivalence in Adler's appropriations can be seen as trying to negotiate this position, following on from Warhol's attempts to queer as well as empty out his sitters, and Sherman's attempts to both enact and deconstruct her generic cinematic fantasies. Warhol's depiction of female celebrities, as has already been mentioned,

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[54] José Esteban Muñoz, "Famous and Dandy Like B 'n' Andy: Race, Pop and Basquiat", in *Pop Out: Queer Warhol*, p. 147. Quote from Michel Pecheux, *Language, Semantics and Ideology*, New York: St Martins, 1982.
[55] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, London and New York: Routledge, 1993, p. 219.

have been conceptualised as men rather than women, with the queer desire of the viewer rewriting their status from women to queens, performing a melancholic gender identity that relates more to the lip synch of a drag queen than to a normative conception of femininity. The figure of the fan becomes one through which to understand this process of disidentification, as the object of desire is transformed through the consumption of the fan, who is both complicit in the commodity system as well as being a disruptive, unruly desiring presence.

Part of being a fan is the fantasy that you are the object of your desire. The love object stands in for a fantasy version of the self, as well as a fantasy lover. This overlapping of desire and identification is something already discussed in the chapters on Jones, Gaskell, van Meene and Schorr, in which the photographer, model and viewer take their positions in more complicated constellations than that of the traditional voyeur or portraitist. The figure of the fan crosses over into the figure of the obsessive adolescent, an engagement with fantasies of the self and desire which are disruptive in their construction of repetitive, personalised narratives, operating in a similar manner to that of the appropriationist in the deconstruction and reconstruction of the source material. As discussed in terms of Sherrie Levine, this overlaying of the character of the fan onto the appropriation artist provokes some alternative narratives around postmodern photography and art. Considering contemporary photographic portraits as relying on a postmodern logic of repetition and appropriation, as well as playing with structures of identification, allows Adler's work to be seen in conversation with this work, as well as introducing a history of photography that has, up to this point, been only touched on lightly. The difference between this generation of photographers, and the appropriation art of the late 1970s and early 1980s is partly the way in which the appropriated source material is approached, and partly the theoretical contexts in which they are set. As with the example of Sherrie Levine's series *After Edward Weston*, the context in which the work is considered drastically alters the work's meanings and the supposed intention of the artist in making the work. The consideration of the first generation of postmodern art has mainly been within the logic of the copy, seeing this concern with the structures of representation as more central than the actual material used to examine these structures. An exception to this approach has been considerations of the work of Cindy Sherman, with her focus on the female model and her performances within her photographs

producing a very different set of theoretical readings than that of the work of Prince or Levine. Here it seems to be the centrality of the performance in Sherman's work which has encouraged a different strategy in approaching her oeuvre. In contrast to the performance of Prince or Levine, which confines itself to the choice of appropriated material and then rephotographing that material, Sherman becomes her appropriated material, almost as if by inhabiting the space of the image she can take it apart, or understand it. In series such as *Untitled Film Stills*, 1977-1980, there is a flatness to the surface of Sherman's photographs that disallows the viewer's entry into the performance photographed, in a similar way that Prince's repetition of poses or objects flattens their specificity and narrative (fig. 4.12). Instead of the similarity between the images disrupting the 'originality' of the image, as in Prince's work, in Sherman's photographs it is her insistent, yet elusive presence that flattens the images into copies, repetitions. Where does Adler's work stand in relation to the performances of Sherman? In her use of appropriated imagery from her personal archive of images as well as images from media sources, Adler takes a step back into the position of the consumer of the images, with her enactments of stereotypes coming from her own performances made outside her art practice. Rather than performing these fantasies of the self, Adler redraws the images, and then destroys them. Similarly, the other photographers discussed in this study take the position of the photographer, rather than the model, using the figure of the adolescent to stand in for a nostalgic, younger self, as well as the paradigm of the attractive female model. Whereas in Sherman's work, the position of the photographer is not so important, the dynamic being one of self-presentation – albeit using codes that reference a masculine, voyeuristic gaze – in Adler's work, the performance of the photographer and the viewer is as important as the performance of the model, whether this is Adler as a younger woman or girl, or an appropriated portrait.

To understand the performative nature of Adler's work, the concept of sibling relations helps to unravel the characters that populate her photographs and the methods which she uses to generate her images. Juliet Mitchell's theorising of sibling relationships has already been discussed, but I want to consider her conceptualisation of identity in relation to Adler's work as it provides a way into the structural operations in Adler's images. For Mitchell, lateral relationships and identifications hold the key to understanding

sexuality that is not normatively heterosexual, or what she describes as "non-reproductive sexuality".[56] As explored in my discussion on narcissism in chapter three, Mitchell's theorisations around sibling relationships blurs the lines between the self and the other, with identity being formed through a serial logic, rather than one of lack.[57] Key to my discussion here of appropriation strategies and their potential crossover into the activities of the fan or the obsessed teenager is Mitchell's situating of sibling relationships at the heart of postmodernism.[58]

Here the strategies described by Krauss and Crimp in the early 1980s – the focus on the copy and its repression within modernism – parallel what Mitchell describes as a repressed aspect of psychoanalysis. For Mitchell, the focus on vertical relationships between parent and child have ignored the importance of lateral relationships, with their emphasis on seriality and 'presentness', an uncanny echo of the postmodern discourse around the copy. Taking Judith Butler's concepts of gender as performative, Mitchell explores the underlying structures that might explain the way that this performativity operates, alighting upon the importance of aggression and the "minimal difference" between siblings.[59] At the core of sibling relationships is the fear of annihilation, that the self is not unique, and is constantly under threat by peers and siblings who threaten identity. Overcoming this aggression towards those that are almost the self is central to Mitchell's theory, an aggression that is also filled with narcissistic and object love.[60] Adler's process of slavishly copying the photograph, whose content can be seen to stand in for herself, or

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[56] "There seems to be no use of an intrinsic difference here in the way that marks the social construction of sexual difference for reproduction. Gender sexuality can be realised in transgendering, homosexuality and heterosexuality." Juliet Mitchell, *Siblings: Sex and Violence*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003, p. 128.

[57] Ibid.

[58] "Sibling and peer cohorts are the personnel of postmodernism with its focus on sameness and difference, its concern with 'time present' rather than 'time past'…. Social groups not constructed along the apparent binary of reproduction rely on managing violence unleashed by the trauma of threatened replication; representing sexuality is crucial." Ibid., p. 31.

[59] Mitchell says that she disagrees to some degree with Judith Butler's analysis of gender, as she argues that the performative aspect of gender that Butler considers has always been a possibility alongside the binary logic of reproductive, Oedipal sexuality. I think that perhaps this disagreement is present in Mitchell's work to a lesser degree than she contends, with her analysis of sibling relationships providing a temporal aspect to Butler's theorisation of performativity, and the disruption and agency that can be generated by the performative. It is not just a question of 'acting a gender', but instead, it is the seriality that Mitchell highlights that allows a way into the potential psychic power of the performative – the repetitive actions that construct identity, both amongst the other repetitions and amongst other people's performative identities. When considered within a sibling/peer group, performative identities are constructed through the 'minimal' differences and similarities across a group, rather than in a vertical identification with the Mother or the Father. See Juliet Mitchell, Tamar Garb and Mignon Nixon, "A Conversation with Juliet Mitchell", *October* 113, Summer 2005, pp. 9-26.

[60] Mitchell, *Siblings*, p. 36.

a love-object that is closely allied to her, and then photographing this image to preserve it, whilst destroying the original object of her attention, appears to replicate the processes that Mitchell describes. This process, when seen in the context of sibling relationships, also points to the queerness of Adler's work. Rather than seeing her work as embodying a lesbian strategy of representation, or aesthetic, her malleable points of desire and identification can be seen to queer the binary of normatively heterosexual desire, whilst denying a definition of a polarised homosexual desire. The combination of narcissistic and nostalgic desire for the images redrawn, along with the objectified process of emotionally incorporating the image and then destroying it, constantly reference the seriality of the images, their placement between commercially ordained modes of desire and the disruption of these modes by taking up multiple positions of identification. The distinction that Mitchell makes between the self and the other that is loved as the self, conceptualises the relationship of the copy to another copy, rather than to the original. The loss or impossibility of the original is outside of the arena of sibling relations, as the self is defined in the small variations of performative repetitions. The futile, aggressive act of the fan, wanting to 'own' their idol, is replicated in the appropriationist's strategy of taking images and objects out of their original context to show how they can be remodelled into new, disruptive narratives. What Adler's work highlights is the residue and the allure of the cultural narratives from which the imagery has been taken, that the seriality of appropriation forms another narrative of desire, rather than simply deconstructing the narratives from which the images have been taken.

This seriality, and the fear of annihilation that Mitchell sees at the base of sibling relations can be seen in a rather different light in Helene Deutsch's theorisation of the teenager. In her 1968 book *Selected Problems of Adolescence* Deutsch moves away from her earlier book *The Psychology of Women*, from seeing adolescence solely as a stage that the individual goes through to an adult maturity, towards an understanding of the importance of social development. Her interest in the teenager can be seen as an acknowledgement of this social category becoming more distinct in the post-war era. Deutsch explains the reasons for beginning her study:

> My own interest in adolescence was reawakened by events outside the sphere of the
>
> psychoanalytic couch. It was revived by the 'noise from the street', so to speak, the increasingly

evident restlessness of adolescents, which has more and more come to be expressed not so much

in individualistic forms as in group formations.[61]

She attempts to theorise the developments of teenage groups that she sees around her, commenting on

the uniform of long hair, greasy jeans and jackets that she sees as providing a group identity for many

young men. Her mainly negative comments on the androgynous appearance of many teenagers

nevertheless provide interesting parallels with Mitchell's construction of sibling relations, as well as the

seriality and ambiguous emptiness in the work of Warhol, Adler and the other appropriation artists

discussed. Deutsch sees that the girls in these teenage groups function mainly as what she calls

"supplementary passive 'doubles'" to the boys, and describes the androgyny of their appearance as hiding

their real conflicts, which she identifies as circulating around preparations for motherhood.[62] If Deutsch's

biologically determined comments around what she sees as these teenagers' 'real' issues are put to one

side, her discussion of their androgyny (what she calls bisexuality) is illuminating. For Deutsch, what the

androgyny signifies is a fear of mortality, saying: "Double-sexed unity is the way to achieve bisexuality

and, with it, the ultimate goal of immortality."[63] Deutsch's construction of the teenage couple as blurring

sexual difference echoes the comments by Mitchell on sibling relations representing a 'non-reproductive

sexuality'. The teenager's seriality cannot be understood except as grotesque in Deutsch's construction, a

denial of their adult, Oedipalised sexuality. Even so, it is informative in this discussion to see how this

conceptualisation of adolescence occurs during the late 1960s, a period in which the teenager signifies a

refusal of bourgeois, heteronormative identities and becomes a distinct consumer category.

Deutsch also comments that the crises of adolescence are becoming prolonged into adulthood, and that

the parents of the adolescents she observed "are often still involved in their own, not yet completed

adolescence."[64] The problems of narcissistic and bisexual tendencies in adolescence are thus extended

beyond a defined age limit, with the focus on lateral relations and a fear of annihilation that resonate with

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[61] Helene Deutsch, *Selected Problems of Adolescence with Special Emphasis on Group Formation*, London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Pyscho-Analysis, 1968, p. 10.
[62] Ibid., p. 77.
[63] Ibid., p. 80. She continues: "The grotesque denial of sex differences is an expression of the boy's own feminine fantasies, by projection onto an external object and, at the same time, an identification with this object, in a kind of mirror-twin fantasy. It is like a realisation of the myth of Narcissus who, upon looking into the mirror of river water, sees the image of his twin sister."
[64] Ibid., p. 9.

the queered, commodified works of Warhol, as well as with the later work of the appropriation artists and Adler's contemporary reconceptualisation of these issues. Deutsch sees these developments in teenage groups in wholly negative terms:

> I myself have never seen more unhappy-looking boys and girls. Their triumph is not one of victorious youth, but of hate-filled, resentful young people who, for all that they may have aspirations toward achievement and progress, evidently suffer from emotional deprivation and a kind of deadening, as a result of their so-called free and unlimited sexual excitement.[65]

This assessment of the teenager as a fundamentally unhappy, deadened subject resonates with the strangely empty presence of both Warhol as an artistic persona and the subjects of his portraits. Rather than Deutsch's analysis of this deadening coming from an excess of sexual excitement, reading her comments alongside Warhol, this ambivalent status can be seen as a resistance to normative forms of identity and sexuality. Here the performances of queered, or perhaps emptied, identities are enacted through a serial logic, so that gender, appearance, sexual acts and desires are made part of an interchangeable sequence. From Warhol's repetition of Monroe's face to Adler's prone adolescent body laid out for the viewer, the object of desire is articulated as emptied, deadened, ambivalent. This self-conscious emptying out of subjectivity produces a viewing position from which the image can be consumed as a sexualised object of desire as well as a site of identification, whilst provoking a discomfort with entering into such an exchange with a repetitive, commodified image. The presence of desire is not negated, but rather presented as an ambivalent set of negotiations to be undertaken by both the artist and the viewer.

Different Girls, 1999

Different Girls, 1999, is a set of 12 photographs, of different celebrities, unnamed, posed looking at the camera, a similar sultry stare on each of these faces (figs. 4.13-4.15). This stare is similar to the expression worn by the younger Adler pictured in the previous series *What Happened to Amy?* and *Once*

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[65] Ibid., p. 102.

in Love with Amy, an expression that unites many of Adler's portraits, one that reads alternatively as intense engagement with the photographer or bland acquiescence to the camera's gaze. Like the models of Sarah Jones or Hellen van Meene, this cool look into the camera's lens is one that fixes the viewer in a direct moment of contact with the image – the voyeuristic gaze held and returned, the blankness of the models disconcerting in the acceptance of their appraisal. In Adler's work, the presence of the photographer – Adler – is made visceral by the intervention of the drawn image, in much a similar way as Jones and van Meene make their presence felt through the staging and costuming of their photographs. As the images come together across series, Adler's preoccupation with 'different girls' becomes a subtext that runs through numerous projects. Talking about her selection of girls for the project she says:

> Most of the girls are very 'this year'…. *different girls* are borrowed from lots of different scenarios, available to me through a range of media… a CD cover, billboard, magazine, publicity still, all arenas made accessible through other forms of entertainment. They are performers, an actress, a singer, an athlete for example… in drawing them I also see them as performers, and, again, they are either performing for me or, well for you, and since, ultimately I'm the one doing the drawing, it's basically a bit of a decoy for maybe my own performance.[66]

Here Adler's presence oscillates between photographer and model, echoing the distance found in her use of autobiographical material with an intimacy in her use of found imagery. The title '*different girls*' points to the interchangeable nature of the models chosen, as well as their specificity, with the reason for their choice being only known by the artist.

When looking through the series, a similar effect is felt as if a personal narrative is being imposed on the images as different girls are potentially identified – the girl leaning against the wall could be Anna Kournikova, the tennis player, the girl with the tattoo 'Angel' could be Melanie C (Sporty Spice), two images appear to be of 'Buffy', the actress Sarah Michelle Geller, and another two of Britney Spears or LeAnn Rimes. But is this identification only due to my own projections onto these drawings? Can I make them appear to be different girls? Apart from being pretty certain that the girl with the riding crop is Sarah Michelle Geller, and the girl with the tattoo is Melanie C, doubt creeps in with my other identifications.

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[66] Adler, email conversation with the author.

There are certain girls I can't place at all – there isn't even a generic familiarity about the topless girl in the red trousers. She stares out from a blue background, looking like a vampy version of Adler, with blonde shoulder length hair and her casual track bottoms. Another image shows another topless model, this time more typically 'fashion', the image in black and white, the cross hatching behind the model texturing the surface of the print. Adler does not identify her models, as she says that the choice of some of the images was dictated by liking the work of certain photographers, and so just to name the models would not tell the whole story. Added to this is her own personal choices, narratives around the models that are withheld from the viewer due to their anonymity. Perhaps in response to the narrativisation of her previous works which featured herself, here Adler chooses different girls that have similarities to herself, but are picked out of their original context, their narratives only made by the viewer. Adler decides on what to tell the viewer, saying that she chooses not to identify all her models to allow for different narratives to exist within them, and to maintain a distance from her own personal fictions she constructs through her choice of images. She says about this series:

> I guess the photographic surface has always acted as a possible chaperone in that sense, somehow the distance created in the act of photographing the drawing ultimately keeps the scenario and the figures at a distance that in *different girls*, for example, is almost a stage, a kind of 'look but don't touch' scenario that is prevalent in a lot of my imagery. The thing is it's layered in with maybe a shift from the kind of appropriation of Richard Prince or Sherrie Levine, in that the desire may be witnessed through the appropriating of these girls is a-girl-looking-at-girls and I've always thought that might distinguish my practice from his, or theirs…[67]

This idea of the photographic surface operating as a chaperone illustrates the layers that Adler creates in her work – denying the viewer an 'authentic' engagement with her work. Instead, the identities and desires presented are mediated through popular culture, so that even the young Adler in *What Happened to Amy?* is already playing her part for the camera, using a vocabulary of poses culled from magazines, television and films. Similarly, the position of the photographer is seen as drawing on a vocabulary of shots to present the model in the appropriate seductive light, with the similarities between many of the poses in *different girls* and Adler's own image archive attesting to this relationship.

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[67] Ibid.

Adler's assertion that her work is different from that of early appropriation artists in part as it is "a-girl-looking-at-girls" points to the queering of the desiring gaze in her work. How the girl is looking at girls is not defined, but the definitions provided by Mitchell of the closeness of object love and narcissism in sibling relations seems to suggest a fairly accurate summation of Adler's gaze. As Liz Kotz has explored, these girls are both surrogates for Adler herself and signifiers of her own desire. The mutation of the characters in her work – from herself, to her younger self, to young boys to teenage female celebrities – keeps the precise nature of the identification undecided, except when looked at through the serial logic of sibling relationships and performative identity.

Adler's early work was framed by its display in a number of exhibitions of 'queer' art in the mid-1990s, with the highlighting of a disruptively sexualised gaze in the appropriationist structure illustrating the flexibility of identifications both within the work and within normative notions of sexuality and sexual identity.[68] Adler is glad that attention has moved away from the readings of her work that focus on the 'queer content', saying that "I was very happy that it [the works' queerness and Adler's sexuality] didn't continue to get discussed all the time, because I felt it was about the moment, not about a position I was taking. In my work I was taking all these different roles, these different sexualities, it changes all the time."[69] Adler's comment illustrates the way in which her work, whilst it may be queer in a number of ways, is not simply about positioning a lesbian identity or desire in place of a heterosexual one. The "different sexualities" that take place, or are staged in Adler's work, are closely allied to Mitchell's definition of gender sexuality, with the serial, repetitive, mutating logic from the self to other that is reliant on maintaining small differences. This serial relationship is one that is played out in relation to other characters and other artists, as well as being a relationship that performs a non-reproductive set of sexualities.

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[68] For example, *After Sherrie Levine* was included in the seminal exhibition *In A Different Light*, curated by Nayland Blake and Lawrence Rinder, University Art Museum, San Francisco, 1995. This exhibition was important in the articulation of a queer art history, as the exhibition was multi-generational, with a curatorial remit that foregrounded the artwork as being the site of queerness rather than the sexuality of the artist: "By trying to work from objects and images – instead of exclusively from the sexual orientation of the makers – we arrived at one of our most important operating principles: to include both homosexual and non-homosexual artists, and to leave sexual orientation unspecified in the exhibition." Rinder, "An Introduction to a Different Light", *In A Different Light: Visual Culture, Sexual Identity, Queer Practice*, Nayland Blake, Lawrence Rinder and Amy Scholder eds., San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1995, p. 6.
[69] Adler, conversation with the author.

<u>*Untitled (girlfriends)*</u>

To explore this serial aspect of Adler's work, as it is played out in relation to the formal construction of the

work and its content, I want to briefly consider a series by Richard Prince that has parallels with Adler's

different girls. Prince's series of *girlfriends*, started in the early 1980s, and reprised for an exhibition at

Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York, in 1993, presents photographs of bikers' girlfriends posed on

motorbikes, taken from enthusiasts magazines, in a kind of Readers' Wives for the biking community.

Almost the opposite to Levine's *After Edward Weston*, here the sexuality that is projected onto the models,

photographers and viewer aggressively takes centre stage, not needing the canny viewers of the

restrained homoeroticism as found in Crimp's bedroom. In relation to Adler's series, Prince's girls are not

celebrities, but are imitating the poses supplied either by their own cultural imagination or that of their

boyfriends' behind the camera. In critiques of the work, the amateur aspect of the photography and posing

is often focused on, an uncomfortable performance staged in an approximation of numerous pornographic

conventions. Luc Sante comments in his essay on the photographs:

> The ugliness of the girlfriend pictures is, indeed, their most interesting feature, and it is also, not
>
> incidentally, their proof of authenticity. A centrefold spread from one of these same magazines,
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> featuring a professional model posed and lighted by a professional photographer, is mere
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> boilerplate, the competent execution of a job.[70]

This 'ugliness' is hard to define, and is not necessarily a quality that appears in each of the images. Some

of the models are posed stiffly, awkwardly gazing into the camera. Others though, pose with self-

possessed, challenging stares, as in one photograph, *Untitled (girlfriend),* 1993, of a girlfriend with long

blonde hair, gazing from underneath her long fringe, her coquettish gaze set off by a slight smile, that

seems to acknowledge the self-conscious irony of her pose (fig. 4.16). Perhaps a better description of the

images' allure is that they document a performance that falls outside commercial pornography, in which

intimacy is a construct, the image flattened by their interchangeable nature. In the images Prince has

appropriated, there is again the sense of the lost original, as in Adler's work, a yearning for the initial

engagement between model and photographer, whilst that engagement is made impossible, a fiction.

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[70] Luc Sante, "*Untitled (girlfriend)*, 1999", *Richard Prince*, London: Phaidon, Rosetta Brooks, Jeff Rian and Luc Sante, 2003, p. 75.

Prince's appropriationist strategy is similar to Adler 'hiring' herself to do her drawing, with the images chosen by the artist by criteria that are not made available to the viewer, except that all the images are of girlfriends from biker magazines. This distancing from the material that is presented to the viewer short-circuits an unselfconsciously desiring relationship with the images, whilst not being able to drain the images of their sexual ambiguity. As the fan collects images of his or her beloved in the hope of getting closer to them the bigger and more complete their collection becomes, or the adolescent writes and rewrites the name of their beloved over and over again in a kind of spell-making, Prince and Adler's images are structural versions of this sexually charged mode of collecting and owning.

Prince's series of girlfriend photographs stands in conversation with his appropriated images from advertising and fashion, creating a tension with the high gloss of the glamorous models that populate his early work. Prince's own relationship to consumer culture echoes the interface that Adler explores, with Prince explaining how:

> I had been bombarded by fiction for 25 years. By TV fiction movie fiction magazine fiction. What was real was unreal and what was unreal was – … a lot of things. Unlike Breton in Nadja I was walking around awake thinking everything else was awake. I had become much to [sic] concious [sic] and my problem seemed to be that nothing was new. I saw everything as if I had already seen it before.[71]

Earlier in the same text, Prince explains why he began to use advertising images in his work: "At the time I didn't feel I could ask an audience (no matter how small) to believe in some kind of personal expression…. I liked that the advertising image looked impossibly true. (They reminded me of stills from a film)."[72] In these two quotes are all the vital ingredients that make up Prince's appropriation strategies. Advertising images appear 'true', 'real' life is like the movies, everything is a quotation, popular culture has overtaken any notion of the original, the authentic, either in terms of the self or the artwork. His comments appear to 'quote' from Warhol, the master of deadpan one-liners. "I like things to be exactly the same over and over

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[71] Richard Prince, from an undated text reproduced in *Richard Prince Photographs*, Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2002, p. 1.
[72] Ibid.

again"[73] appears to provide the appropriation artist with his or her methodology, whilst "I want to be a machine"[74] and "I like boring things"[75] allies Warhol with industrialised products and the standardised output of consumer culture. Warhol's comments about his relationship to his work perhaps show why Prince couldn't ask his audience to believe in personal expression: "If you want to know all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There's nothing behind it."[76]

Like Adler, the starting point in both Prince's and Warhol's work is this interface between media fantasy and personal fantasy – the places where cultural narratives have become intertwined with the sense of self to a degree where it is no longer possible to separate them. Prince's texts reflect this slippery sense of self, and work, often writing in the third person, or the third person plural, recycling texts with minimal differences, so that the first person is just one more fictional stance within a shifting set of voices. The confusion between 'real' life and the processed version presented through the media is something that Adler also addresses in her comments on her working practice, saying:

> I really realised that naming these people is not the point because who they actually are is only relevant to me but the idea is broader, for example, who do you think represents you or your life in film? It's not one person but fragmented characters portrayed by a range of actors and actresses and their on and off screen identities.[77]

Adler's comments echo the layers of fiction that Prince has created around his work and life, with numerous text based works being faked 'real' documents about him, as in his 'interview' with JG Ballard.[78]

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[73] Andy Warhol, quoted in Foster, "Death in America". Quote taken from undated statement by Warhol, as read by Nicholas Love at the memorial mass for Andy Warhol, St Patrick's Cathedral, New York, 1 April 1987, and as cited in Kynaston McShine, ed., *Andy Warhol: A Retrospective*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989, p. 457.

[74] Ibid. Quote taken from Gene Swenson, "What is Pop Art? Answers from 8 Painters, Part I", *Art News*, 62, November 1963, p. 26.

[75] Ibid. Quote taken from undated statement by Warhol, and as cited in McShine, ed., *Andy Warhol: A Retrospective*, p. 457.

[76] Ibid. Quote taken from Berg, "Andy: My True Story", p. 3.

[77] Adler, conversation with the author.

[78] Published in Spring 1985, in *ZG*, no. 13, the text was quoted as being reprinted from *Punch*, September 1967, an interview with JG Ballard titled "Extra ordinary". The title alerts the reader to the fictitious nature of the text, which recounts Prince's supposed flights back and forth across the Atlantic and the Caribbean on the eve of his eighteenth birthday. The interview collapses time and identities in the recounting of an interview from 1967, transcribed apparently "by Richard Prince from JG Ballard's notes taken in an August 1967 conversation between JG Ballard and Richard Prince". Reproduced in *Richard Prince*, pp. 86-94.

Just as the 'interview' between Ballard and Prince is a faked encounter, in Adler's work, the veracity of her

images is impossible to verify, as is her motivation in reproducing them. In response to curiosity as to

whether she actually destroyed her drawings, Adler made a piece called *Why Would I Lie?*, 1999, which

featured the artist drawn life-scale, apparently trying to speak to the viewer across a number of large

photographs (fig. 4.17). The silently spoken monologue provided another illustration of the impossibility of

engaging with the performances embedded in the photographic surface, beyond a series of imaginative,

fictive identifications.

Running throughout Adler's work is the idea of a secret narrative, known only by the artist, another

'original' that is lost in the process of creating the work. At first, this idea might seem to move her practice

away from that of Prince's and Warhol's, but there are ways in which their own desires and subterfuges

continue to pull their work away from a machinic, structural notion of appropriation. Talking about her

choice not to give the names of her models, including those in *different girls*, Adler says "I feel like there

are certain kinds of information that just tip the scales in ways that are not important. Like when you ask

me who was there when you took the photographs? I can say no one was there. It doesn't matter…. It

feels easy enough to say, but at the same time there are reasons that I don't want to say."[79] When

discussing the photographic surface acting as a "chaperone", Adler also says: "… there are other levels of

motivation at play [than she has made public]… a much more narrative possibility that remains private to

me. A sort of secret non fiction…."[80] This secrecy and personal identification can be seen in some of

Prince's comments about the girlfriends series. Discussing the negative response to these images – seen

as demeaning to women and misogynist by many critics at the time – Prince gives this surprising answer

to his interviewer:

> Well, as far as the biker chicks are concerned, I just wouldn't mind being one. I've never said that
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> before, but I think that's what I really feel. There's a certain kind of desire and a certain amount of
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> passion. I like what I think they look like, or perhaps what they are. I think many of these pictures
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> have their own egos and they have an imagination of their own. That's my own particular

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[79] Adler, conversation with the author.
[80] Ibid.

reaction…. What I'm interested in is a kind of overdetermination or the effect of the image. It's not

unlike a TV image to me or a movie still.[81]

Prince's comments return again to the complex of identifications that take place in relation to these

images, so that the identities of the model, photographer and viewer are complicated and overlaid. The

desire presented in these images is again one appears to operate on a lateral axis, a seriality of loving the

other as the self.

Untitled (girlfriend), 1993

Returning to Luc Sante's discussion of Richard Prince's girlfriend photographs, the conclusion made is

that: "In the end, though, the effect is simply and crudely masturbatory. The girlfriend is a requisite as a

prop but no more capable of deriving pleasure from the situation than the machine itself."[82] The woman as

machine, mannequin, object – this is a familiar refrain around images of the adolescent girl, from

Augustine to Bellmer's doll to van Meene's models. As explored in previous chapters, this machinic quality

stands in for an emptiness, a subject made object by the camera. However, this emptiness is never quite

completed, is a fiction that cannot be sustained if the identifications between model, photographer and

viewer are to be effected. What is perhaps true of Warhol's Marilyns, Prince's girlfriends and Adler's

different girls is that this emptiness perceived in the bodies of the models cited above is taken to

encompass the whole of the picture plane. If everyday life becomes a movie, then reality is a flattened

image of itself, a hysterical facsimile. A copy of a copy of a copy will always hold in it the desire for the

original, or at least a fantasy of subjectivity projected onto the object. Levine's *After Edward Weston* sets

the viewer chasing through her photograph, to Weston's, to the model pictured. Quoting Douglas Crimp:

"Levine has said that, when she showed her photographs to a friend, he remarked that they only made

him want to see the originals. 'Of course,' she replied, 'and the originals make you want to see that little

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[81] Richard Prince, quoted in Brian Wallis, "A Conversation with Richard Prince", taken from a public conversation with Richard Prince, Whitney Museum of American Art, May 13 1992, *Art in America*, vol. 81, November 1993, p. 117.
[82] Sante, "*Untitled (girlfriend)* 1999", p. 73.

boy, but when you see the boy, the art is gone.'"[83] This idea, that the art can disappear through the steps

back into the photograph, is one that does not stand up to the simulacral images of Cindy Sherman, who

posits an empty space 'before' the artwork. Perhaps it is the possibility of having a 'before', the fantasy of

an original, that joins the work of Levine, Prince and Adler. However, this 'original' changes depending on

the viewer's sets of associations – from an imaginative identification to the adolescent Adler to nostalgic

memories of similar events to a voyeuristic desire to enter the space as the photographer. By keeping the

intentions of the artist at a distance, the viewer's choices of resonance and narrative is made fragile,

uncertain, as in my identifications of Adler's different girls. When the comments by Prince on the filmic

nature of real life and the truth of advertising cannot exactly be taken at face value in the context of his

constant fictionalising, the emptiness of his chosen models is set into tension with their potential stories,

performances, "secret non fictions" as Adler calls it. Prince and Adler take objects of other people's

desires and both objectify them further – structurally chosen and represented within their formal processes

– as well as reanimate them in new ways through the identifications that are set into place, the

construction of the viewer's identity through the desires and identifications that are made with the images

presented.

To consider a single image from Prince's series of girlfriends seems a venture of uncertain merit, in the

context of the images' instability and their presentation as series rather than singular portraits. However, to

ignore the content of the images is to repress some of the narrative being presented, to see *After Edward

Weston* as an exercise in authorship – which it is – whilst ignoring the choice of image being reauthored,

and the person that is reauthoring the image. In *Untitled (girlfriend)*, 1993, a girl with long brown hair

stares out of the photograph (fig. 4.18a). She does not have the coquettish or uncertain smile that occurs

again and again across the girlfriends series. Instead her steady gaze and outfit of gathered vest top,

jeans and sandals are much less provocative than many of the other girlfriends' skimpy costumes. When

seen next to Adler's work, there is again a confrontational edge to the gaze of the model, as in Adler's

different picturings of her adolescent self. As a photograph on its own, this portrait could sit alongside the

work of Hellen van Meene, or become a found image for Adler to reproduce in her *different girls* series.

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[83] Crimp, "The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism", p. 98, quoting Levine from an unpublished statement, 1980.

When seen amongst the multitude of girlfriends, what becomes clearer is the importance of the different combinations of the same terms – girlfriend, motorbike, seductive pose, close cropping (either done by the original photographer or by Prince). In *Untitled (girlfriend)*, 1993, the opposite effect is achieved by the same set of variables (fig. 4.18b). In this image the girlfriend is posed naked, leaning over the saddle and engine of the bike, her legs sticking out awkwardly behind her. Her strangely posed body has the effect of making her seem part of the bike, a hysteric transposed from Charcot's photographs to the American outdoors, laid out for the viewer adorned only in studded collar and cuff. The availability of her body, and its equation with the bike – both displayed as objects of desire for the photographer – make any narrative that allows the model subjectivity rather difficult. These girlfriends are quasi-structural exercises in desire, the original performances founded on quotations from numerous conventions – from the studio portrait to the pornographic image. Prince's choice of images highlight this uneasy relationship between the performance between two people and their channelling and representing of cultural narratives. Adler's *different girls* draws on this structural dynamic, but inserts her own narratives as a previously pictured 'different girl', and as the female viewer of the photographs. This is emphasised by her own performance in drawing the image, so that she takes part in the performance of the original images in a way that emphasises the complex of identifications beyond that of the photographer's position behind the lens.

A missing original

Alongside the individual *girlfriends*, Prince has also constructed multiple portraits using the biker chick images, in what he calls 'gangs'. These photographs are constructed by taping together a set of slides – normally six or nine images – and then making a large format transparency from the taped together composite (fig. 4.19a). This process then dictates the spacing of the images, and their size in relation to each other. In the 1986 gang *Live Free or Die* nine images are comprised of three colour photographs, three black and white photographs and three faded photographed or photocopied images (fig. 4.19b). The different photographic processes are highlighted by grouping the images together, providing another level of formal construction to the work. The women are mostly bare breasted, set off against the central model

who leans aggressively on her bike, wearing a leather jacket and a t-shirt bearing the slogan "Fuck Off+Die!". These earlier *girlfriends*, as opposed to the 1993 series, are more overtly objectified in the images, with their nakedness depicted in the style of pornographic Readers Wives rather than any allusion that this is an 'everyday' outfit. The girlfriend on the right hand side of the central model wears ripped fishnets and high heels, where the hippy chick in the top left is clad in just her pants and a head band. The particularity of each image is in constant tension with the formal aspects of the compositions, the distancing of each images effected by the different photographic techniques and the placing of the images on the large white surround. The outrage provoked by the perceived misogyny of the images is tempered by the difficulty in reading the images as individual performances – instead their presentation is more that of an anthropological artefact than a singular image focussed on titillation. The repetition across the image highlights the shared elements in each image, and the different ways in which these elements have been staged and photographed. When seen together, the fantasy of an 'original', a scene that existed before the artwork, becomes increasingly difficult to sustain. These images did exist in other contexts before Prince's appropriation of them, but this does not mean that they are any freer from the cultural vocabulary that Prince's grouping emphasises.

This fantasy of an original context, an unappropriated source, is one that is underlined in the formal aspects of Adler's practice. The process that she employs: selecting an image, or set of images, drawing the images in as faithful a copy as she can manage, photographing her drawing, destroying the original drawing, displaying the photograph as a unique print, enact a melancholic or ironic belief in the original that exists as a residue and a narrative in her final photographs. The aggressive act of destruction that is central to her process – so that the intimate gesture of drawing can only be experienced at one remove through the photographic surface – echoes the impossibility of entering into the original performance that the photograph depicts. She has videoed herself destroying her drawings, as a way of distancing herself from the painful act of destruction, as well as to provide 'evidence' that she does indeed destroy them. However, these videos also remain elusive to the viewer, having never been shown, existing only as

descriptions.[84] This performance for the camera that is never shown emphasises the performative aspect of Adler's process, that she places herself as both the subject and author of her work. Talking about the necessity of destroying the drawings and the relationship to her subject matter, Adler says:

> Destroying the drawing is irreversible and permanent, meaning the photograph is the only proof the drawing ever existed. Also the photographs become a kind of history, documentation of the act of drawing, which immediately becomes a performance upon its being photographed and then destroyed. So I tend to work with performers as subjects, engaged in some sort of negotiation with the fact that they themselves are subject to this procedure.[85]

Here Adler makes concrete the distance that the camera enacts between the performance and the viewer of the photograph of the performance. Just as the act of drawing is in part an experiment to get closer to the photographic image, the photographing of the drawing then returns it to the condition of mediated surface. The aggressive act of destroying the drawing echoes the aggression that has been acknowledged in the work of other artists discussed in this thesis. With their photographs, the intimacy of the performance depicted is made elusive through numerous devices: from the ambiguous identifications of the photographer, to the level of complicity and coercion in the relation between photographer and model, to the frustrated narratives presented in the serial nature of the photographs in relation to one another.

Conclusion: different girls

In Luc Sante's essay on Richard Prince's girlfriends he concludes, in elegiac fashion:

> As time passes and their original context vanishes the strutting and preening of the photographers will fade from view. The women will regain centre stage, not as victims but as expressions of unfathomable hopes and doubts and regrets.… When that happens Prince will appear not as

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[84] "I have shown them in private [the video documentation] and maybe their existence is known through descriptions. This is important to me, as evidence almost, that they exist and that the drawings have, in fact, been destroyed." Adler, email conversation with the author.
[85] Ibid.

appropriationist or curator or magpie, but as the true portraitist, the one who could see beyond the

blinkered vision of the man who pressed the shutter.[86]

Whilst Sante's comments are rather hyperbolic, he does point to an interesting intersection in this series,

between the structure of appropriation, and the portraits that these acts of appropriation produces. One

last series by Adler perhaps takes us further into this intersection than simply opposing the act of the

appropriationist to that of the portraitist. In *Amy Adler Photographs Leonardo diCaprio*, 2001, Adler invited

the actor to her house for a photo session, which formed the basis for a series of large-scale

photographed drawings (fig. 4.20). The six photographs depict diCaprio's head and shoulders against a

plain red background, the movement of his head and hands forming the focus of the series' narrative. The

close-up on the face of the actor echoes works in which Adler is the subject – such as *Nervous Character*,

1999 – which comprises images of Adler looking up and down, with the repetition of the pose altered

through the subtle differences of each redrawing (fig. 4.21). In *Nervous Character*, Adler is both

performing the title of a book by the psychologist Alfred Adler, *Nervöse Karakter*, from whom she also took

the title of her earlier series *The Problem Child*, as well as exploring temporality in the photograph – there

are 24 photographs that evoke the 24 frames a second in a film or an animated sequence. Rather than the

temporal shift between the time of the photograph and the time of drawing, as in her redrawings of her

younger self, here Adler explores the temporal indications in the photograph itself. In *Amy Adler*

Photographs Leonardo diCaprio, this temporality is indicated in the title of the series – the time and space

of the performance between the photographer and the model – that enacts the displaced devotional

portrait offered by the adolescent fan of their idol. Rather than drawing from a photograph found either in

her personal archive or in general circulation in the media, here Adler steps back into the role of the

photographer, producing her own photographs that she then 'finds' through drawing them. For Adler, this

series brings together numerous concerns around the presentation of the self, celebrity and the function of

desire through the media and personal histories. Talking about the different positions she places herself in

her work, she discusses the relationship between her use of herself and other models:

As the photographer in my work I want the flexibility to be a range of different bodies… In my work I

have been, for example, a stranger, a teenager, the older woman. The only way to make that

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[86] Sante, "*Untitled (girlfriend)*, 1999", p. 78.

position flexible is to sometimes be in the frame, then it isn't always me, Amy, behind the camera. Using images of myself has been important in travelling in and out of this landscape. When Leonardo diCaprio came over for example, my living room became a film set in a way – I wasn't sure if I'd entered into his dimension or he entered into mine.[87]

When asked why she had chosen diCaprio in particular, Adler said:

As an actor he could seamlessly be integrated into my story. And that he, because he was so absolutely unobtainably removed from reality, he could be representative of this thing that you couldn't be near…. But also his blankness, his ability to receive and give multiple kinds of desires, that his identity, not his sexuality, is his ability to be masculine and feminine.[88]

These comments return to the importance of presence and absence in Crimp's discussion of the 'photographic activity of postmodernism'. In Adler's work, diCaprio can be seen as one of her 'different girls', just as her younger selves can be, or her preadolescent boys. Similarly, they point to the oscillation between presence and absence in Prince's *girlfriends* – the way that they can never be viewed solely as portraits in which the identity and desires of the photographer and appropriator fade into the background. Central to the choice of these images is the way in which the performance for the camera is highlighted in the image, the engagement between the desires of the model and those of the photographer, a fantasised space of identification that the viewer is invited to enter into, whilst the performance is always, necessarily, withheld except within an imaginative exchange. What is enacted is a mode of desire that is articulated through an adolescent structure, an identification with and a desire for that questions the limits of individual identity. DiCaprio, in Adler's drawings, signifies very similarly to her drawings of herself, as well as of other ambiguously gendered and sexualised celebrities that have populated her work, including River Phoenix and Jodie Foster. Rather than her work reading as androgynous, the characters that Adler depicts have a serial logic that is better explained by Mitchell's description of sibling relations – the fear of being annihilated and the struggle to be unique within a peer group that merges aggression and desire in a way that undoes the binary of sexual difference. Adler's photographs perform a very private performance that takes place in her drawings, which in turn emphasise the performative nature of the photographs she

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[87] Adler, email conversation with the author.
[88] Adler, conversation with the author.

chooses as her source material. In Adler's work, the queerness lies in the shifting boundaries between the models, photographers and viewers, as well as between temporal spaces and personal and public modes of identification. Should the viewer desire diCaprio, or Adler, or the anonymous model as him or herself? Or as Adler might have? Or as the original photographer might have? Or as the model might have? Merged into these photographs are the ways in which the portrait and the self-portrait intersect with each other, just as the personal photograph echoes the multitude of celebrity portraits and fantasised selves that are found in the media. Adler, the adult artist, performs the adolescent, the appropriation artist and the fan, constructing desires and identifications that redraw the boundaries of what might be outside, or perhaps more accurately, alongside a normative construction of heterosexuality, as well as examining the structure of the photographic portrait after its postmodern 'deconstruction'.

Conclusion: "… the *same* but different"[1]

For Juliet Mitchell, seriality is at the heart of sibling or lateral relations. Explaining how seriality is different from repetition, she defines repetition as an obsessive re-enactment of the same as a response to trauma, whereas seriality "is the *same* but different."[2] Difference in series does not circulate around a binary as in sexual difference, but as has already been explored, negotiates the boundary between self and other in a way that does not make the other everything that the self is not. Mitchell explores the difference of sibling relations from a Lacanian construction of identity:

> The sibling relation doesn't relate to the phallus. We could say that acknowledging the sibling as both the same and other ends the mirror phase. Twins show us how difficult this is – and how necessary…. I think there is a mirror phase that is independent of the Lacanian imaginary – in which the mother refers the child to the mirror – and which is also different from Winnicott's idea that the mother mirrors the true self to the child, mirrors the baby to itself. I think it is important to consider the experience of the baby looking at an older child.[3]

In Mitchell's comments a number of key issues are raised, the importance of "subject-subject relations", the merging of the self and other, and the relationship to a temporal other (the older child) in the construction of identity. When the adolescent model is photographed by the artist, the performance that takes place can be seen to relate more closely to Mitchell's account above, than the Lacanian focus on the mirror stage as a psychic structure in the formation of identity. Rather than a difference based on sex, in a phallic economy, here the difference is based on not-being-me, whilst almost-being-me, the same but different.

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[1] Juliet Mitchell, "A Conversation with Juliet Mitchell", Tamar Garb and Mignon Nixon, *October* 113, Summer 2005, pp. 9-26, p. 22.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid., pp. 14-15, 16.

The question that began this study was a very general one, "Why did a range of young, female artists in the 1990s decide to take the adolescent girl as their subject matter?" From this question, my area of enquiry has both narrowed in the focus on five contemporary photographers who have similarities in their use of photographs in series and the repetitious presentation of their models, and widened to encompass an idiosyncratic history of the representation of adolescence from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. The different girls that are referenced in my study's title are not a homogenous group of adolescents, but a disparate cast of characters from photography, film and literature who help to explain the symbolism of adolescence, and in particular the ways in which the adolescent girl converses with discourses around femininity, feminism and sexuality. These include Alice Liddell photographed by both Lewis Carroll and Julia Margaret Cameron; Augustine, the hysteric and Surrealist heroine; Lolita, the character from Vladimir Nabokov's novel who has become the ubiquitous term for the coquettish young girl; the second Mrs De Winter, who is trapped between her husband and his dead wife, left nameless in both Hitchcock's film and Daphne du Maurier's novel *Rebecca*; Carrie, whose psychic abilities turn a prom into a blood bath; Eva C, the early twentieth-century medium who materialised all manner of images from her body, a kind of fleshy psychic camera; the anonymous prostitutes photographed by EJ Bellocq; the anonymous swaggering rebel boys photographed by Karlheinz Weinberger; the prepubescent Brooke Shields as appropriated by Richard Prince; Lady Clementina Hawarden's two eldest daughters, Clementina Maude and Isabella Grace; Hans Bellmer's dolls; and Francesca Woodman's self-portraits. Whilst not all of these characters are adolescent in terms of their age (a few are slightly too young, a few slightly too old), and not all of them are girls, all of them are photographed, filmed or described as performing adolescence, and contribute to the complex dynamics of identification and desire explored in the contemporary work.

By way of conclusion I will return to the figure of the hysteric and the way in which hysteria links together adolescence, femininity and psychoanalysis. By placing Charcot's Augustine alongside Freud's Dora, these two very famous different girls can be seen as characters who perform for the photographer/narrator, whilst exceeding the limits of the narratives in which they are placed. Reading the photographic portrait alongside the case study highlights the way in which narrative and photographic conventions are disrupted in the contemporary photographs, recalling Kristeva's use of the term 'open

structure' to describe adolescence. [4] The performance space of the photograph, with its disruption of the

traditional function of the portrait to stabilise the sitter's identity into a recognisable set of signifiers, can be

seen to be reworked in Freud's case study, with its fragmentary nature undermining the supposed mastery

of the analyst. Both Dora and Augustine are spaces of projection for their observer/creators, with the

notion of an individual identity being destablised from the start in their presentation through pseudonyms,

an acknowledgement of the fictionalising of their stories.

The focus on the 'different' in this study's title implies not only a place within a series, but also a deviation

from normal, a sense of disturbance that may not be easily placed. Like the ambiguous status of the

double, the boundary that is played with here is that between the subject and object, another person or a

fantasised projection. As Freud renames Ida Bauer a doubling occurs between the documented encounter

and its fictionalisation. At the Salpêtrière Georges Didi-Huberman reminds his reader that:

> … for us, Augustine will always remain only *quasi*: quasi-face, quasi-body, quasi-story. And I would
>
> say that *even her name remains quasi*. Scientists as seasoned as Bourneville and Régnard, so
>
> anxious to comply with clinical protocol, did not succeed in giving her one name, continually
>
> hesitating between 'Augustine', 'Louise', 'X', 'L…', 'G…'.
>
> And I, too, will have written only about a quasi-Augustine. [5]

Here the double blends into a series, no longer the division between truth and fiction, but a continually

performative creation. Otto Rank's discussion of the double brings up its link to death, a figure that at first

works as an imaginary ego-ideal, as in Lacan's account of the mirror stage, but then as Freud phrases it in

"The Uncanny": "From having been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of

death."[6] The doubling that occurs in the photographic portraits utilises this sense of double as a ghostly,

disturbing repetition, with the models in these contemporary works appearing to be ambiguously animated,

as if drawing the viewer's attention to their position as individual subjectivities and as projection spaces for

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[4] Julia Kristeva, "The Adolescent Novel", *New Maladies of the Soul*, Ross Guberman trans., New York: Columbia University Press, 1995. Originally published as *Les Nouvelles maladies de l'ame*, Libraire Artheme Fayard, 1993.
[5] Georges Didi-Huberman, *The Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*, Alisa Hartz trans., Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003, p. 67. Originally published in French in 1982.
[6] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" (1919), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. xvii, James Strachey trans. and ed. with Anna Freud, Vintage: London, 2001, pp. 217-256; p. 235; Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study* (1914, revised 1925), Harry Tucker, trans. and ed., London: Maresfield Library, 1989.

both the artist's and the viewers' fantasies. Rather than an exact reflection, the doubling that occurs in these portraits is akin to Alice's strange adventures through the Looking Glass, or the ghastly presence of the double in gothic fictions such as Elisabeth Gaskell's short story "The Poor Clare" in which the double is a devilish presence, disrupting the normal order of things. [7] The different girls in these photographs can be seen to enact a disturbance within the conventions of the photographic portrait, with the repetition of models, poses, clothing and locations overlaying readings of stable narratives or individual subjectivities. The significance of doubling as a disruptive device can be seen throughout the historical examples in this study, from the many Clementinas in Lady Hawarden's photographs, to the inclusion of commercial portraits in the work of Bellocq and Weinberger, to the theorising of surrealist photography by Rosalind Krauss to the postmodern focus on the status of the copy. Here the use of quotation to disrupt the assumptions contained within what is being quoted highlights the moralising imperative behind the valorising of the original, both in terms of normative identities and the artwork.

A photograph of Augustine suspended between two chairs brings to the surface the uncanniness that is present in many of the portraits discussed in this study (fig. 5.1). Compared with her wariness and stiff pose when photographed in her "Normal State", or the well-known *Attitudes Passionnelles*, this image of the obedient hysteric performing as automata for the doctor and the camera reveals the performance that takes place in even the most conventional of portraits, both in front of and behind the camera (figs. 2.20 and 2.21). Again, the notion of the double provides a way of expressing the eruption of the abnormal, the unnatural, through the normal. In the didactic frame of the case study, the reader is told where the line that divides normal and abnormal arises. The fantasy of the objectivity that is contained within the case study starts to break down with the presentation of such staged images as Augustine suspended in the third volume of the *Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière* when the collaborative aspect of these images becomes more apparent. Here Augustine appears to enact the corpse-machine as described in Ulrich Baer's discussion of Charcot's use of photography: "the hysteric was most often photographed and

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[7] "In the great mirror opposite I saw myself, and, right behind, another wicked, fearful self, so like me that my soul seemed to quiver within me, as though not knowing to which similitude of body it belonged." Elizabeth Gaskell, "The Poor Clare" (1856), *The Works of Elizabeth Gaskell*, Charlotte Mitchell ed., vol. 3, London: Pickering and Chatto, 2005, pp. 385-428, p. 407.

otherwise displayed in two distinct modes: as a corpse or a machine".[8] Baer continues: "Insofar as the

hysterical body is the site of this 'hallucinatory reliving', which occurs without conscious control, it was

possible for Charcot to think of his patient as an '*homme-machine*' (sic) – a mechanical contraption void of

any cognitive dimension."[9] Suspended with eyes closed, hands folded in her lap, dressed in a nurse's

uniform, Augustine appears docile, in a trance, a figure of respectability except for the orientation of her

body from the vertical to the horizontal and its uncanny stiffness. Here the scene of a magician's levitation

is brought to mind, with the hysteric replacing the hypnotised assistant. The doctor stands back (behind

the camera) and allows the viewer to marvel at the strange and exotic sight that he has produced for our

curiosity. Unlike the conventional portrait, the suspension between the chairs brings to the fore the

temporal dimension of this pose, and in the accompanying text Charcot says "this experiment was never

carried out for longer than 4 or 5 minutes."[10] The model is reduced to an automaton, a pliable tool for the

doctor's performance, removed as far as possible from the subject shown in the 'before' portrait: what was

once a young woman is now an object, a physical anomaly, a freak show. The subjectivity of the hysteric

has been evacuated by the performance of symptoms, so that the relation of the viewer to the image is

that of fascination akin to that triggered by the pornographic image. It is the oscillation between the 'before'

portrait, with its depiction of a stable identity, and the various performances of an identity drained,

fragmented or deadened during Augustine's hysterical attacks that provide a frame of reference for the

ambiguous subjectivities performed in the contemporary photographs.

Charcot's attempt to map the performances of hysteria provides a visual precedent and foil to Freud's

attempts to read his patients' verbal symptoms within the psychoanalytic relationship. The analysand's

agency within this relationship is one that at times appears as tenuous as the subjectivity of Charcot's

patients, with the problems of transference and counter-transference coming to the surface in Freud's

analysis of his uncooperative adolescent patient Dora. The tension between Freud's interpretations and

Dora's resistance to them have provided rich material for discussion around gender relations in

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[8] Ulrich Baer, "Photography and Hysteria: Towards a Poetics of the Flash", *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1994, pp. 41-77; p. 56.
[9] Ibid., p. 62.
[10] Quoted in ibid., p. 56.

psychoanalysis and the various merits of different interpretations of their interaction.[11] The arguments

around Dora's status as proto-feminist, as characterised by the written exchange between Hélène Cixous

and Catherine Clément, and Freud's reliance on the sexual aetiology of hysteria rather than social factors,

as explored by Elaine Showalter, have made the case study into a feminist fairy tale.[12] Whilst Freud's

authoritarian interpretations of Dora's symptoms are often discussed, there is an unusual degree of

uncertainty in his presentation of the case. This begins with his title: "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of

Hysteria". The fragmentary nature of the case study is highlighted in his introduction, and is returned to

during the presentation of the analysis, positioning Freud as the unreliable narrator. The fiction of the

objective interpreter is undone by the uneasy presentation of his exchange with Dora, with some

commentators comparing Freud to a modernist writer, with the text admitting to the impossibility of

reaching some conclusion within the case.[13] Freud becomes a character in his own story, a precedent for

Nabokov's pastiche of the case study, with Humbert Humbert in *Lolita* being perhaps the most well-known

of the various constructors/unreliable narrators of the fantasised adolescent subject. The merging of

identification and desire that takes place complicates the subject positions that can be found within these

literary texts and points to the importance of the performances of the artists and viewers in the

contemporary work, as well as the performance in front of the camera. Does Freud simply project his own

fantasises onto the space of Dora in his case study? Can we as readers create new narratives from

Freud's performance? Does Dora's resistance tell us more about Freud than he would like us to know?

Unlike the fictional status of Lolita, Dora is the representation of a real woman, as well as the product of

Freud's interpretation, a resistant participant in Freud's narrative. As Steve Marcus notes: "If we let

Nabokov back into the picture for a moment, we may observe that Dora is no Lolita, and go on to suggest

that *Lolita* is an anti-*Dora*…. [Dora] refused to be a character in the story that Freud was composing for

her, and wanted to finish it herself."[14] Whilst Dora may have refused to be a character in Freud's story, she

could not escape completely. As with Augustine, the boundary between the performance for the doctor

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[11] See the essays in *In Dora's Case: Freud – Hysteria – Feminism*, Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahane eds., New York: Columbia University Press, 1985, second edition 1990.
[12] See Hélène Cixous, and Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, Betsy Wing trans., Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986 (originally in the French as *La Jeune Née*, Union Générale d'Editions, Paris, 1975) and Elaine Showalter, "Feminism and Hysteria: The Daughter's Disease", *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (1985), London: Virago, 1987.
[13] Steve Marcus, "Freud and Dora: Story, History, Case History" (1974-1975), in *In Dora's Case*.
[14] Marcus, "Freud and Dora", pp. 78, 88.

and even the fantasy of a faithful representation of an individual subjectivity is one that is constantly held in tension as we are made aware that this is *Freud's* Dora, just as Augustine is Charcot's. However, perhaps the difference between Dora and Lolita is smaller than Marcus presents, for both characters evade their pursuers and are depicted as being resistant to interpretation by their narrators.

The tension that is present in Freud's case study can be seen in the interchange in the photographic portraits discussed in this study. The doubling between models, and their relationship to both the photographer – as alter egos, as objects, as collaborators, as loci of desire – and viewer, is played out in the way that Freud both tries to contain Dora as an object of analysis and the antagonism within the analysis that highlights the impossibility of Freud being able to properly analyse anyone without taking into account his own counter-transference. In Freud's famous footnote to Dora's case he provides what he sees as the key to the failure of the analysis:

> The longer the interval of time that separates me from the end of this analysis, the more probable it seems to me that the fault in my technique lay in this omission: I failed to discover in time and to inform the patient that her homosexual (gynaecophilic) love for Frau K was the strongest unconscious current in her mental life.[15]

The certainty of the tone is undercut by the text's position as a footnote to the case study, another uncertainty in this text that circulates around the problem of deciphering femininity through its disturbing manifestation in hysteria. The presence of the other woman in this footnote points to a solution that is at odds with Freud's interpretations throughout analysis, as it is one that removes the centrality of the male figures in this drama. In relation to the photographic portraits in this study, Freud's footnote points to the queerness that runs through my interpretation of both the contemporary and historical examples. In employing a focus on the lateral relations in the represented performances, a way into the relationship between the female artist and the female model is provided, one that does not polarise into a male-identified voyeurism or a maternal logic of mother and child. Rather, the uneasy eroticism and aggression that has caused many critics difficulties can be discussed in terms of sibling relations, and the potential

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[15] Sigmund Freud, "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" ([1901] 1905), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. vii, James Strachey trans. and ed. with Anna Freud, Vintage: London, 2001, pp. 7-122, p. 120.

that these hold for queer desires. The two Alices about to kiss in Anna Gaskell's *Untitled (wonder) #2*, 1996, enact the uncertain boundaries that are present in these contemporary performances of adolescence. The interpretation of this image is multiplied, from a picture of resuscitation, to an imagined doubling of one character, to a playful embrace. It is the presence of these multiple narratives, and the viewer's self-conscious movement through them that provides the internal logic of seriality to these images. The artists' presence is made clear in these works through various strategies, shown clearly in the work of Hellen van Meene, with her positioning of her limp models literalising both the interaction between photographer and model, as well as the history of poses that are referenced by both the adolescent's performance and the viewer's interpretation of the performance. Dora in the case study is both the representation of a person that Freud talked to, with her own histories and identity that are withheld from the reader, as well as being a site of fantasy for Freud, as our necessarily subjective interpreter of events. The description of the analysis is a performance in which both Freud and the reader take part in constructing various versions of events, desires and transferences, highlighted in the text by Freud's hesitancies and qualifications, providing a literary precedent to the photographic portraits.

In the context of queerness, the effect of the 'different' is to focus attention on the relationship between non-normative and normative desire, rather than on the structural opposition of homo- and heterosexuality. Homosexual desire is played out alongside narcissistic and nostalgic identifications, with the ambiguous status of the models as subjects or objects complicating the ways in which both the artist and viewer can be seen to interact with these photographic performances. As Howard Singerman has noted in his discussion of Sherrie Levine's work, women artists have traditionally been seen as identifying with their subjects, a collapse of boundaries in which female agency is possible primarily as a narcissistic projection. As briefly touched on in chapter four, Singerman reviews a range of critics writing on male documentary photographers such as Walker Evans alongside their female counterparts such as Dorothea Lange. Whilst Evans is discussed as having a disembodied photographic eye, Lange is equated with her subject matter. Singerman proposes the shift that would occur in reading the appropriated work of Evans as being by Levine:

Following Newhall, Cox, Van Dyke, and Kozloff, to read the artist as a woman would be to find the photographer herself deeply within the image.… the woman artist exists only within the image as another object like it, imagined as the image's second story. Her story is inseparable from the story of the seen, the depicted.[16]

What is explored in the photographic portraits of these contemporary artists is the way in which their photographs are in dialogue with these expectations of the relationship between the woman artist and her model. Amy Adler's use of her younger self as one actor within the range of characters represented in her work plays with the boundary between the portrait and the self-portrait, taking up the position of the original photographer photographing herself as an adolescent in *Once in Love With Amy*, 1997. The potential for a desiring exchange between women is played out in Adler's work with an ambiguity that is characteristic of these contemporary photographic portraits. The multiplying of viewing positions and performances of identities are inserted into the history of photography, combining the stereotyped voyeurism or supposed objectivity of the male gaze and the over-identified female gaze. Hans Bellmer's complicated relationship to his dolls is just one example explored in this study as to the ways in which desire and identification can co-exist in ways that disrupt normative viewing strategies and identities. In Collier Schorr's work boys can stand in for girls in her appropriation of a homoerotic exchange played out through her depiction of both male and female adolescent models. Here the nostalgic desire for the adolescent provides a temporal mode of identification and desire, as in Adler's work, so that the dynamic is not between male and female, but between adult and adolescent. Here the histories of male homosexual desire, as seen in the work of Karlheinz Weinberger, queer the heterosexual voyeuristic structure, overlaying the depiction of the female adolescent with those of an adolescent masculinity that is offered up to an ambiguously desiring gaze.

If the normative is only constructed by a naturalised repetition, as in Judith Butler's construction of gender as performative, then disruptions to the performance of subjectivity can be read as providing fissures in the normative logic of the photographic portrait and the construction of identity. The interface between the model signifying as subject or object, as explored through the images of Augustine and the figure of the

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[16] Howard Singerman, "Seeing Sherrie Levine", *October*, vol. 67, Winter 1994, pp. 78-107; p. 91.

double, is a thematic concern that links the contemporary artists discussed in this study, and is particularly

pertinent in the work of Sarah Jones. Her portraits of girls play with the representation of subjectivity, with

the repetitions and replacements that occur between the models, settings, clothing and props queering the

boundary between subject and object, playing out visually the construction of identity that is performed by

the model, photographer and viewer. Drawing on Victorian conventions which equate the beautiful female

model with a beautiful object, Jones takes this equation to an extreme so that the models appear to be no

more than the objects that they are posed with. Here, the conventions of the photographic portrait showing

an individual identity, a 'real' person, are brought into tension with the rhythms that are set up in the series

between the models, the tightly contained interiors and a variety of vases, furniture and flora. As in Lady

Clementina Hawarden's repetitious posing of her daughters, the photographic space of the portrait is

utilised explicitly as one of performance, a reworking of the conventions of the genre painting featuring a

beautiful woman as well as the conventions of the portrait.

The ambiguous signification of the model as being a subject or object echoes Juliet Mitchell's construction

of the hysteric as being both full and empty, the uneasy sibling relationship which rests between

narcissistic desire and the fear of annihilation, as well as the incorporation of both dead and alive in the

figure of the spectre. In many of the historical examples explored in this study, the troubling of this

boundary between subject and object is where their significance for the contemporary works lies. The

adolescent girl can be seen as enacting many of the dialogues that are traditionally given to the hysteric in

both psychoanalysis and feminism, which engage with this oscillation around boundaries. The hysteric is

performing an ambiguity that cannot be read as either straightforward protest or as pathological mental

illness, with her dilemma being one that is brought about by the social constraints around femininity, and a

refusal to move towards maturity when this is signified by a passive femininity and maternity: "The hysteric

refuses to settle for her role as object of desire for a man (initially the father), but instead roams

ceaselessly between this feminine identification as object of desire and the masculine position of subject

of desire. So reads the classic account."[17] In her book *Mad Men and Medusas* Mitchell returns to hysteria

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[17] Juliet Mitchell, *Mad Men and Medusas: Reclaiming Hysteria and the Effects of Sibling Relations on the Human Condition*, London: Penguin, 2000, p. 323.

and proposes that it forms the basis of the postmodern condition, so that rather than hysteria being collapsed into femininity, the questions that hysteria revolves around are reframed as ones about sibling relations: "The struggle is not, Who am I? But, Where am I?; not one of identity (though it is often confused with this) but of, What is my position in this kinship scenario?"[18] This emphasis on the relational position of the hysteric underlines the importance of the exchange that is performed in these photographic portraits between the model, photographer and viewer. It is not just the performances of adolescence that are being presented, but the performances of both the photographer and viewer in constructing their identification with the models. As has been discussed in terms of Helene Deutsch's and Julia Kristeva's explorations of adolescence, the importance of the social is central. At the boundary between child and adult, the adolescent signifies a psychic space that is trying out ways of operating as an individual, whilst having an uncertain boundary between the conceptualisation of self and other. The shift between Deutsch's *Psychology of Women* published in 1944, and her 1968 *Selected Problems of Adolescence* highlights the increasing awareness of the influence of the social on the construction of identity, and the importance of examining the adolescent as a focal point of this interaction. Whilst Deutsch still sees the questions of adolescence as resulting from a lack of maturity, maintaining a Freudian logic of progression towards an Oedipal concept of normality, she also admits in her later study that adolescence is extended longer and longer, and that the resolution of the "adolescent crisis" is always partial.[19] This shift in Deutsch's work can be seen to be elaborated in Mitchell's focus on lateral relations as being a key to understanding postmodern identity construction, avoiding the pathologising framework that Deutsch's Freudian analysis brings to the figure of the adolescent.

It is this shift from seeing adolescence as a phase on the path to a theoretical concept of normative identity to a psychic space that is always-already there through the lateral relation that, for me, underlies the reasons for the adolescent's significance in contemporary art during the 1990s. The description of the trend for large-scale colour photography as being 'narrative' both highlights and obscures the kinds of performances that are taking place in these images. Narrative implies a story that has a progression, a

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[18] Ibid, p. 329.

[19] Helene Deutsch, *Selected Problems of Adolescence with Special Emphasis on Group Formation*, London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1968, p. 38.

transition from beginning to end. In literature, the *bildungsroman* or coming-of-age novel utilises the figure of the adolescent as a character in process, who ultimately finds maturity and a sense of stable identity. The narratives that are contained in the photographic portraits that form the focus of this study frustrate this sense of linear progression, freezing the action to the moment of uncertainty. Rather than simply fragmenting narrative, these photographs create a performance space which stalls narrative progression but does not drain it of meaning. The bodies and objects in these images take on a symbolic presence that has analogies with the language of fairytales, where thoughts are literalised and objects can appear alive. Rather than providing some resolution as in a traditional literary narrative, here the performances of the models are set in a repetitive, non-linear space, so that Gaskell's multiple girls continually try to "make their maker" in *resemblance*,[20] Schorr's models are both her and not her, male and female, Jones's bourgeois interiors seem to have more life than the models posed in them, van Meene's models literally droop under the camera's gaze and Amy Adler's different girls are celebrities and anonymous characters, self-portraits and objects of desire. It is as if the artists are responding to the tensions between feminism and postmodernism, fusing the death of the author with the condemnations of the feminist reader, unnaturally reanimating combinations of quotations from the histories of photography, painting, film, feminism, psychoanalysis and literature. Emulating the actions of the adolescent fan, the object of attention is taken apart and then put back again in an act which radically restructures it, making it both a site of identification as well as a specifically tailored object of desire. The viewer's position is one that is equally implicated in this chain of signification, unable to position him or herself safely with either the model or artist. As Gaskell phrases it: "I want viewers to be seduced into a scenario or story in which they find themselves suddenly caught up in the same trap as that of the character they are watching."[21] This study has attempted to follow the various strands of narrative and quotation that run through these performances of adolescence, not to construct a lineage of influence for each individual artist, but to

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[20] "As the artist notes, *resemblance*… explores the desire and the frustration inherent in the plan 'to make one's own maker'. Hypothesizing an improbable folding of time back on itself… one could accomplish a continuous overturning of the concepts of before and after, and therefore of mother and daughter." Marcella Beccaria, *Anna Gaskell*, Castello di Rivoli: Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, 2001, p. 12.
[21] Anna Gaskell, quoted in an interview with Matthew Drutt, in *Half Life*, Diana Murphy and Lucy Flint-Gohlre eds., Houston: The Menil Collection, 2002, p. 71.

consider the ways in which the histories of feminism, psychoanalysis and photographic portraiture are

performed in these artworks, the same, but different.

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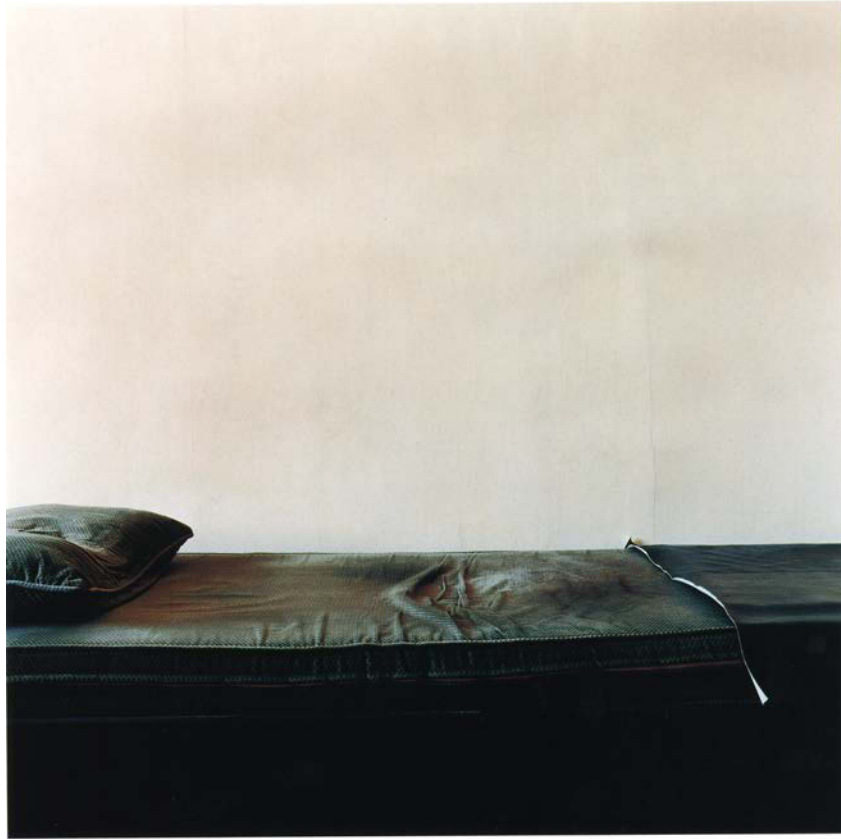
Fig 1.1: Sarah Jones, *Consulting Room (Couch) XII*, 1997
150 x 150 cm, C-print mounted on aluminium

Fig 1.2: David Octavius Hill and Robert Adamson, *At the Greyfriars′ Cemetery in Edinburgh*, c
1843-1848
20.5 x 14.4 cm, calotype

Fig 1.3: Francesca Woodman, *Polka Dots #5*, 1976-1977

Fig 1.4: Francesca Woodman, Providence, Rhode Island, 1975-1976
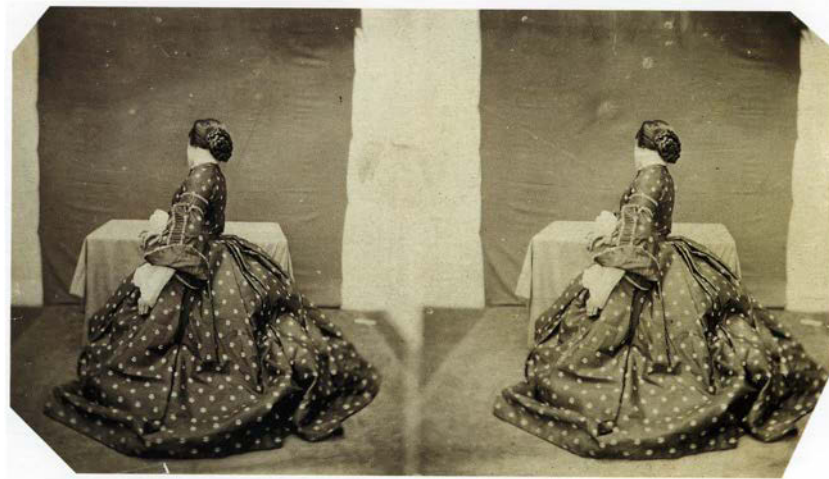
Fig 1.5: Lady Clementina Hawarden, Isabella Grace Maude, 5 Princes Gardens, c 1859-1861
10.5 x 15.9 cm, stereoscopic photograph
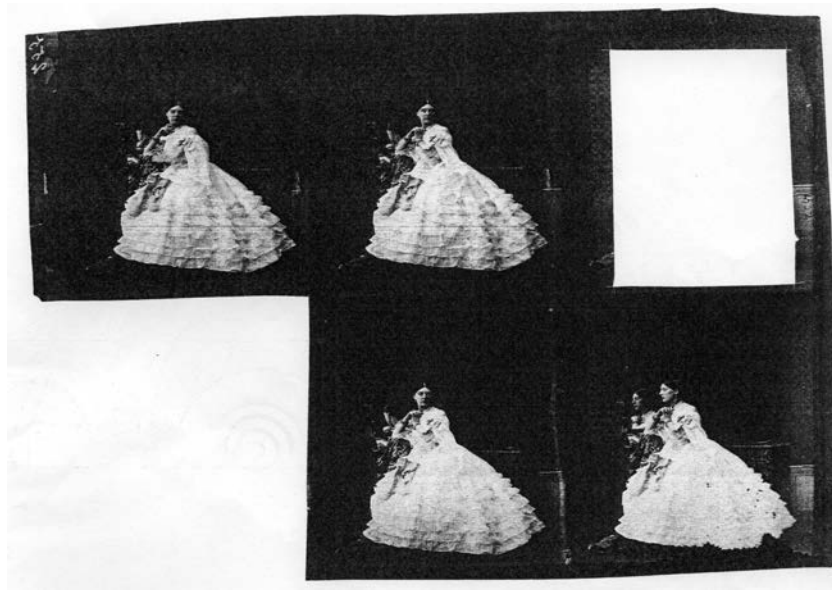
Fig 1.6: Camille Silvy, *Flora Bradford*, 15 March 1860
Albumen print proof sheet from wet collodion negative. Carte-de-visite sheet, with two images cut out.

Fig 1.7: AAE Disdéri, Princess Gabrielle Bonaparte, c 1862
Uncut sheet of carte-de-visite photographs

Fig 1.8: Carte-de-visite photographs of working women from Arthur Munby's collection
Clockwise from top left: T G Dugdale of Wigan, "Jane Horton, 19, Kirkless Hall Pits, Middle Patricroft, Wigan Aug. 1863"; Robert Little of Wigan, Pit Brow girls, 1868; Herbert Wragg of Wigan, "South West Lancashire Pit Brow Woman, 1886" (possibly Elizabeth Halliwell of Blundell's Pemberton Colliery); T G Dugdale of Wigan, "Shevington, 1867"; Robert Little of Wigan, "Wench from Ince Hall pits – age 30. Background inserted at her own request"; John Cooper of Wigan, "Ann Fairhurst, Ince Hall Pits, 1868" captions in quotations are by Arthur Munby

Fig 1.9: Anonymous, c 1865, albumen print
reproduced in Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "The Legs of the Countess"

Fig 1.10: Sarah Jones, *The Sitting Room (Francis Place) IV* and *V*, 1999
150 x 150 cm, C-prints mounted on aluminium

Fig 1.11: Sarah Jones, *Camilla (I),* 1998
150 x 150 cm, C-print mounted on aluminium

Fig 1.12: Lady Clementina Hawarden, Isabella Grace and Clementina Maude, 5 Princes Gardens,
c 1861-1862
9.7 x 7.5 cm, albumen print

Fig 1.13: Sarah Jones, *The Dining Room (Francis Place) III,* 1997
150 x 150 cm, C-print mounted on aluminium

Fig 1.14: Sarah Jones, *Consulting Room I*, 1995
150 x 150 cm, C-print mounted on aluminium
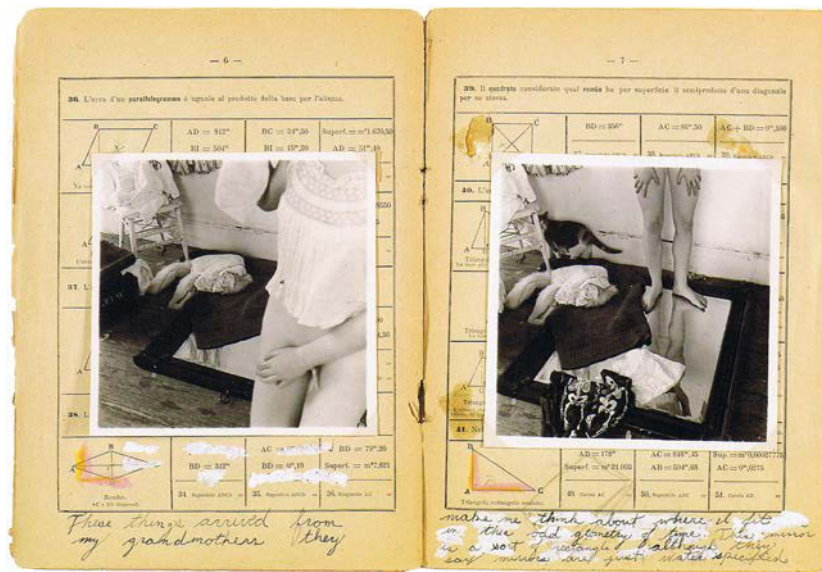
Fig 1.15a: Francesca Woodman, *In My Cousin᾽s Room Who Is My Same Age*, nd
Fig. 1.5 b: Francesca Woodman, double-page spread from her book *On Some Disordered Interior Geometries*, 1981

Fig 1.16: Francesca Woodman, Providence, Rhode Island, 1975-1978

Fig 1.17a and b: Francesca Woodman, New York, 1979

Fig 1.18: Sarah Jones, *The Fence (Passion Flower)*, *I* and *II*, 2002
150 x 150 cm, C-prints mounted on aluminium

Fig 1.19: Julia Margaret Cameron, *Maud– The Passion Flower at the Gate*, 1875
32.4 x 27.1 cm, albumen print

Fig 1.20: John Everett Millais, *A Huguenot, on Saint Bartholomew's Day, Refusing to Shield Himself from Danger by Wearing the Roman Catholic Badge*, 1852
93 x 62 cm, oil on canvas

Fig 1.21: Lady Clementina Hawarden, Clementina Maude, 5 Princes Gardens, c. 1862-1863
11.6 x 9.1 cm, albumen print

Fig 1.22: Sarah Jones, *The Dining Room (Francis Place)*, *VII*, 1999
150 x 150 cm, C-print mounted on aluminium
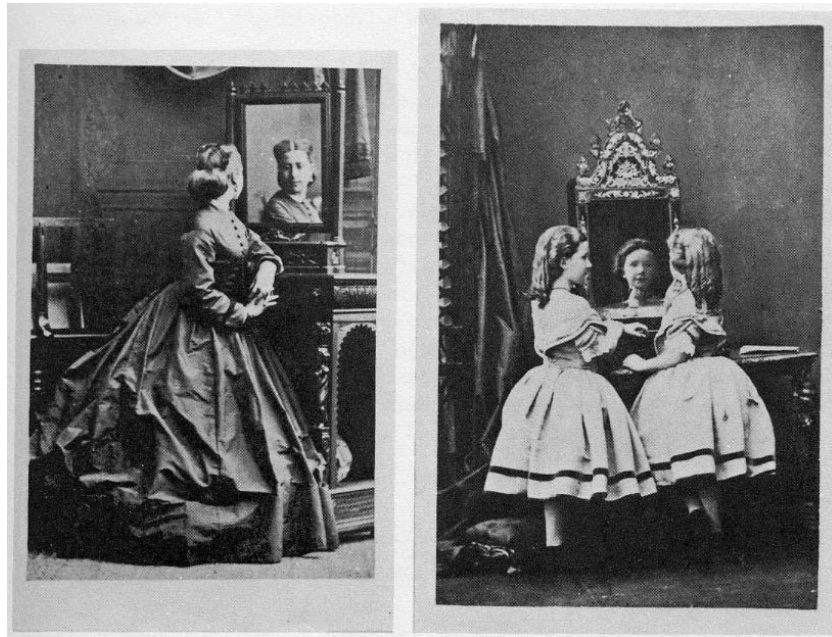
Fig 1.23a and b: Camille Silvy, Lady at a mirror; Two small girls at a mirror, c 1865
carte-de-visite photographs
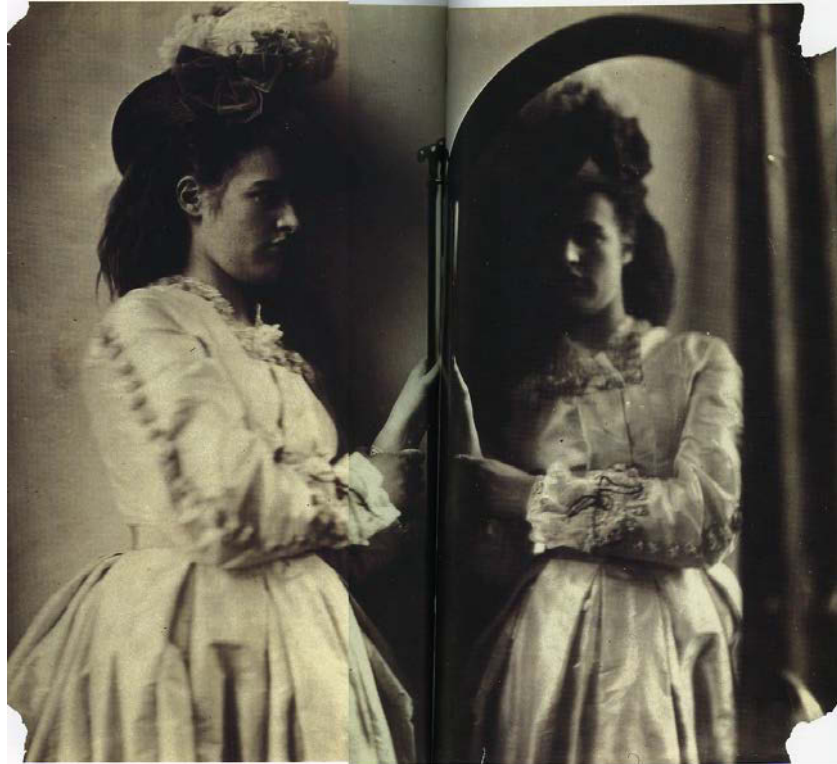
Fig 1.24: Lady Clementina Hawarden, Clementina Maude, 5 Princes Gardens, c 1863-1864
23.8 x 27.5 cm, albumen print

Fig 1.25: Lady Clementina Hawarden, Isabella Grace and Clementina Maude, 5 Princes Gardens,
c 1862-1863
11.2 x 8 cm, albumen print

Fig 1.26: Lady Clementina Hawarden, Clementina Maude and Isabella Grace, 5 Princes Gardens,
c 1864
23.6 x 24. 7 cm and 23.2 x 23.8 cm, albumen prints

Fig 1.27: Sarah Jones, *Dining Room (Mulberry Lodge)*, *III*, 1997
150 x 150 cm, C-print mounted on aluminium

Fig 1.28: Sarah Jones, *Dining Room (Mulberry Lodge), I* and *II*, 1997
150 x 150 cm, C-prints mounted on aluminium

Fig 1.29: Sarah Jones, *Dining Room (Francis Place), I* and *II* , 1997
150 x 150 cm, C-prints mounted on aluminium

Fig 1.30: Lady Clementina Hawarden, Clementina Maude and Isabella Grace, 5 Princes Gardens, c 1863-1864
23.6 x 25.1 cm, albumen print

Fig 1.31: Francesca Woodman, Boulder, Colorado, 1972-1975

Fig 1.32: 'Spirit' photograph by charwoman Mrs Deane, showing two women sitters with 'spirits' above them, 20 March 1934
Harry Price Archive, University of London

Fig 1.33: Francesca Woodman, Providence, Rhode Island, 1976-1977
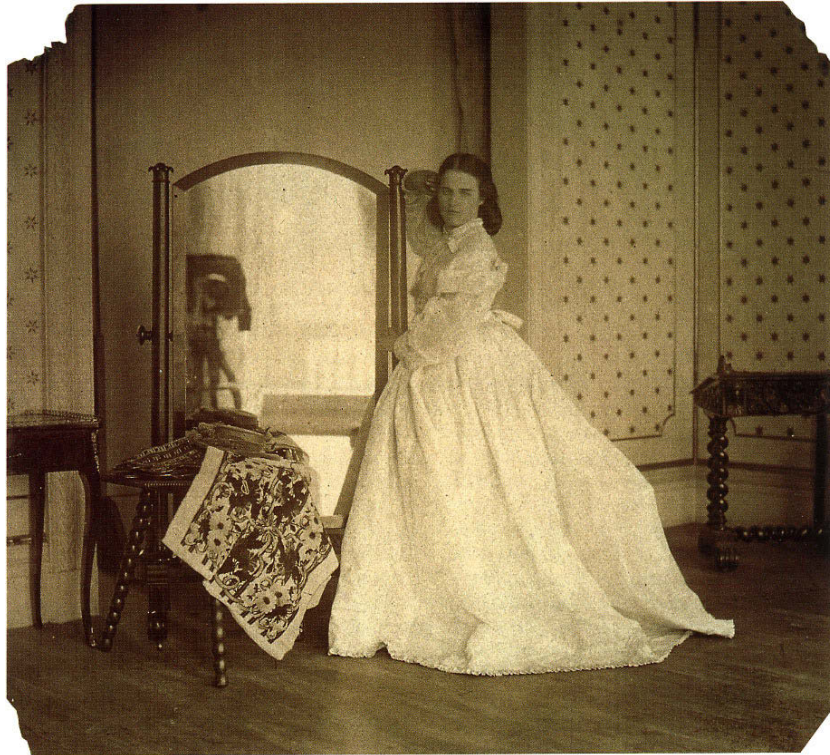
Fig 1.34: Lady Clementina Hawarden, Clementina Maude, 5 Princes Gardens, c 1862-1863
21.6 x 23.2 cm, albumen print

a   b   c   d
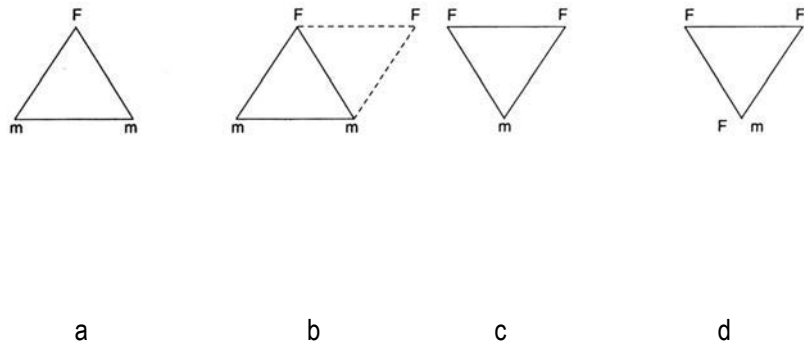
a: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's construction of the male-female-male homosocial triangle.

b and c: Terry Castle's inversion of this triangle through the introduction of a second female character.

d: The triangular relationship as constructed in Anna Gaskell's work, with the F/m position occupied by the authors of her source material (Carroll, James, etc.), Gaskell and the viewer.

Fig 2.1: Diagrams showing male and female homosocial structures, drawing on Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick (a) and Terry Castle (b and c)
Amended from the diagram in Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian*
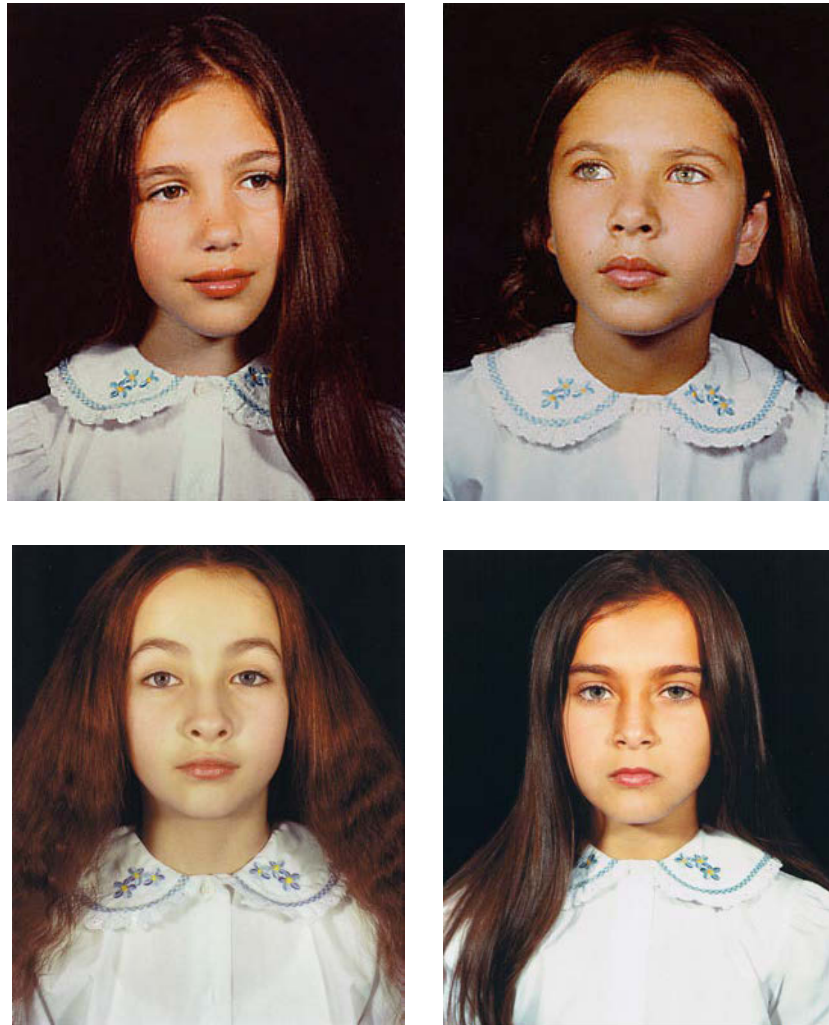
Fig 2.2: Anna Gaskell, examples from *The Alice Portraits* series, 1996
40.6 x 50.8 cm each, C-prints

Fig 2.3a: Hans Bellmer, *The Doll*, 1934, black and white photograph
Fig 2.3b: Hans Bellmer, *Untitled*, 1935, hand coloured black and white photograph

Fig 2.4 clockwise from top: Anna Gaskell, installation view of *resemblance*; *Untitled #76 (resemblance)*;
Untitled #71 (resemblance);*Untitled #82 (resemblance)*,*Untitled #84 (resemblance)*; 2001
dimensions variable, C-prints

Fig 2.5 clockwise from top: a: Hans Bellmer, *The Doll*, 1935, hand coloured black and white photograph;
b and c: *The Doll*, 1935, black and white photographs

Fig 2.6: Lewis Carroll, *Alice Liddell Dressed in Her Best Outfit*; *Alice Liddell as "The Beggar Maid"*,
summer 1858
17 x 13 cm and 16.8 x 13 cm, albumen prints

of her own little sister. So the boat wound slowly along, beneath the bright summer-day, with its merry crew and its music of voices and laughter, till it passed round one of the many turnings of the stream, and she saw it no more.

Then she thought, (in a dream within the dream, as it were,) how this same little Alice would, in the after-time, be herself a grown woman: and how she would keep, through her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood: and how she would gather around her other little children, and make *their* eyes bright and eager with many a wonderful tale, perhaps even with these very adventures of the little Alice of long-ago: and how she would feel with all their simple sorrows, and find a pleasure in all their simple joys, remembering her own child-life, and the happy summer days.

Fig 2.7: Lewis Carroll, last page of the manuscript *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, 1864, with a photograph of Alice Liddell taken in 1859

Fig 2.8: Anna Gaskell, *Untitled #1 (wonder)*, 1996
40.6 x 50.8 cm, C-print laminated and mounted on board

Fig 2.9: Anna Gaskell, *Untitled #2 (wonder)*, 1996
120.8 x 100.6 cm, C-print laminated and mounted on Sintra

Fig 2.10: Anna Gaskell, *Untitled #3 (wonder)*, 1996
149.1 x 121.8 cm, C-print laminated and mounted on Sintra

Fig 2.11: Anna Gaskell, *Untitled #13 (wonder)*, 1996
27.2 x 33.3 cm, C-print laminated and mounted on board

Fig 2.12 clockwise from top left: Anna Gaskell, *Untitled #8 (wonder)*, *Untitled #15 (wonder)*, *Untitled #17 (wonder)*, *Untitled #18 (wonder)*, 1996
various dimensions, C-prints laminated and mounted on board

Fig 2.13: Anna Gaskell, *Untitled*, 1996
ink on paper

Fig 2.14 clockwise from top: Anna Gaskell, *Untitled #10 (wonder)*, *Untitled #12 (wonder)*, *Untitled #15 (wonder)*, 1996
various dimensions, C-prints laminated and mounted on board

Fig 2.15: Anna Gaskell, *Untitled #29 (override)*, 1997
19.1 x 23.5 cm, C-print laminated and mounted on Sintra

Fig 2.16: Anna Gaskell, *Untitled #24 (override)*, 1997
121.5 X 100.8 cm, C-print laminated and mounted on Sintra

Fig 2.17: Anna Gaskell, *Untitled*, 1996
ink on paper

Fig 2.18: *Carrie*, dir. Brian DePalma, 1976
film stills
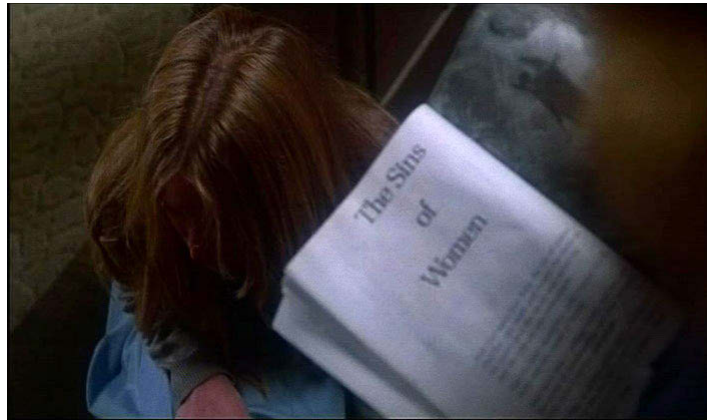
Fig 2.19: *Carrie*, dir. Brian DePalma, 1976
film stills
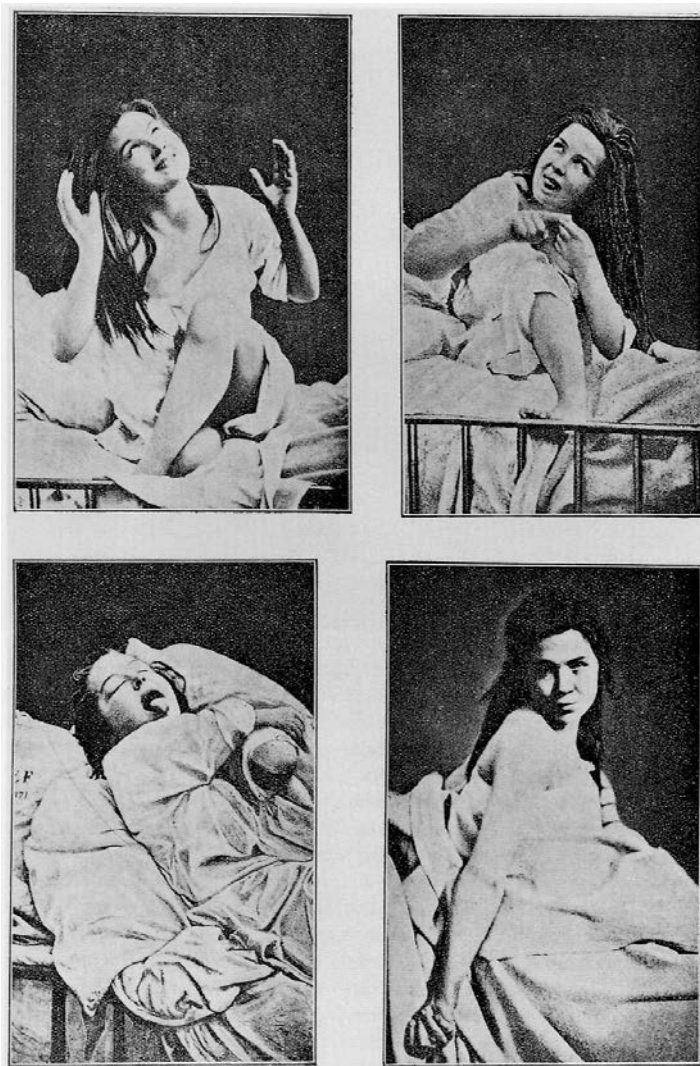
Fig 2.20: Régnard, photographs of Augustine, reproduced as "Les Attitudes passionnelles en 1878", *La Révolution surréaliste*, no. 11, 15 March 1928, p. 21
Originally reproduced in volume II of *Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière*, 1878

Planche XIV.

HYSTÉRO-ÉPILEPSIE

ÉTAT NORMAL
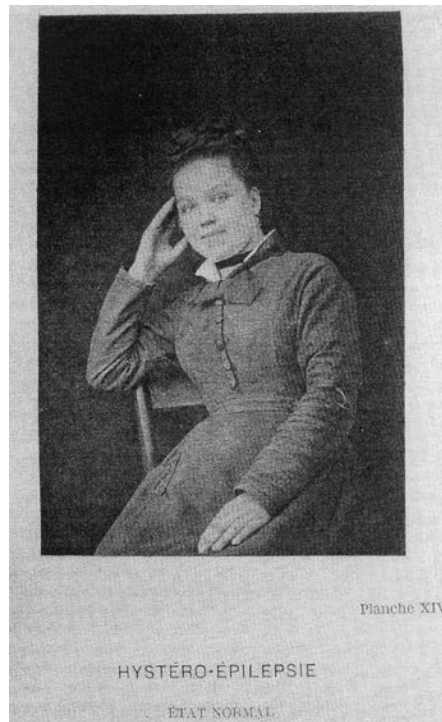
Fig 2.21a: Régnard, photograph of Augustine in her "Normal State"
Fig 2.21b: Régnard, photograph of Augustine having an attack ("Tetanism"), retouched photograph
Originally reproduced in volume II of *Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière*, 1878

Fig 2.22a: Mina 'Margery' Crandon photographed during a séance with the materialised hand of her dead brother Walter, c 1926
Fig 2.22b: "Crude teleplasmic hand exuding from navel of Margery, séance, Boston, Mass, 1925".
Quote taken from back of photograph
Harry Price Archive, University of London
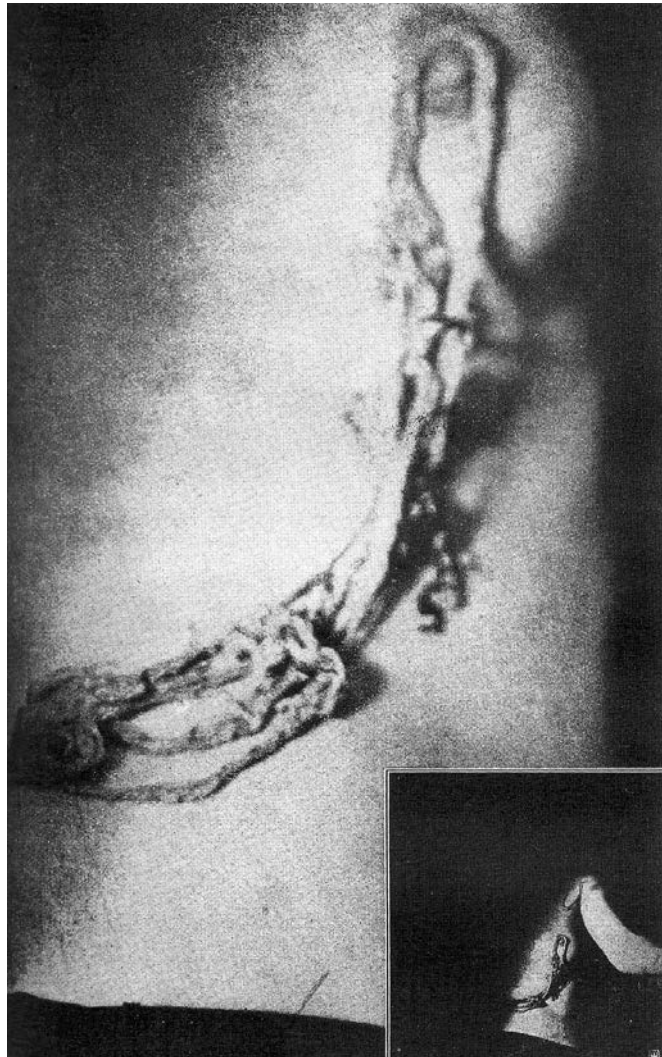
Fig 2.23: Juliette Bisson, "Mme Bisson's flashlight photograph of 9 Jan, 1913, with enlargement".
Quote is taken from the photograph's caption in *The Phenomena of Materialisation*, 1920

Fig 2.24: Anna Gaskell, *Untitled #90 (half life)*, 2002
126.5 x 122.2 cm, C-print
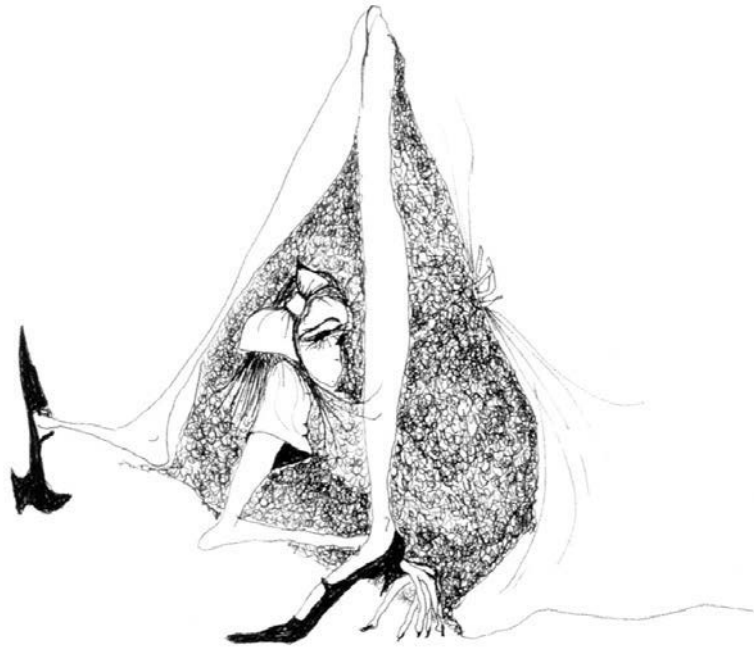
Fig 2.25: Anna Gaskell, *Untitled*, 1996
ink on paper

Fig 2.26: Anna Gaskell, *Untitled #88 (half life)*, 2002
119.7 x 151.4 cm, C-print

Fig 2.27: Anna Gaskell, *Untitled #97 (half life)*, 2002
152.4 x 123.1 cm, C-print
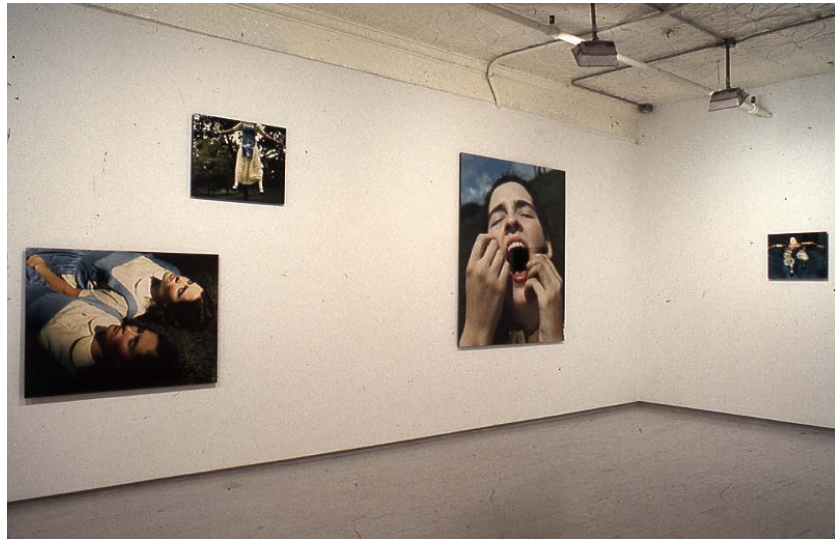
Fig 2.28: Installation views of Anna Gaskell's series *wonder*, 1997 and *half life*, 2002

Fig 3.1: Collier Schorr, *Two Shirts*, 1998
76.2 x 101.6 cm, C-print

Fig 3.2: Hellen van Meene, *Untitled*, 1998
39 x 39 cm, C-print

Fig 3.3: *i-D* magazine spread, no. 10, c 1981-1984, np
photocopy of original magazine, National Art Library
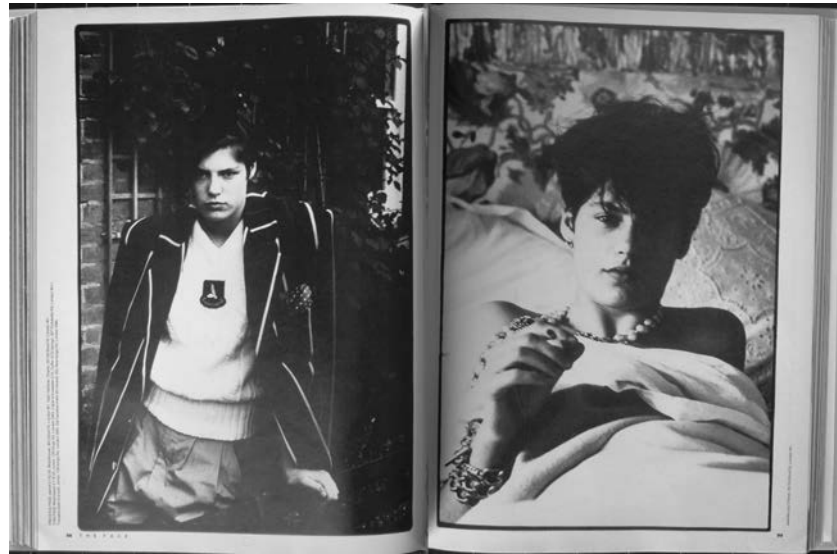
Fig 3.4: Ellen von Unwerth, fashion story for *The Face,* no. 66, October 1985, pp. 98-99

Fig 3.5: Karlheinz Weinberger, At the Masked Ball, Zurich, 1958
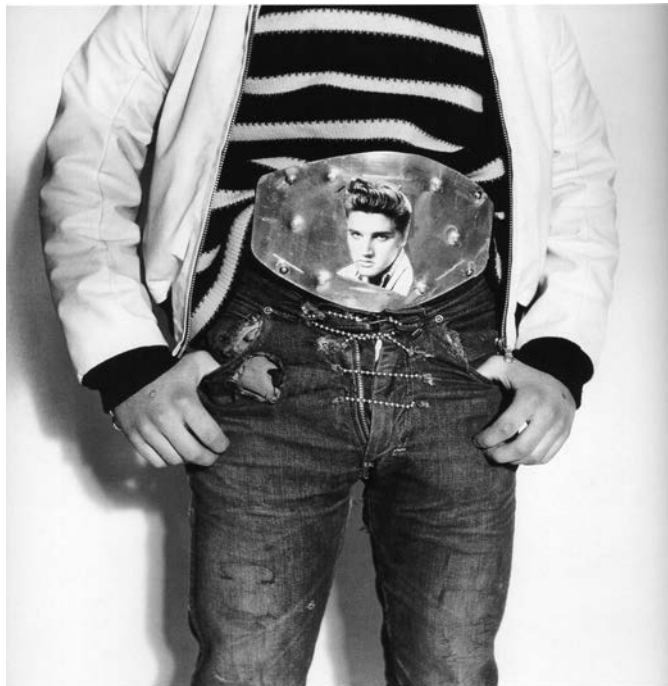
Fig 3.6a: Karlheinz Weinberger, *Romeo* (Werner Berger), boss of the *Revenger Gang*, Zurich, c 1962
Fig 3.6b: Karlheinz Weinberger, Zurich, c 1962

Fig 3.7a: Karlheinz Weinberger, member of the *Tiger Gang*, Zurich, c 1962
Fig 3.7b: Karlheinz Weinberger, Zurich c 1961

Fig 3.8a: Karlheinz Weinberger, Knabenschiessen, Albisgüetli Zurich, c 1962
Fig 3.8b: Karlheinz Weinberger, Zurich, c 1961

Fig 3.9: EJ Bellocq, Storyville Portraits, c 1912
Prints made by Lee Friedlander from Bellocq's glass negatives

Fig 3.10a: EJ Bellocq, Storyville Portraits, c 1912
Fig 3.10b: EJ Bellocq, Storyville Portraits, c 1912
Prints made by Lee Friedlander from Bellocq's glass negatives

Fig 3.11a: EJ Bellocq, Storyville Portraits, c 1912
Fig 3.11b: Hellen van Meene, *Untitled*, 1999, 39 x 39 cm, C-print
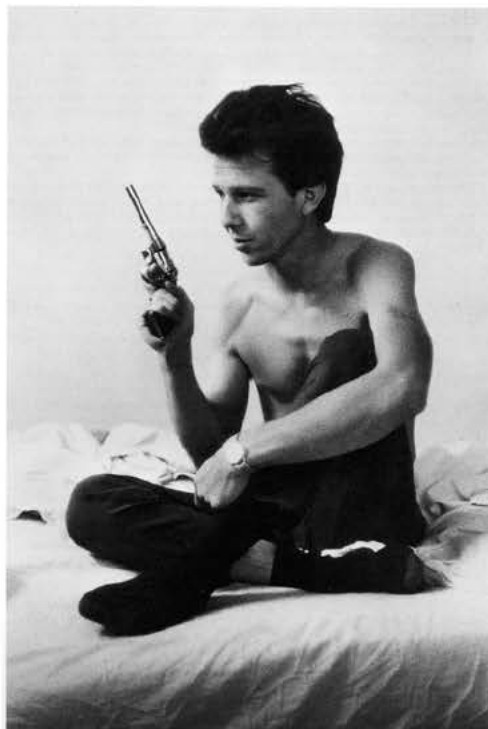
Fig 3.12a: Installation shot of *Overnight to Many Cities*, Photographers' Gallery, London, 2002, including Joel Meyerowitz, *Dominique, Soft Late Night, Good Grey Peach Pink Top (Brooklyn Heights), August 4, 1981*, third from the right

Fig 3.12 b: Larry Clark, cover photograph from his book *Tulsa*, 1971

Fig 3.13: Double-page spreads from Collier Schorr᾽s book *Conquistadores*, 2002
clockwise from top left: *A Neighbour᾽s House*, 1996; *The Pupil*, 1995; *Wallpaper (Chairs)*, 1997;
Cadets, 1997. Various dimensions, C-prints

Fig 3.14: Hellen van Meene, *Untitled*, 2000
C-print

Fig 3.15: Collier Schorr, *Horst Condrea*, 1995
97.8 x 69.2 cm, C-print

Fig 3.16: Collier Schorr, *The Last to Know What it is Like to be a Traitor*, 1994
39.4 x 29.8 cm, C-print

Fig 3.17a: Collier Schorr: *Defensive Tight End, Lindenfeld*, 1995-1996
Fig 3.17b: Collier Schorr, *In The Garden (Torso)*, 1995
105.4 x 76.2 cm and 40.6 x 50.8 cm, C-prints

Fig 3.18a: Collier Schorr, *South of No North*, 1995, 46 x 61 cm, C-print
Fig 3.18b: Collier Schorr, *Tremelo Americana*, 1998-1999, 25.5 x 33 cm, C-print
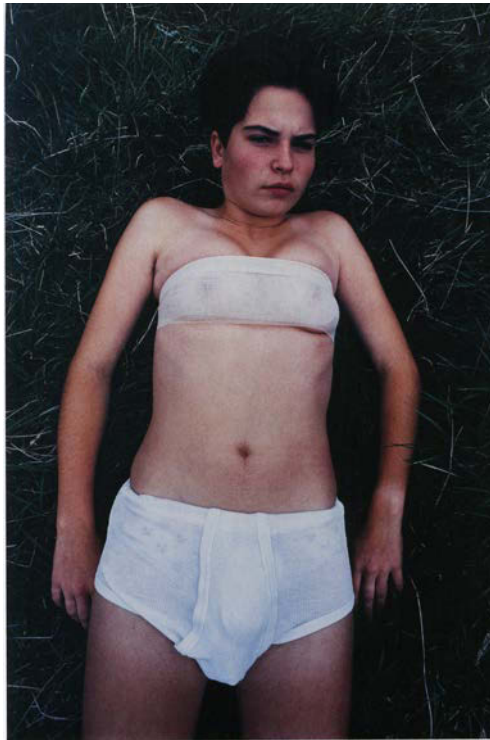
Fig 3.19a: Collier Schorr, *The Purloined Dick*, 1995, 61 x 46 cm, C-print
Fig 3.19b: Hellen van Meene, *Untitled*, 1999, 39 x 39 cm, C-print

Fig 3.20: Hellen van Meene, *Untitled*, c 1998-1999
39 x 39 cm, C-print
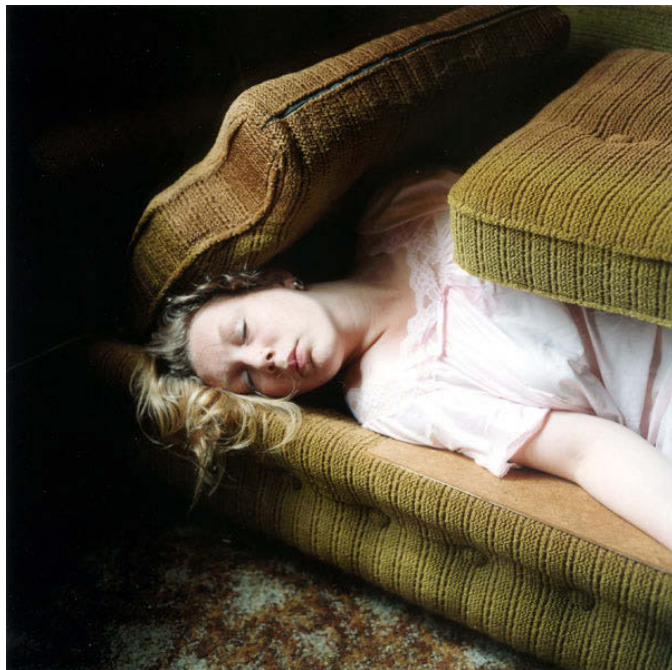
Fig 3.21: Hellen van Meene, *Untitled*, 1999
C-prints

Fig 3.22a: Hellen van Meene, *Untitled*, 1999, 39 x 39 cm, C-print
Fig 3.22b: Hellen van Meene, *Untitled*, 2000, C-print
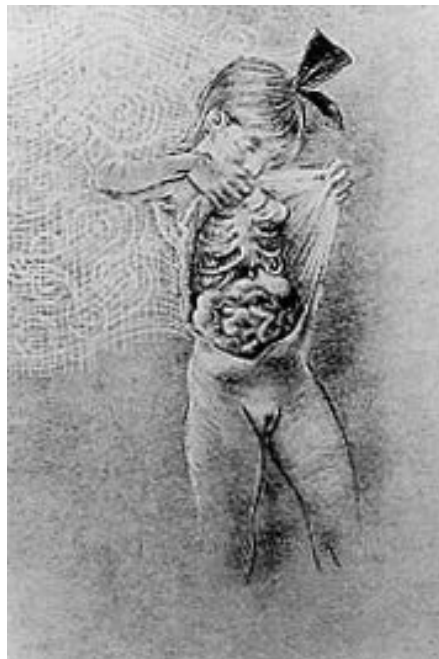
Fig 3.23a: Hans Bellmer, *The Doll*, 1934, black and white photograph
Fig 3.23b: Hans Bellmer, *Rose ouverte la nuit*, 1935-1936, graphite, gouache on paper

Fig 3.24a: Hellen van Meene, *Untitled*, 1998, 39 x 39 cm, C-print
Fig 3.24b: Hellen van Meene, *Untitled*, 1999, 39 x 39 cm, C-print

Fig 3.25: John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851-1852
76.2 x 101.6 cm, oil on canvas

Fig 3.26: Comparisons between the paintings of Rossetti and photographic studies by Parsons
Left hand side: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Reverie*, 1868; *Pandora*, 1869; *The Roseleaf*, 1870
Right hand side: John R Parsons, *Jane Morris*, 1865
From Michael Bartram, *The Pre-Raphaelite Camera*, 1985, pp. 136-137

Fig 3.27a: Julia Margaret Cameron, *The Angel at the Tomb*, 1869-1870, 34 x 25.5 cm, albumen print
Fig 3.27b: Julia Margaret Cameron, *My niece Julia Jackson full face*, April 1867, 25.3 x 20.1 cm,
albumen print

Fig 3.28: Julia Margaret Cameron, *Pomana*, 1872
34.6 x 26.9 cm, albumen print

Fig 3.29: Hellen van Meene, "Eri, 23", 2005
Commissioned by *The New York Times Magazine*, published 3 April 2005

Fig 3.30: Richard Prince, *Spiritual America*, 1983

Fig. 3.31a: Richard Prince, *Untitled (Three women looking in the same direction)*, 1980, 102 x 153 cm each, 3 Ektacolour photographs
Richard Prince, *Untitled (kids)*, 1980, 51 x 61 cm each, 4 Ektacolour photographs
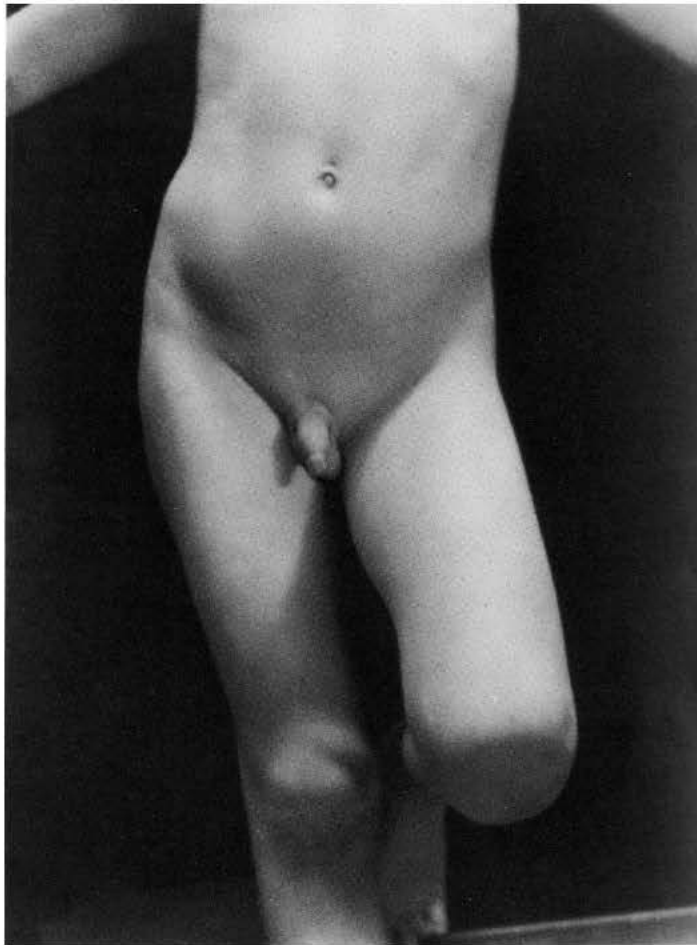
Fig 4.1: Sherrie Levine, *After Edward Weston: 2*, 1980
Black and white photograph
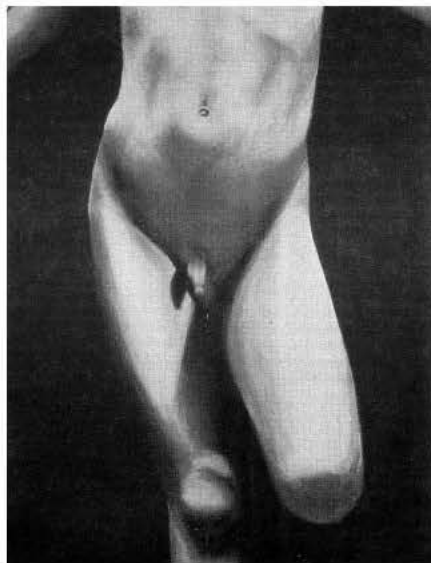
Fig 4.2: Amy Adler, *After Sherrie Levine*, 1994
35.6 x 50.8 cm and 96.5 x 127 cm, silver gelatin prints

JUST SAY WOW

Since wow was all we could say when we received *Amy Adler*'s mucho bueno drawing of Rider Strong, we thought you should join in, too. Applaud this *West Hollywood, California* gal, won't you?
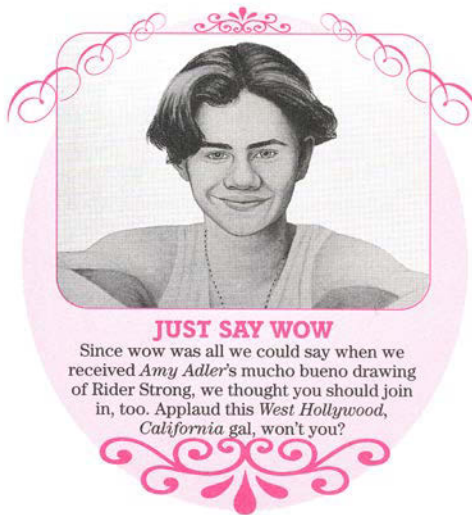
Fig 4.3: Amy Adler, *BOP*, 1994
Magazine cover and spread featuring Adler's drawing; detail of Adler's drawing and the magazine's comments

Fig 4.4: Andy Warhol, *Screen Tests*, 1964-1966
Film stills. Left to right, top to bottom: Dennis Hopper, 1964; Suzanne Janis, 1964; Francesco Scavullo, 1966; Beverley Grant, 1964; Gerard Malanga, 1964; Edie Sedgwick, 1965; John Giorno, 1963; Lou Reed, 1965; Ivy Nicholson, 1965

Fig 4.5: Andy Warhol, *Female Movie Star Composite*, c 1962
Cut-up composition and photostat

Fig 4.6a: Amy Adler, *King*, 1994, silver gelatin print, 127 x 96.5 cm
Fig 4.6b: Amy Adler, *Fox*, 1995, 50.8 x 76.2 cm, C-print

Fig 4.7: Amy Adler, *What Happened to Amy?*, 1996
40.6 x 50.8 cm or 40.6 x 50.8 cm each, colour photographs

Fig 4.8: Amy Adler, *The Problem Child*, 1995
various dimensions, from a series of eight photographs (C-prints and silver gelatin prints)
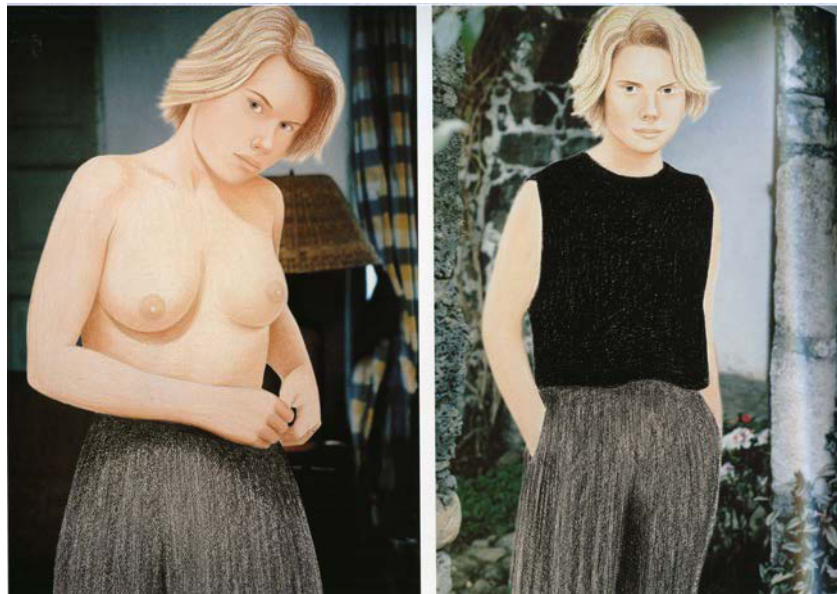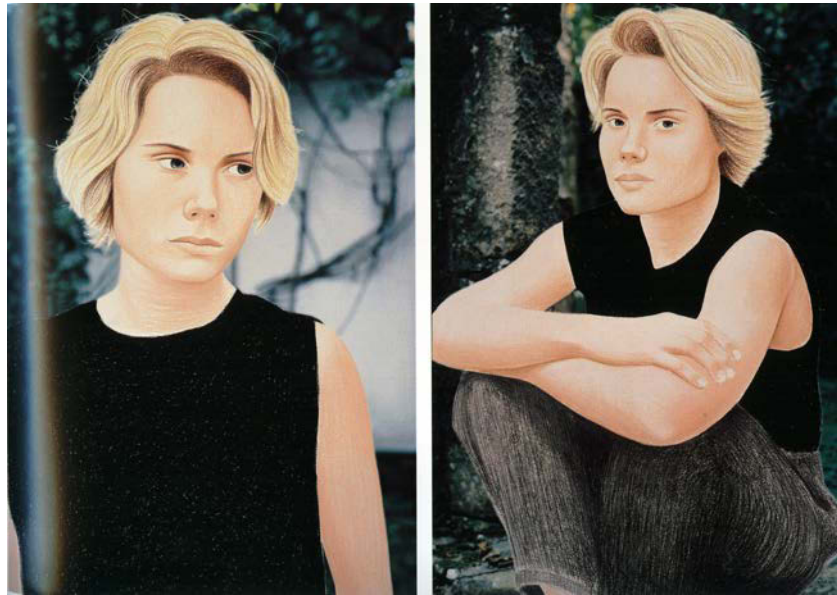
Fig 4.9: Amy Adler, *Once in Love With Amy*, 1997
various dimensions, cibachrome prints
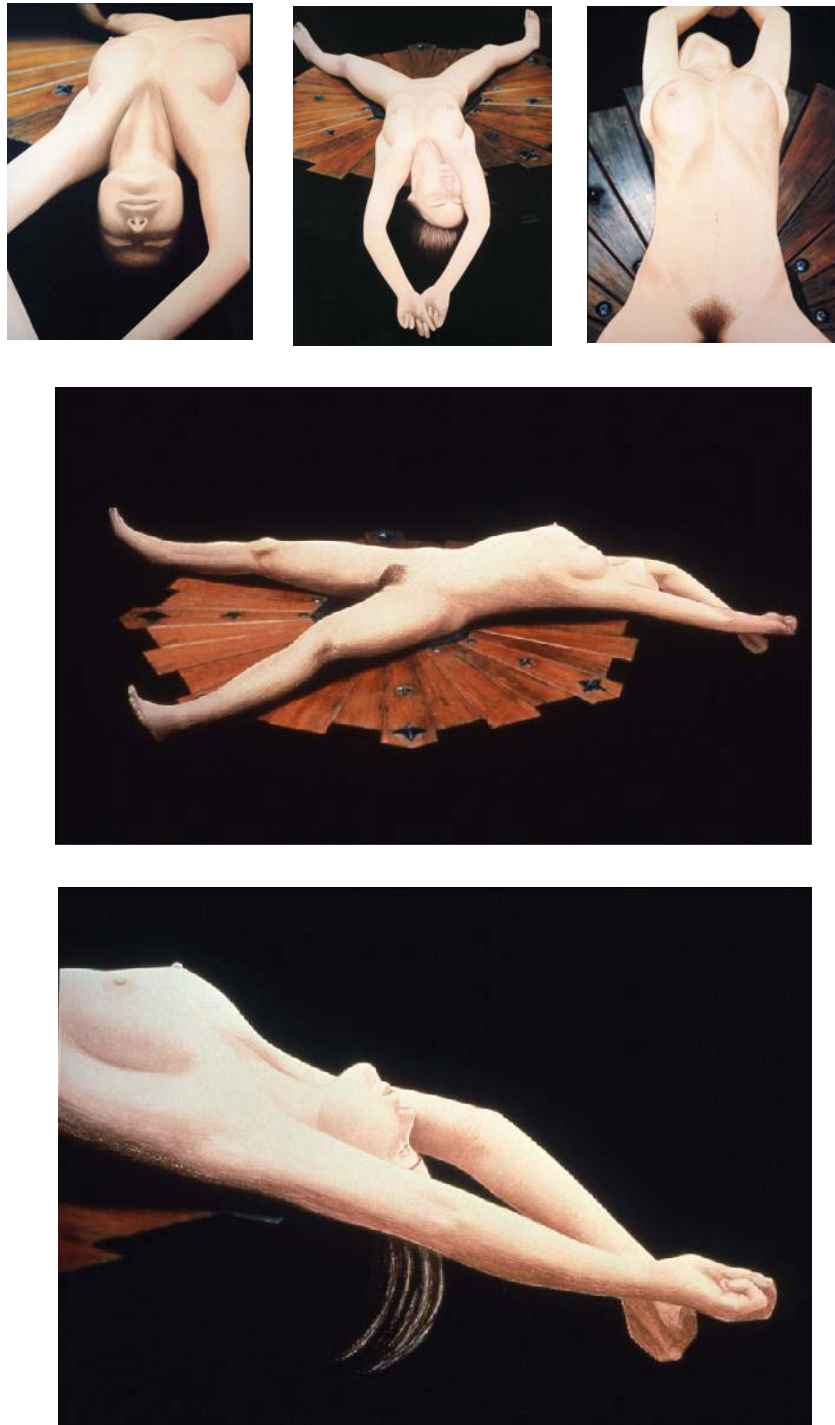
Fig 4.10: Amy Adler, *Once in Love With Amy*, 1997
various dimensions, cibachrome prints
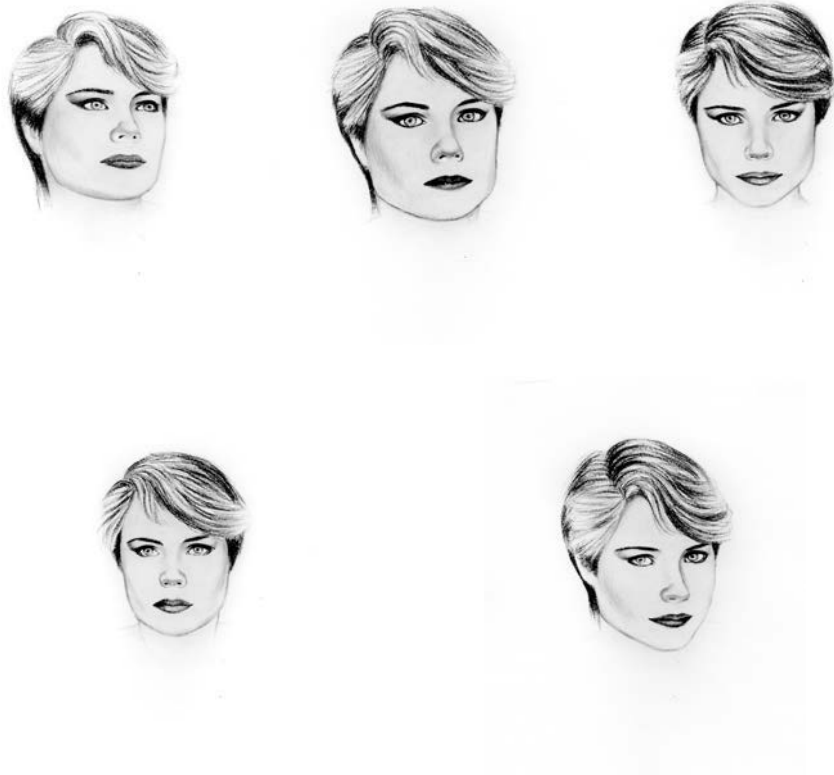
Fig 4.11: Amy Adler, *Very Lolita*, 1997
50.8 x 40.6 cm, five silver gelatin prints

Fig 4.12: Cindy Sherman, *Untitled Film Still #3*, 1977 and *Untitled Film Still #21*, 1978
various dimensions, silver gelatin prints
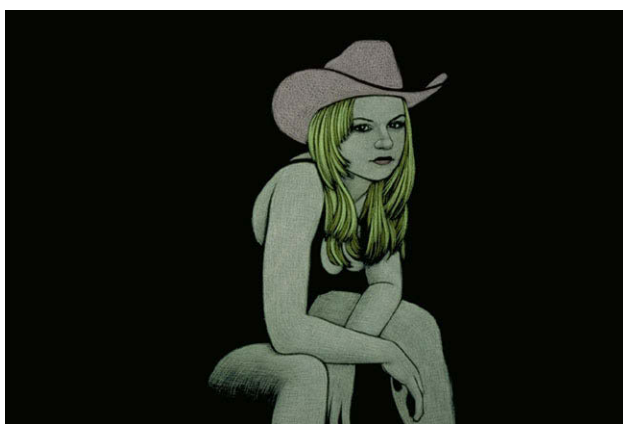
Fig 4.13: Amy Adler, *Different Girls*, 1999
101.6 x 152.4 cm, cibachrome prints
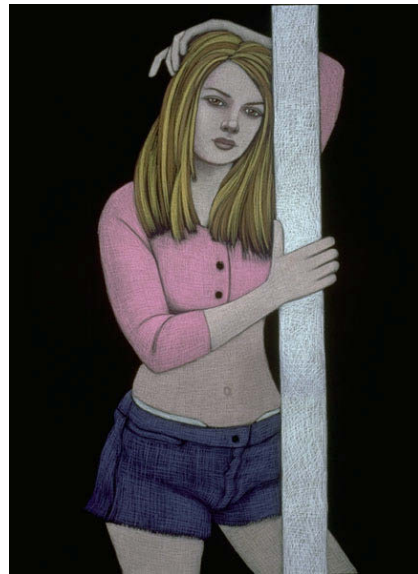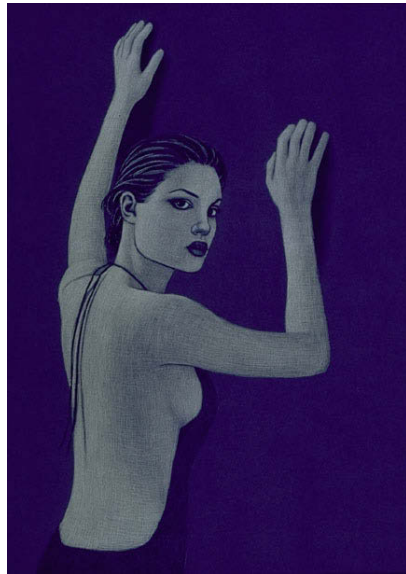
Fig 4.14: Amy Adler, *Different Girls*, 1999
101.6 x 152.4 cm or 101.6 x 152.4 cm, cibachrome prints

Fig 4.15: Amy Adler, *Different Girls*, 1999
101.6 x 152.4 cm, cibachrome prints

Fig 4.16: Richard Prince, *Untitled (girlfriend)*, 1993
190 x 127 cm, Ektacolour photograph
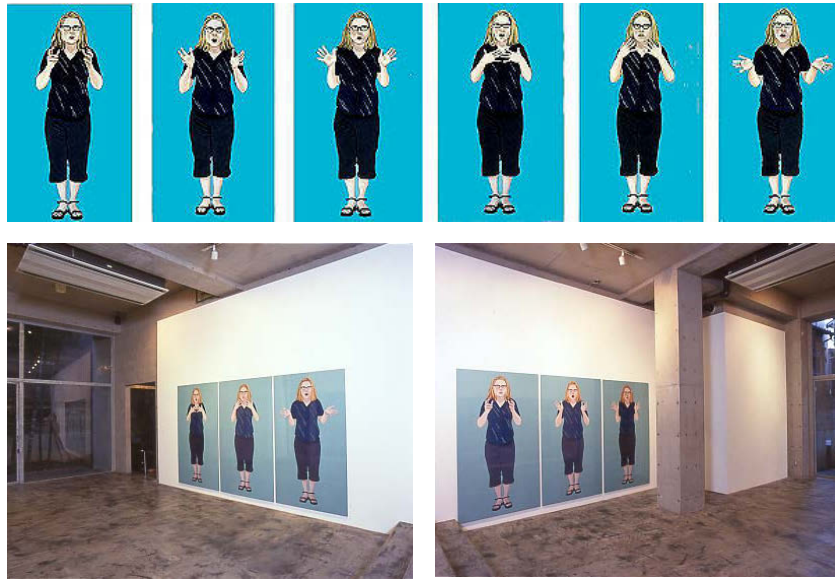
Fig 4.17: Amy Adler, *Why would I lie?*, 1999
182.9 x 101.6 cm each, six cibachrome prints; installation shots

Fig 4.18a: Richard Prince, *Untitled (girlfriend)*, 1993, 190 x 127 cm, Ektacolour photograph
Fig 4.18b: Richard Prince, *Untitled (girlfriend)*, 1993, 102 x 152 cm, Ektacolour photograph
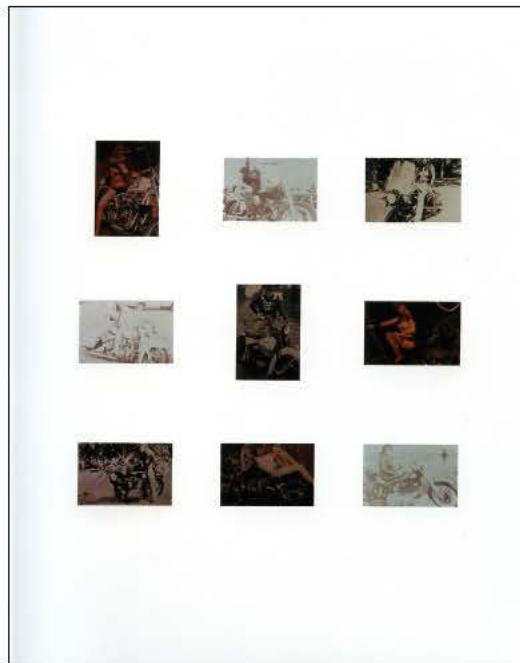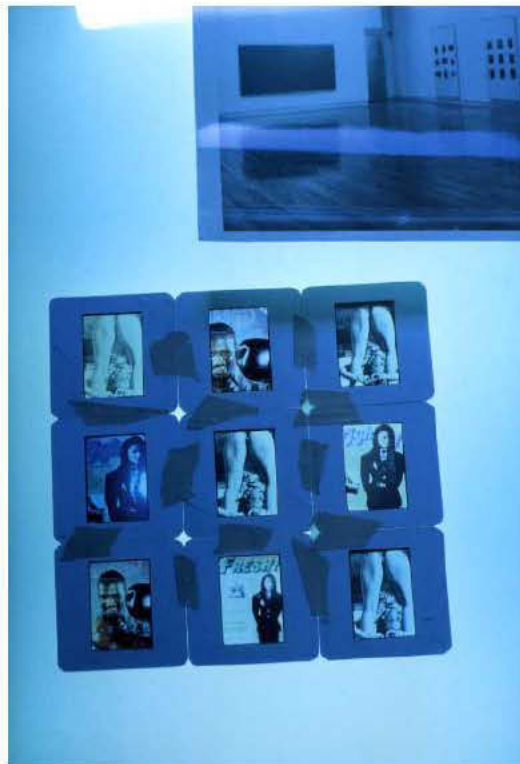
Fig 4.19a: Photograph of Richard Prince's working process, taping slides together ready to be printed as a 'gang'. Reproduced in *Richard Prince Photographs*, p. 149
Fig 4.19b: *Live Free or Die*, 1986, 219 x 122 cm, Ektacolour photograph

Fig 4.20: Amy Adler, *Amy Adler Photographs Leonardo diCaprio*, 2002
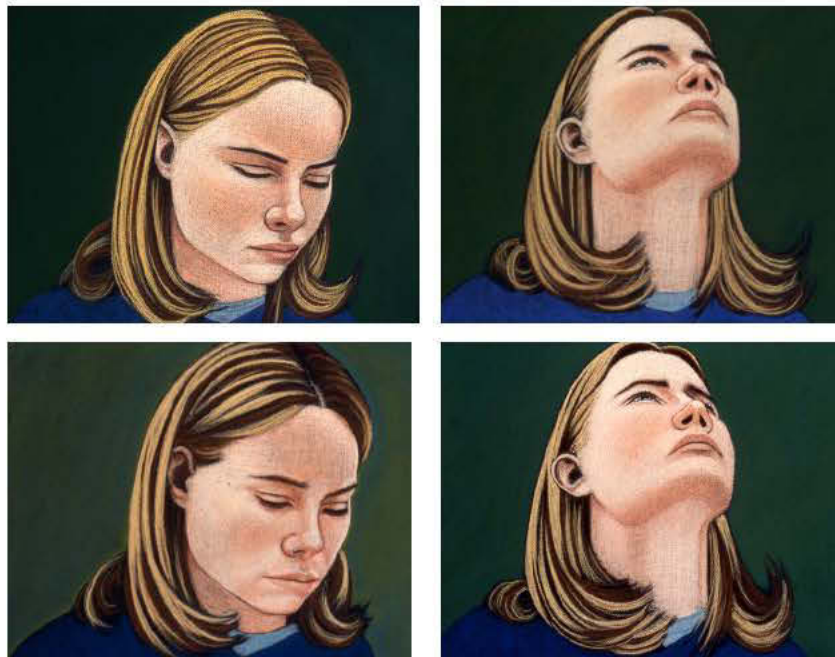Installation shot; 127 x 152.4 cm each, six cibachrome prints

Fig 4.21: Amy Adler, *Nervous Character*, 1999
Installation shot; 61 x 76.2 cm each, 24 C-prints

Planche XIV

LÉTHARGIE
HYPEREXCITABILITÉ MUSCULAIRE

Fig 5.1: Régnard, photograph of Augustine ("Lethargy: Muscular Hyperexcitability")
Originally reproduced in volume III of *Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière*, 1880