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2. Is the difference between our seeing and understanding of photographs and paintings one of degree or kind?

2.1 Wollheim on Photographs

In his essay 'Seeing-as, seeing-in, and pictorial representation',[1] Richard Wollheim engages in a discussion of photographs which is brief yet clear. In it he draws our attention to the pronounced difference between how photographs depict and paintings depict (what I take to be a difference in kind) and how, as a result, our understanding of photographs may be sharply distinguished from that of paintings. He can be seen to contrast the two media by drawing three distinctions:

Distinction 1 Under the perceptual genus of representational seeing, three species of seeing are identified, each of which is appropriate to understanding the subject matter of a specific type of pictorial object:

(A) The 'seeing appropriate to pictorial representations' is the seeing appropriate to pictures such as paintings, because these types of pictures are subject to a standard of correctness which is uniquely set by an artist's intentions.

(B) The 'seeing appropriate to photographs' is appropriate because photographs are subject to a standard of correctness which is not uniquely set by an artist's intentions.

[1] Essay V, appended to the second edition of Wollheim's *Art and its Objects* (1980). See especially pp. 205-9.

(C) The seeing appropriate to non-representational images is the seeing appropriate to such items as Rorschach inkblots, because these pictures are subject to no standards of correctness.[2]

These three species are not meant to exhaust the field of representational seeing; Wollheim points the way towards non-pictorial types of seeing appropriate to sculpture and to theatre, for example. We need only concern ourselves with paintings (species A) and photographs (species B) here.

Distinction 2 It is held that while the sitter-model distinction may operate in painting, it cannot do so in photography. This is illustrated thus: 'With a painting A's twin brother could serve as a model for A's portrait, i.e. the portrait for which A is the sitter; and if the portrait comes off, A, not his twin brother, is the person correctly seen there. But, if a photograph has a sitter, or is of someone or something, then the sitter must be identical with the model, or the cause of the photograph, and the model is the person or thing correctly seen in the print ...'. Understanding the photograph in this way involves the 'seeing *appropriate* to photographs, or to seeing photographs as photographs'.[3]

Distinction 3 Photographs may be taken and *used* as pictorial representations (otherwise they are not representations). When a photograph is used by a photographer in this way, 'intention cancels out the deliverances of the causal process, and that is because these photographs are no longer to be seen as photographs'[4]. Paintings do not need to be used in this way because they are (already) pictorial representations.

Most, but not all, theorists agree that intention plays *some* role, if only a very minor one, in our understanding of photographs. Wollheim's intentionalist thesis captures this common

[2] Wollheim (1980), p. 207

[3] Ibid., p. 208

[4] Ibid., p. 209

notion well and suggests one way of dealing with it. I think Wollheim's view in this respect, though, is a narrow one which presupposes too limited a set of photographic pictures and practices – one we might loosely class as *documentary* photographs and *documentary* practice – and as a result exaggerates the difference between photographs and paintings and unnecessarily complicates the intentionalist thesis. In responding directly to Wollheim's distinctions above, and through comparing photographs with paintings, we can usefully begin to put photographs into relief, begin to articulate more clearly our understanding of photographs, and begin to see how the wide variety of photographs which we encounter may successfully stand within the structure of an intentionalist theory of pictorial representation. In this chapter I pose and respond to the following three questions:

Question 1(a) Is the standard of correctness for appropriately seeing pictures such as paintings, sketches and so on *uniquely* set by an artist's intentions?

The related but contrasting case is the photographic one, and it will be illuminating to ask:

Question 1(b) Is the standard of correctness for appropriately seeing photographs always *not uniquely* set by the artist's/photographer's intentions?

Question 2 Is the difference between paintings and photographs as sharp as the subject-model distinction suggests?

Question 3 Do artists *use* photographs as representations?

Addressing question 1(a), I turn to paintings first.

2.2 Is the standard of correctness for appropriately seeing pictures such as paintings uniquely set by an artist's intentions?

In this section I will attempt to draw our understanding of paintings closer to that of photographs by showing how the causal element may intrude on an artist's intentions in the production of a painting.

With paintings, the depictions of Wollheim's first species (A), a standard of correctness as to how they are to be understood, it is held, is set uniquely by the intentions of the artist or picture maker. The picture maker, in marking the canvas or sheet before him, does so in a manner which best conveys his intentions ('desires, thoughts, beliefs, experiences, emotions, commitments') regarding a chosen subject matter. He is able to take up the role of viewer, while a picture is in progress, in order to check that what is being conveyed will be understood by a (reasonably sensitive and informed) viewer. Correctness and incorrectness apply because, despite his intentions, he may get this wrong – because of artistic incompetence, bad luck, over-conceptualisation perhaps, or some other reason.

Does intention *uniquely* set meaning in a painting? Consider three possible ways in which our correct understanding of a painting could be affected because the artist's intentional influence on a work is to some degree broken, compromised, or modified: (1) where other people's intentions are allowed to affect the painter's setting of a correct understanding of a work; (2) *non*-intentional factors are brought to bear on the painting and thus our correct understanding of it; and (3) causal-mechanical factors inherent in the painting medium and its tools may impinge on and affect our correct understanding of the work. I'll take these in turn.

2.2.1. Other People's Intentions

Consider a painter who, engaged in producing a work, at some point explicitly surrenders his intentions – that is, consciously attempts, at some point in creating his picture, to dislocate from that picture his desires, thoughts, beliefs, commitments and so on which cause him to paint as he does. He may do this so that something new, novel, or unexpected greets himself and the viewer of the work, for example. One way such a painter may do this is to invite a member of the public to complete the work. The standard of correctness for viewing a painting produced in this manner does not seem to be uniquely set by the artist's intentions; someone else's intentions intrude to set the correct meaning.

One might respond that a member of the public, upon wielding a paintbrush in this project, becomes, or must be considered, an artist and that the work is in fact a collaboration. The correct way of viewing and understanding the work in this light, then, might be set by a certain distillation or aggregation of their collective intentions with appropriate weight given to each. Consider, though, the paintings of classical master painters which have been completed by their apprentices. Rarely do we understand the subject matter of these works as based on multiple intentions. It is much more common to hold the intentions of the master prime – and thereby to establish correctness. The thought here, presumably, is that most apprentices to classical masters have either taken on their teacher's intention for particular works, or closely aligned their own intentions with that of their teachers.

It is easy to imagine in the case involving a member of the public completing a picture, though, the public person not taking on the intentions of the artist, or not wishing to align his own intentions with those of the artist's. In this case, we might want to hold that because the primary artist of such a painting *decides* to 'surrender' intention, *decides* the point in the production of the work at which another's intention is to intrude, and *decides* the point at which the work is complete and is to be presented to the viewing public, we should

understand the primary artist's intention to override or subsume other people's intentional input. This may be so (given an appropriate story establishing how intentions are to be weighed and compared), but it would appear to be stretching matters to say, with Wollheim, that the correct understanding of the picture's subject matter was uniquely set by the primary artist's intentions. The role of the artist's decisions at different stages within a pictorial project is an interesting issue, and I will touch on another aspect of it shortly, but it cannot be fully resolved here. Suffice it to say that it is no straightforward matter as to whether the standard of correctness in such a work is uniquely set by the artist who instigated the work. Intentions are involved, but not solely the artist's.

2.2.2 The Intrusion of Non-Intentional Factors

It is not difficult to imagine another type of work in which the painter explicitly surrenders his desires, thoughts, beliefs, commitments and so on, so that the standard of correctness is partially set by *non*-intentional factors. Take the example of a solo artist who stages part of the production of a painting so that something unexpected – some random event – informs the work by marking its surface in a way which affects how we understand it. This type of painter may, for example, decide to expose a work to the elements for 24 hours. Torrential rain may streak the canvas with the result that its subject becomes clearly suffused with a poignant melancholy, say. The degree of suffusion might be such that most viewers of the work cannot fail to see in it a melancholy subject. This result may be despite the painter's intentions. The artist's intentional input ensures that this rained-on image is still a picture, still a representation, and not simply a work of nature. But nature's input would seem to ensure that the standard of correctness to which this type of painting is subject is not uniquely set by the artist. Note that in this example, the non-intentional factor (the rain) is a *causal* factor which plays a role in helping to establish our understanding of the picture. A parallel here with our understanding of photographs is not difficult to see.

Can a picture maker actually *surrender* intentions at some point in, or for some period during, the production of a picture? This question seems to rest on the deeper question: Can one ultimately succeed in intending to give up one's intentions? I cannot hope to do this issue full justice here, so only touch on it. It seems a critic of the above conclusion might hold something like the following view: even if a painter's intentions are to surrender his desires, thoughts, beliefs and so on at some point, or for some period of time, while producing a picture, intention should ultimately carry the day because the painter (usually) decides when his picture is *complete*. And this ultimate decision of completeness – that, to the best of his abilities, a picture conveys his pictorial intentions – reflects an 'ultimate intention' which should subsume or override all other intentions (just as it should override the intentions of *other people* in the previous section's counter-argument).

I said at the beginning of this essay that Wollheim's use of 'intention' usefully steered between an excessively narrow and excessively broad definition: not taking into account everything which goes on in an artist's head, yet not being reduced to one simple volition. Surely it is also a useful definition because it does not narrowly reduce intention to what I have just called an 'ultimate intention' which overrides all others within a pictorial project. We should grant the above painter *some* success, and grant the fact that some non-intentional factors may play a role in setting the standard of correctness for seeing his painting appropriately.

Of course it is not just environmental non-intentional factors which may affect viewers' understanding of pictures. A painter's intentional influence may be reduced along *temporal* and *spatial* dimensions, for example. Embroidering on the above example, the artist may choose not only to expose his canvas to the elements for 24 hours (whatever the environmental conditions), but to do so on the first anniversary of Britain's abolition of the

Monarchy (whenever that might be), and do so at some randomly specified Ordnance Survey map grid reference (wherever that might be).[5]

Although eccentric works, it is not difficult to imagine such pictorial projects and, counter to Wollheim, discover a point or period within their production at which the artist specifically relinquishes his intentions for the work. By doing this he is allowing other factors to influence the standard of correctness for viewing his painting.

2.2.3 The Intrusion of Causal-Mechanical Factors Inherent in Different Media

The curiousness of photographs – what makes Wollheim establish for photographs a separate species of seeing – is the extent to which our understanding of them is influenced by causal (photo-mechanical) factors, which are introduced into the medium by the use of a camera, and generally propagated by specifically photographic methods of development and reproduction.

Consider the causal elements inherent in other mediums of pictorial representation – in the materials and tools which, like the camera, constrain the artist and his intentions. These are aspects of media which a picture maker must work *with* in order to convey his intentions. These tools and materials will, to lesser and greater extents, constrain a picture maker's 'desires, thoughts, beliefs, experiences, emotions, commitments' which cause him to work as he does.

For example, there is a limit to the control a painter has over how a brush is charged with paint and discharged of paint over a stretched canvas. There are natural limits to the density

[5] I owe the map grid reference example, and the general notion of possible non-intentional factors within picture making, to Christopher Janaway.

of grey an artist can achieve with a 3B pencil on a sheet of drawing paper. Pastels and airbrushes, even in expert hands, are not always fully obedient to an artist's desires and commitments. The *method* by which these tools are used can further relieve the artist of intentional control – think of Jackson Pollock's paint dripping technique.

In all of these examples, the medium intrudes to some degree upon the intentions of the artist. The causal-mechanical intrudes on the causal-intentional, as it were. Although painting and sketching and other forms of picture making rarely involve the optical variety of causal-mechanical factor found in photography, all media will find the causal-mechanical intruding to some extent upon a picture maker's intentions and that this may affect how a picture is understood.

We can now turn to complementary Question 1(b) and photographs.

2.3 Are standards of correctness for appropriately seeing photographs always not uniquely set by the photographer's intentions?

In the last section I attempted to draw our understanding of paintings closer to that of photographs, by trying to show how the causal element may intrude in the production of a painting, in order to show that our understanding of the two media are more similar than is often held. In this section I attempt the same conclusion, but by pulling in the opposite direction: by attempting to draw our understanding of photographs closer to that of paintings. Here, I will discuss the intrusion of the intentional element within the production of photographs, first by considering to what *extent* intention may be involved in setting a standard of correctness for appropriately seeing photographs, and then by tackling the question whether that correctness is always *not uniquely* set by a photographer's intentions. I will then briefly reflect on some of the influences the two media have had on each other which further suggest that the difference between a viewer's understanding of photographs and paintings is one of degree rather than kind.

With the depictions of Wollheim's second species (B), 'correctness and incorrectness do apply to the seeing appropriate to photographs, but the contribution that a mechanical process makes to the production of photographs means that causation is *at least* as important as intention in establishing correctness.'[6] [My emphasis.] Is this true?

[6] Wollheim (1980), p. 208-9

2.3.1 Highly Manipulated Photographs Considered

Consider our understanding of highly manipulated photographs, for example Man Ray's surrealist work *The Primacy of Matter over Thought* (1929), which we saw earlier (**Plate 9**), in which a nude model appears to 'melt' into the studio floor. Although something of the object (the model) which stood before the camera when its shutter was released has been caused to appear in the resulting photograph, the subject matter depicted in this photograph seems to be highly driven by Ray's intentions. That is, intention is at least as important as causation in establishing correctness in seeing the photograph appropriately. To understand this photograph in strictly, or predominantly, causal terms – say, as a documentary image recording what a certain model looked like from a particular fixed position at a particular time – would be to misunderstand what is depicted. Man Ray is cited as saying: '… photography is not restricted to the mere role of copyist. It is a marvellous explorer of aspects that our retina will never register,' (1926); and 'I do not photograph nature, I photograph my fantasy,' (1951).[7] Ray, through relentless work, developed an expert control over his solarization process and was extraordinarily discriminating in using it, and *The Primacy of Matter Over Thought* is arguably his finest application of the technique. Of Ray's technique, Arturo Schwartz holds that: '… Man Ray was able to achieve with a [solarized] photograph what generally only a truly great portrait-painter achieves – a psychological as well as a physical portrait of his subject'.[8] Other, diverse, examples of manipulation within the photographic process include some of the photographs of Lászlo Moholy-Nagy, the ambitious combination prints of Rejlander, the Futurist photography of Mario Castagneri and Wanda Wulz, and many others.

It may be argued that such manipulation of photographs after exposure is treating the photograph in a painterly fashion, and thereby illegitimately allies it with painting, i.e. that

[7] Both quotes are cited in Norman Gambill (1980), p. 3.

[8] Arturo Schwartz (1977), p. 282

they are not bona fide photographs. As Roger Scruton has put it, the photographer ‘can proceed to paint things out or in, to touch up, alter ... but of course he has now become a painter …’.[9] This view of photographs, though, ignores the history of photography and photographic practice. Almost from the medium’s inception there have been photographers who have questioned and seeked to depart from photography as a literal act of documenting the world. Photographers working within significant traditions of photography – such as Surrealism, Dadaism and Futurism – have sought to represent subject matter other than the objects and scenes around them through manipulation of the photographic process. Chemistry, as well as optics, is inherent in traditional photography, and chemical manipulation, to lesser and greater extents, has always been involved in producing an intended photograph, as have other darkroom manipulations.

2.3.2 Digitally Manipulated Photographs Considered

Can we find photographs whose subject matter is *uniquely* set by the artist’s intentions? I’m not certain, but I think we can come close with digitally manipulated photographs.

Digitally manipulated photographs are perhaps boundary, but certainly suggestive and real, examples of photographs which continue the above traditions of photographic manipulation. (See **Plate 10**.) It is with digital images that the potential arises for a picture maker’s intentions to completely overshadow the causal-mechanical element inherent in photography, and thereby to fully determine a viewer’s understanding of a photograph. *Any* photographer with access to a computer, scanner and image manipulation software may modify her image digitally. Each and every pixel of an image may be modified – individually, in selected

[9] Scruton (1983), p. 104

groups, or globally – in a host of ways.[10] For the digital photographer who works in this way, and depending to what extent they manipulate each and every pixel of a particular photograph, their intention may fully establish the standard of correctness for our understanding the photograph.

I have said that this is perhaps a boundary example of a manipulated photograph because it is perhaps not clear whether this sort of picture is a *photograph*. Clearly, if an artist simply sat down at a computer and created an image pixel by pixel (with a digital paint or drawing package, say), this would not be a photograph, whether it looked like one or not, because no causal element (no photographic type of causal-mechanical element) would be involved in its production. With the digital 'boundary' example, the picture has been causally generated (via a camera), but any *visual* trace of the causal element (at least at pixel level) has been eradicated due to a high degree of digital manipulation. Is this still a photograph? My instincts are that it is. But I do not wish to argue the status of digital images or the precise ontology of photographs here. My point is that *if* such heavily manipulated images are photographs, then it is reasonable to suppose that we may discover photographs in which the photographer's intentions *uniquely* set the standard of correctness for appropriately seeing them, in the manner Wollheim claims for paintings.

2.3.3 Influences Between Photography and Painting: A Brief Historical Note

When considering whether the distance between our understanding of photographs and paintings is one of degree or kind, we should note how the two media have historically influenced each other. Painting's influence on photography, photographic practice and

[10] The photographer may adjust hue or saturation of an image, sharpen or blur an image, move or replicate a pixel group to some other part of the image, change the colour model (from Red-Green-Blue to Cyan-Magenta-Yellow-Black, for example), create a local or overall polarised effect, or apply any number of other visual effects.

photographic understanding has been obvious since photography's conception. This is natural given the ubiquity of painting and the fact that new depictive media cannot issue from a vacuum. Julia Margaret Cameron's photography, with its literary and painterly influences and academy-inspired notions of beauty, is an excellent Victorian example of this. Cindy Sherman's *History Portraits*, such as untitled photograph #225's (**Plate 11**) mocking homage to Botticelli's *Portrait of a Woman* (c. 1490), are more recent (and more self-conscious) examples.

Perhaps less generally recognised is the fact that influence has also flowed in the opposite direction: paintings, painting practice and our understanding of paintings were influenced by some of the earliest contemporary examples of photography, and this influence continues into the present. Painters have not only painted from photographs, but also have incorporated photographic styles of depiction into their paintings. The influence of photography is especially clear, for example, in many of Degas' paintings and pastels of ballet dancers of the 1870s and 1880s. Take his *Répétition d'un ballet sur la scène* (c. 1874-5), (**Plate 12**), where various ballerinas are frozen in mid-dance, the *maître* is depicted 'snap-shot-like' stretching out languidly in his chair at the far side of the stage and one happy young dancer half appears in the foreground – cut neatly down the centre by the left edge of the painting. Or, take Siegfried Kracauer's observation: 'Marcel Duchamp relates that in 1912, when he was painting his *Nude Descending the Staircase*, Paris art circles were stimulated by stroboscopic and multi-exposure high-speed photographs. What a change in the relationships between photography and painting!'[11] Superrealist paintings, such as Chuck Close's *Self Portrait* (1968), are more recent examples. Just as the photographer may wax painterly, so may the painter wax photographic.[12]

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[11] Kracauer (1979), p. 170

[12] For a full and detailed discussion concerning the cross-influences between photography and painting see Aaron Scharf (1968). The Chuck Close example is from, and is illustrated in, Kendall Walton (1984), p. 256. For a good overview of 'photographic art' and the evolution of artistic photographic practice – especially from the 1960's – see Michel Frizot (1998). For an interesting overview of the growing 'institutionalisation' of photography, especially

2.3.4 Summary Concerning the Non-Uniqueness of the Photographer's Intention in Setting a Standard of Correctness for Appropriately Seeing and Understanding Photographs

In brief summary, there *may* be boundary cases of (digitally produced) photographs where the intentional element uniquely sets a standard of correctness for appropriately seeing a photograph. Even if this were not the case, with some manipulated photographs the intentional element is more important than the causal in our correctly understanding them (i.e., the intentional is at least as important as the causal in establishing the correct standard of seeing). Highly-manipulated photographs such as those produced by Man Ray and others are not every day photographs, but there seems no good reason not to accept optical, chemical and digital manipulation in the production of photographs as anything but genuine, bona fide and historically coherent practice. With unmanipulated, documentary type photographs, Wollheim and many others accept that intention plays some role, but not an important or dominant one, in our seeing and understanding them appropriately. Drawing on the examples and discussion so far of both this section and Section 2.2, I suggest that the distinction between painting and photography, drawn in terms of a standard of correctness uniquely set or not uniquely set by an artist's or photographer's intentions, is less precise than Wollheim has suggested. Causal elements may play a key role in our understanding paintings and, conversely, intentional elements may play a key role in our understanding photographs. Historically, the influences of photography on painting and *vice versa* have been substantial, lending further credence to the thought that the difference between our seeing and understanding of photographs and paintings is one of degree.

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creative and art photography – reflected in the increasing numbers of dedicated photographic galleries, museum collections, publications, exhibitions, events, university and college curricula, grants and awards, corporate sponsorship, international sales markets, and so on – see Stuart Alexander (1998).

2.4 Is the difference between our understanding of photographs and paintings as sharp as the subject/model distinction suggests?

Wollheim brings out a sharp difference between depiction in painting and photography by focusing on a distinction which can be drawn in portraiture between a sitter (the subject) and a stand-in model. In painting, for example, John's twin brother Jim could model for a portrait of John and, if the work is successful, it is John who is correctly seen in the picture. If John's twin brother Jim modelled for a portrait of John before a camera, in the resulting photographic portrait, it is held, Jim is correctly seen in the picture. Wolheim emphasises that this is 'the seeing *appropriate* to photographs, or to seeing photographs as photographs'.[13] In this section I explore common intuitions about the subject/model distinction and its role in photography, seeing and understanding photographs appropriately, and I question whether it need always be the case that in photographs subject and model are identical.

2.4.1 A Thought Experiment: Producing Both a Painterly and Photographic Portrait of John by Using his Twin Brother Jim

The subject/model distinction appears to become less clear if we consider the following thought experiment, which I think plausibly compares the professional artistic practices of some portrait painters and photographers.

A painter wishes to depict John in a realistic and insightful manner, but only has access to his twin brother Jim. (John, a construction engineer say, is engaged in a year long contract

[13] Wollheim (1980), p. 208. Wollheim goes on to say '… a photograph may be taken and then used as a pictorial representation, and in that eventuality it is to be seen in the same way … as a representation.' I will consider the 'use' of photographs as representations in § 2.5.

without leave in Dubai). The painter, who is an acquaintance of the twins, uses Jim as a model for John because of the strong resemblance between the two. The painter works with a small palette of good acrylic paints on canvas. His method is to paint Jim's basic form, but deviate from that form, as his medium permits, in precisely those aspects that he has observed John to differ from Jim: John has slightly higher cheekbones, a mouth which is a little crooked. The painter gets Jim to wear John's favourite winter suit. He has Jim hold a certain fixed, pensive expression of loss which he clearly remembers John holding on an occasion shortly after John and his wife's first child was born. The painter thinks that fleeting expression of loss opens up something fundamental to understanding John in particular and to experiences of childbirth in general, and is something he feels it worthwhile representing on canvas. Most people who see his finished canvas agree.

The painter's sister is a photographer who is similarly acquainted with the twins and equally keen to produce a realistic and telling portrait of John. After spending some time discussing her project with Jim, he is invited to visit John's home to model for the portrait in John's study. The photographer's method is to utilise Jim's basic form, but deviate from that form, as her medium permits, in precisely those aspects that she had observed John to differ from Jim. With the canny use of lighting, and only a hint of professional make-up, she is able to 'raise' Jim's cheekbones. With a little coaching from John's wife, Jim is able to crook his mouth (as he now remembers imitating his brother when they were children). With direction and a little time, Jim is able to 'think his way into' and hold that telling expression of loss which the photographer had also witnessed in John just after the baby was born. To best ensure her intentions, the photographer exposes six rolls of (medium format) black and white, high-speed film. She is then able to select a single frame and print a grainy, low contrast image on a textured, rag-based stock. The photographer thinks that fleeting expression of loss opened up something fundamental to understanding John in particular and to experiences of childbirth in general, and is something she feels it worthwhile depicting in a photograph. Most people who see the photograph agree and believe that it depicts *John* in that light.

2.4.2 Intuitions and Conclusions

On an intuitive level, and in keeping with my attempt in drawing photographs and paintings closer together, it is difficult to mark any great distinction between the above painting and photograph beyond the obvious characteristics of the individual mediums. Artist intention, along with artistic ability in the respective mediums, play a role in establishing what it is we see, what we understand the subject matter to be, in both these pictures, i.e. John.

Compare a viewer's experiences of the two portraits. The viewer's experience of the painting is likely to be something like this: given that he is familiar with the subject matter (that he knows John) and that the painting is successful (that it conveys the artist's intentions), he will see it as a painting depicting John. If he knows the model, Jim, he may or may not see Jim in it – this may have to be pointed out to him. And given that this has been pointed out to him, (or that he has noticed a resemblance to Jim), although this may add to his interest in the picture, there is no reason to believe that he wouldn't continue to understand the painting's subject matter to be John and to see John in it.

The viewer's experience of the photograph may be very similar: given that he is familiar with the subject matter (that he knows John, or to put it another way, that he possesses the relevant cognitive stock) and the photograph is successful (conveys the artist's intentions), he will see it as a photograph depicting John. If he knows the model, Jim (possesses, we might say, an enriched cognitive stock), he may or may not see Jim in it – again, this may have to be pointed out to him. Given recognition of the model, although this may add to the viewer's interest in the picture, there is no reason to believe that he wouldn't continue to understand the photograph's subject matter to be John and to see John in it. In this type of project, it is

not obvious that the subject/model distinction does apply to a 'seeing *appropriate* to photographs'. [14]

Wollheim's related notion of 'seeing a photograph as a photograph' seems to presuppose that the photographic project will be a documentary one and thereby to *specify* how we are to understand a photograph and its subject matter. For Wollheim, the artist or photographer's intention is *meant* to be less important than the inherent causal element in establishing the standard of correctness for seeing a photograph. Why? Most likely because this is the intentional element's role in the majority of photographs.

Although Wollheim's view captures common notions about a wide variety of mainstream photographs, the theory appears to lose an ability to capture and explain our understanding of a range of creative photographs which are not literal visual records. It would be ironic that an intentionalist theory of depiction which captures such a wide range of pictures *as art* (produced in the wide variety of cultural and historical styles and range of media I mentioned in my introduction) should let slip through its fingers some *photographs* as art. Is this what happens?

Wollheim goes on to explain intention's role in photographs, and our unique understanding of photographs, in terms of photographs being taken and used as pictorial representations. It is to this 'use' of photographs that I now turn.

[14] If one believes that it is appropriate to see Jim in the photographic portrait (despite the photographer's intentions and the fact that one actually sees John in it) because the photograph *refers* to Jim (picks out existent object Jim), tougher examples are available. Take Chris Dorley-Brown's photograph *Haverhill 2000*, which is a single composite portrait, in colour, of the inhabitants of Haverhill, Suffolk. The image, produced from 2000 superimposed individual portraits, depicts a single discreet face (a face perfectly symmetrical, round-jawed, with small nose, flat cheeks and flawless skin), but doesn't refer to any existent entity – at least not in any straightforward manner involving an object, a particular place, or a particular time. Similar photographic composite portraits were made in the nineteenth century (for example, by Sir Francis Galton, Dr. William Noyes and Arthur Batut) for anthropological and sociological purposes, in an attempt to produce visual evidence of racial and criminal 'types', discover family 'types' and design 'templates' of (female) beauty.

I am obliged to MGF Martin for pointing me towards this type of response to concerns of reference.

2.5 Do artists/photographers use photographs as pictorial representations?

Wollheim concludes his short discussion of photography in 'Essay V' with the following supporting example:

> [If] someone photographs a film extra and uses the photograph to portray Alcibiades, or (like Cecil Beaton) he takes a photograph of one of his friends dressed up as a Grand Duchess and uses it to depict a Grand Duchess … what it is correct to see is not the film extra or the friend – though the photographs remain photographs of the film extra, of the friend – but Alcibiades or a Grand Duchess. The sitter/model distinction returns, intention cancels out the deliverances of the causal process, and that is because these photographs are no longer to be seen as photographs.[15]

For Wollheim, one and the same photograph can be: (i) a photograph of *x*; and (ii) a photograph used as a depiction of *y*; where $x \neq y$. It is *appropriate* to see the photograph's subject matter as of *x*; it is *correct* to see the photograph's subject matter as of *y*. This bifurcation of our understanding of photographs, I believe, is meant to capture two common yet potentially conflicting intuitions: that the causal element in photographs is generally the most important element involved in understanding photographs; and that photographs may depict more than what simply stood before the camera when its shutter was released. What may strike us as odd about this account is that there should be an appropriate way to see photographs which is not the correct way, and that the correct way to see photographs is to not see them as photographs. Must a photograph, such as the above portraits, necessarily be *used* to depict a subject matter, such as Alcibiades or a grand duchess?

[15] Wollheim (1980), pp. 208-9

2.5.1 Distinguishing Producers and Presenters of Photographs

In order to get clear about using photographs as representations, I wish first to distinguish between the producer of a photographic work (the photographer or artist) and a presenter of a photographic work (which may be the photographer or artist, or may be some other person, such as a gallery curator, magazine or newspaper editor, advertising art director, and so on). The standard of correctness for understanding a photograph set by the *presenter* of the picture may be very different from the standard of correctness set by the producer of the picture. For example, just as a museum curator could modify our understanding of, say, the subject matter of Pierre Bonnard's painting *Le nu à la baignoire* (*The Nude in the Bath*) (1937) by presenting it amongst pornographic works, so could a gallery curator modify our understanding of a Beaton friend-dressed-up-as-a-grand-duchess photograph by presenting it amongst a room full of real-grand-duchess photographs. Such presenters would be distorting the artist's intentions (or at least original intentions) for these pictures.

It is the intentions of the producer of a picture (both photographer and painter) which we, along with Wollheim, want to hold as prime in such cases, rather than the presenter's intentions, because the picture maker is best placed to know what their photographs represent and how we should correctly understand them. (The photographer, while producing her photograph, can take up the role of viewer to confirm, to a reasonable degree, whether she will be successful or not in conveying her intentions.)[16] The emphasis on the picture maker establishes an initial point of trajectory in determining our understanding a picture and what it represents.

[16] Making the photographer's intentions prime is not to discount a curator's or an advertiser's perspective. In § 1.3, I held that an intentionalist thesis should not discount the individual viewer's perspective, for any viewer may discover more in a picture than a successful artist intended. Because presenters of pictures are initially viewers of them, it is possible for presenters such as curators and advertisers to contribute to our understanding of pictures through their presentations – for example, through manipulating the viewing context of pictures. As I have indicated, I will leave to one side further discussion of the contextual element involved in photographic understanding.

The picture maker may be, and often is, the presenter of the picture they have produced. Bonnard himself could have presented a nude bathing study in a pornographic context (however unlikely), just as Beaton could have presented a make-believe duchess portrait at an exhibition of photographs depicting real European royalty. They could have presented their respective pictures with different titles – reflecting different intentions and thereby modifying our understanding of their pictures.

These are straightforward examples of both picture makers and others *using* pictures as representations. Although photographers may use their photographs as representations in this way, it is not clear that this is the only way in which photographs may be representations. Cannot photographers produce representations directly – and bypass any need to set what we might call a 'standard of use'?

2.5.2 Distinguishing Photographic Projects: The Documentary and the Creative

I think it is important to distinguish photographic projects. Again, take Wollheim's example of Beaton's grand duchess image. I have been unable to find an image specifically of a *grand* duchess by Beaton, but he did photograph a number of duchesses (see **Plate 13**), various groups of friends dressed up for costume parties, some of whom could be taken as grand duchesses (see the women in **Plate 14**, for example), and a variety of images of people as the Duchess of Malfi, including one of the actor George Rylands (see **Plate 15**) dressed for the role in a Marlowe Society production of the play (Beaton's first photograph published in Vogue magazine). Very early in his career, Beaton also produced a wonderfully exotic photograph of the Duchess of Malfi using his sister Baba as a model (see **Plate 16**). It is not clear whether this is an image of Baba *as* the Duchess of Malfi, or whether it is a Duchess-of-

Malfi-picture, as it were.[17] I will come to this distinction in a moment. It is this diversity of duchess images which suggests the need I am calling for here to distinguish between possible photographic projects.

Project 1 Beaton's photographing the (real) Duchess of Westminster (**Plate 13**) for Vogue magazine could have been a fairly straightforward documentary project (let us say). As no model has been utilised, surely the photograph isn't being *used* to represent the Duchess (or a duchess), it *is* a representation of the Duchess (or a duchess).

Project 2 That period in Beaton's life when he revelled in party-going and dressing up with his friends suggests another type of photographic project: during one of these parties he could have captured on film one of his friends dressed up as a grand duchess in order to mark the event. This is an essentially documentary project producing a documentary image. It would then be open to Beaton to use this image (for a different purpose) to represent a grand duchess if he was so inclined.

Project 3 A third type of project might see Beaton bring a friend to an appropriate stately location, lavishly dress her or him up as a grand duchess and produce a photograph. The early image of The Duchess of Malfi, involving his sister (**Plate 16**), *may* be the result of this type of project. This would be especially apparent if, for example, he had he entitled the photograph 'Baba as a Grand Duchess' – which would suggest that we not take its subject matter as a real grand duchess. This is a much more artistic project than Project 1 and Project 2, involving the selection of a fitting interior, fashioning a suitable dress, designing appropriate headgear, applying make-up, perhaps styling the model's hair and so on. The

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[17] We need to distinguish between the title of a photograph and a caption accompanying it. A title may, and often does, suggest a photographer's intentions; a caption editorialises: '… it directs viewers to specific aspects of an image, or projects the captioner's attitude about the subject'. Pelizzon (2002), p. 93. The Plate 16 image does not seem to have been given a title by Beaton. It appears as a captioned illustration in some biographical and autobiographical Beaton literature – captions which indicate the model as his sister Baba as a matter of personal and historical interest – and it appears uncaptioned in other illustrated collections. Beaton, in his autobiographies and scrapbooks, says little specifically about his intentions in producing the photograph.

photograph of George Rylands dressed up for his role as The Duchess of Malfi (**Plate 15**) similarly issues from this type of project. In these projects, there is still a sense of documentation: Beaton is documenting his own creation in the first case; and documenting someone else's creation (Rylands') in the second case. Again, there is also a Wollheimian sense here in which Beaton could take either of the ensuing photographs and use it as a depiction of a grand duchess.

Project 4 There is a fourth possible project, though, in which the photograph produced does not seem to be used as a depiction, but is a depiction produced *directly*. In 1930, *The Sphere* magazine baptised Beaton's sitters, many of whom were his friends, 'The Photocracy'. The Photocracy '… formed a complex social mixture of heiresses, lionized artists, leading theatrical figures and the residues of a patrician class … [who] were themselves translated into photographic *fictions,*' (my emphasis).[18] If we take this seriously – as a true representation of Beaton's intentions – another project that Beaton might plausibly have engaged in was the *creation* of a depiction – in this case of a fictional (or ideal) grand duchess. Let us call this alleged fictional work '*The Grand Duchess'*. Beaton, in this type of project, would be drawing on his photographic experience, technical skill, interest in theatrical design and superior ability to manipulate his subject matter and medium. The difference between this and the three previous projects is that this project is as an essentially *creative* one, rather than a documentary one. Here, Beaton has a certain photograph in mind (it may be partly, and almost wholly, preconceived) which he wishes to produce for public exhibition and appreciation. He uses his model, uses light and framing, uses a range of peculiarly photographic tools and materials to create his intended image, but he doesn't use the *photograph* for anything.[19] The photograph depicted in **Plate 16** may be the result of this type of project. He might have called it *'The Grand Duchess'*.

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[18] David Alan Mellor (1994), p. 12. Mellor's book is a relatively detailed overview of Beaton's work.

[19] If one were not happy with Beaton engaging in this type of creative project, one might imagine the fictional projects of Julia Margaret Cameron or Cindy Sherman, for example.

It may be argued that with this fourth type of project, my worry shouldn't be whether Beaton used his photograph as a pictorial representation, but whether he used his model as a representation which he then photographed. That is, in the style of Project 3, he produced a (pictorial) representation of a (three-dimensional) representation. This is a point Roger Scruton raises in *Photography and Representation* (1983). Take some parallel examples. If I produce a straight-forward photograph of Rodin's bronze *The Burghers of Calais* (1886-88), Manet's *The Beer Waitress* (1878-79), or Ralph Fiennes portraying Henry VI on stage (or any other representation) it may be argued that it is not *my* intention which sets the standard of correctness for understanding what is represented in the photograph, but the intentions of those artists who created the representations in the first place. As Wollheim suggests, my intentions here would play very little role in setting a correct standard of seeing; my photographic work would essentially 'deliver' (causally, or causal-mechanically) the original creator's intentions (for understanding the statue, painting, stage persona picture) to the viewer. This, of course, assumes a 'straight-forward' or documentary type of photographic method. And this is where it puts a foot wrong.

On this view Beaton (the artist) creates a living work using a model, and Beaton (the photographer) documents it on film for posterity. Where Beaton's intentions loom is in his creation of the representation – in dressing up and posing his sister, for example, as a grand duchess. But I don't think it is right to understand what I have called the fourth Beaton project in this way. In this type of project, Beaton's role in taking the photograph is an essentially creative and interpretive one which sees as its goal the production of a certain preconceived photographic print for public appreciation. It is true that there would be artistry, creativity and intention involved in dressing up the model, but there would also be artistry, creativity and intention involved in lighting and posing the subject, deciding the right lens, selecting appropriate depth of field, choosing the moment of exposure, establishing print structure and so on, which can only be understood in terms of *photographic* expression of the subject matter. If the intentional emphasis of Beaton's creative project were solely, or

predominantly, focused on the dressing up of his sister in the studio, then *any* photograph, taken by *any* photographer (including Beaton), and *however* taken which successfully documented the dressed-up Baba would fit the bill. But this sort of documentary photograph is unlikely to be appreciated by the public in anything like the way we appreciate the photograph he *did* produce in Plate 16 – the prospective *The Grand Duchess*.

I am reading the fourth Beaton project, which I believe to be an intrinsically photographic one, as I read the photographer's project in producing a portrait of John in the thought experiment earlier on (Section 2.4): it is an essentially creative, interpretive and highly intentionally-infused one. Manipulating the subject matter and the related tools, apparatus and processes of the medium culminates in the production of a picture partially or fully preconceived by the artist. In dealing with photography as an art – and here we are closely paralleling Wollheim's discussion about painting as an art – this seems the correct understanding.

I suggest that a photographer engaging in certain creative projects has no indispensable need or reason to *use* her photograph to represent a subject – unless she has changed her mind about it or wants to use it for some *other* intended purpose – for she may depict a subject in creating a photograph of it directly.

2.6 A Brief Summary Concerning Our Seeing and Understanding of Photographs and Paintings

Our understanding of photographs and paintings do not seem to be as radically different in character as is sometimes supposed. It seems clear that the intentional element will play some role – to a lesser or greater degree – in the production of almost any photograph, and as a result will contribute to setting the standard of correctness for appropriately seeing and understanding its subject matter. With some artistic and heavily manipulated photographs it appears that the intentional element will be at least as important as the causal element in determining that standard. A correct understanding of paintings, on the other hand, although usually predominantly influenced by an artist's intentions, may also be influenced by extra-intentional factors, non-intentional factors and various causal-mechanical factors inherent in the medium. We have also seen that the difference between our understanding of photographs and paintings does not seem as sharp as the subject/model distinction suggests. Some creative photographic projects, by the Beatons, Margaret Camerons and Shermans of this world, produce pictures for which a correct understanding is highly dependent on grasping their creator's intentions, which is directly comparable to how paintings are understood.