

Reading the Gallery:

Portraits and Texts in the Mid- to Late Nineteenth Century



SARAH HOOK

WOLFSON COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

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ABSTRACT

Reading the Gallery: Portraits and Texts in the Mid- to Late Nineteenth Century

Sarah Hook

Wolfson College, University of Oxford

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The Victorians saw more portraits than any generation before them. While the eighteenth century has been named ‘the age of portraiture’,¹ portraits pervaded nineteenth-century society like never before. With the invention of photography, coupled with technological advancements in low-cost printing methods, the medium in which faces could be recorded was revolutionised, the classes of society that could afford to be immortalised expanded, and the spaces in which portraits were seen proliferated. These spaces included the public gallery, photography studio shop windows, and personal photograph albums. They also included the art periodical, biography, fiction, and poetry as the experience of portraiture became distinctly textual as well as visual.

This thesis draws upon art history alongside literary, museum, and material studies to explore the creative exchange that developed between portrait viewership and reading practices in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Taking the establishment of the National Portrait Gallery in 1856 as its starting point, the thesis tracks the changing idea of the portrait gallery through its literary reception. It takes the portrait gallery to mean the physical space in which portraits were exhibited, and the conceptual idea of collecting, arranging, and interacting with portraits that permeated into the literary world. By focussing on the work of Edmund Gosse, Walter Pater, Thomas Hardy, and Vernon Lee, the thesis forms a ‘gallery’ of nineteenth-century tastemakers, each of whom looked to the democratic art of portraiture to reflect upon their literary art.

How did portraits and texts interact in the mid- to late nineteenth century? In what ways did writers adapt the conventions of portraiture and the portrait gallery for the written text? This thesis seeks to answer these questions and provide new narratives about the complex relationship between the visual and the verbal in nineteenth-century culture. It observes the Victorian ‘culture of art’ with a more focussed eye to illuminate how the conditions of viewing, circulating, and collecting portraits specific to the period allowed the portrait gallery to serve as a particularly compelling arena for the literary imagination.² Gosse, Pater, Hardy, and Lee tested the inherent limitations of portraiture as an art of imitation to realise its imaginative capacity for communicating with close and distant, contemporary and historic figures. They recognised that writing offered a valuable way of constructing the affective conversations that could be had with – and the stories that could be told about – portraits and portrait collections. With the proliferation of portraits came the problem and the opportunity of organising them.

¹ Kamilla Elliott, *Portraiture and British Gothic Fiction: The Rise of Picture Identification, 1764-1835* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), p. 3.

² The phrase ‘culture of art’ is borrowed from Jonah Siegel, *Desire and Excess: The Nineteenth-Century Culture of Art* (London: Princeton University Press, 2000).

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INTRODUCTION

Reading the Portrait Gallery

In 1920, Vernon Lee recollected stumbling upon an album of photographic ‘ghosts’ while staying in a summer house rented by friends four years earlier.¹ The album contained the portraits of a West Sussex family and documented their travels to Italy. In Lee’s essay, the walls of the house resemble the album’s pages in its display of framed ghosts, which she vividly resurrects despite the years that have passed:

There were the customary ovals of clergymen in the languishing attitude that compensated for the photographic rigid head-rest; the groups of schoolboys and volunteers; also the ill-focused bridal parties in ivied porches; moreover, governmental groups, with swarthy attendants and palmy pagodas. Of course, also the fading profiles of crinolined aunts and nieces long since demised.²

The portraits likely date to the mid-nineteenth century when photography was in its early years and exposure time was lengthy. It is with this casual collection of portrait photographs that this thesis begins its study of portraiture in the mid- to late nineteenth-century literary imagination. Why do these portraits, picturing unnamed strangers and far from being pieces of fine art, retain Lee’s attention? Why does she consider them a worthy subject for her essay? For Lee, looking back from the early twentieth century, the photographs appeared as relics of Victorian portraiture. Her inventory progresses from pathos to almost-comic cliché. Similar items would have been found in any family home, but these portraits are haunting because they are the common artefacts that Lee stumbled upon. ‘[T]he full significance of this discovery could be manifest only to me’, she recalled.³ In Lee’s imagination, the old and ‘languishing’ portraits become increasingly

¹ See Vernon Lee, ‘Ghosts in a Roman Photograph Album’, *English Review* (May 1920), 431-38.

² *Ibid.*, p. 431.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 432.

mobile as part of an extended list that propels her personal reflection. The ‘family effigies, humdrum yet full of pathos’, serve as the vital starting point for her travelling thoughts that move from West Sussex to Rome, from the present to the past, and from strangers’ experiences to her own.⁴ For Lee, the album revealed that ‘these unknown former occupants, had been in Rome fifty and more years ago’; it also recalled that *she* had been in Rome and, in a greater temporal shift and imaginative leap, it evoked the feeling that she ‘was back there’, not only as she was looking at the photographs in 1916, but also while she was writing about them in 1920. Lee’s imaginative journey is an illuminating example of the interaction between portrait viewership and literary methods that occurred in the mid- to late nineteenth century.

The West Sussex photographs, as pictured by Lee, are the products of a *fin-de-siècle* imagination. Lee’s essay provides examples of the kinds of portraits the Victorians would have produced, observed, and circulated in large numbers. Yet, more importantly, it also demonstrates how portraits were experienced during the period – they were not only seen by the eye, but also experienced by way of the hands, the imagination, and through the author’s pen. For Lee, the portraits gave rise to questions:

Or was not the aunt really the later stage of the niece? Was the Dean and the Curate *one*, separate only in time? Were *these* the same or several? Many or few? And which was which, and what to one another, husband and wife, brother and sister?⁵

The ease with which faces and identities are duplicated and transferred from one portrait to another, as part of Lee’s speculation, approaches sensation. Notwithstanding the *fin-de-siècle* colouring of her account, this impulse of enquiry characterises the essential practice of observing portraits in the second half of the nineteenth century, a practice motivated by the desire to know and communicate with the figures who once stood

⁴ Ibid., p. 432.

⁵ Ibid., p. 431.

before the camera or sat for the portrait painter. For Lee and her friends, ‘it became a game to go from room to room, mount on chairs comparing portraits; and speculate at meal-times on possible identities and supposed discoveries’: to ‘weave genealogies and biographies of those bygone unnamed strangers’.⁶ Lee’s game involved a creative process that combined biography, history, and fiction: it was an act of story-telling. The portraits provide material support to the ‘shrunk, discoloured ghosts’ that Lee resurrected through her imagination and in her writing, ghosts who ‘kept [her] company [...] with their peaceful stories of the Rome of [her] childhood’.⁷

In the nineteenth century, portrait collections repeatedly gave rise to imaginative stories. If we transport ourselves back to the mid-century and envisage the domestic summer house as a public gallery, we find another passage in which its writer imaginatively weaves biographies of framed figures from the past. The writer is the art critic Joseph Beavington Atkinson and the location is the South Kensington Museum, which hosted a series of historic portrait exhibitions (comprising paintings borrowed from the recently-established National Portrait Gallery), from 1866 to 1868. For the readers of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, Atkinson recreated the experience of walking through the first of these exhibitions, with the distinction that he rarely described a portrait painting. Instead, he presented people. While this may be surprising to read in an art review, it is indicative of the Victorian experience of portraiture that often strove to animate the framed figures. In Atkinson’s account, the historical figures are liberated from the immobilising surface of the canvas to co-inhabit the gallery space in the manner of Lee’s portrait ghosts:

At the entrance door we are met by Geoffrey Chaucer and John Wycliffe. The portly figure of Henry VIII. swaggers in the court beyond, and round the corner we come upon good Sir Thomas More, seated in the midst of his family, deep in

⁶ Ibid., p. 432.

⁷ Ibid., p. 438.

books and serious thought. Such a sight induces meditative mood, and we cannot but observe, among the moving crowd who come to hold converse with statesmen, poets, and philosophers of a by-gone age, a fitting sobriety of manner. [...] A lady looks into the face of Jane Grey or of Mary Queen of Scots, and draws a sigh; a statesman approaches the figure of Wolsey or of Bacon, and is taught the instability of power and the fallibility of the human intellect. [...] the contact with men, even through their portraits, who have shaken the world and then fallen under the ruins, seldom fails to awaken sympathy.⁸

Atkinson personifies the portrait paintings, looking past the canvas, paint, and intervening centuries to ‘converse’ directly with the historic figures they memorialise. Similar to how Lee viewed the West Sussex photographs with a sense of pathos, South Kensington’s portraits ‘awaken[ed] sympathy’ for Atkinson and the would-be gallery visitor. The feeling of tangible ‘contact’ that the portrait gallery provided with people and with the past is captured by the ‘peculiar sense, ineffable, indescribable, but which everyone knows’ that interested Lee throughout her career: ‘the sense of being companioned by the past, of being in a place warmed for our living by the lives of others’.⁹

Both writers’ accounts express the desire to textually construct the affective and imaginative conversations that could be had with – and the stories that could be told about – portraits above any other form of art. For the public institution, sympathy was essential to the portrait gallery’s aim of cultivating a democratic and national relation between viewer and portrait. Atkinson was aided in his narrative by the biographical labels and descriptive catalogues that supplemented the formal gallery experience in the nineteenth century – textual accompaniments unavailable to Lee in a private house. The sense of intimate familiarity created between the painted figure and gallery visitor contrasts with the unanswered questions that comprise Lee’s conversation with the

⁸ [Joseph Beavington Atkinson], ‘Historic Portraits’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 100.613 (November 1866), 571-84 (p. 571). Atkinson is identified as the author by *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*: <<http://wellesley.chadwyck.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

⁹ Lee, ‘In Praise of Old Houses’, in *Limbo and Other Essays* (London: Grant Richards, 1897), pp. 21-41 (p. 29).

unnamed photographic ghosts. Yet, precisely because they are anonymous, the photographs similarly invited sympathetic interaction in the form of Lee's personal reflection. Both portrait collections comprise history's remnants. The tangibility of their representation of the past provides a crucial ingredient for the weaving of biographical and fictional story-telling in the Victorian literary imagination. Lee and Atkinson read the portraits as visual biographies from which to create a story about the collection, either in the form of walking through the gallery and imaginatively navigating British history, or of reliving memories of foreign travel.

Lee's and Atkinson's essays approximately frame the half century that will be the focus of this thesis, exploring the literary reception of portraits and portrait galleries. The above passages highlight the range of portrait media and spaces that will be discussed, while their common narrative about the affective and imaginative capacity for 'reading' portraits points to the thesis's central idea: that the proliferation of portraits, together with the expansion of portrait viewership spaces, provided creative opportunities for writers. The mid- to late nineteenth century was a period during which the authority of painted portraiture was challenged by the increasing number of photographs newly available, and the formal institution of the art gallery was rivalled by the formation of private collections at home. Yet the conditions of portrait viewership did not always follow such a straightforward trajectory. Photographic and painted portraits were viewed alongside one another, and paintings were reproduced in the form of photographs or prints, as part of the multitude of portrait images that were in circulation. The spaces of portrait viewership similarly became increasingly fluid as informal portrait galleries borrowed from, as well as displaced, the formal institution.

This thesis recognises that, in the mid- to late nineteenth century, portraits and portrait galleries repeatedly gave rise to real and imaginative stories that provided models for writers of different literary genres, from art criticism to fiction. The experience of portraiture became distinctly textual as well as visual. An increasing appetite for public portraiture paralleled a growing reading public. Richard Altick has noted how ‘the number of English readers, and therefore, productions of the press, multiplied spectacularly’ in the nineteenth century.¹⁰ What Altick called the ‘democracy of print’ combined with the corresponding trend in portraiture to form a great democracy of portraits *and* texts. Readers were becoming spectators, and spectators were becoming readers.¹¹ The portrait gallery became a meeting place for the visual image and written text. Nineteenth-century art viewership was regulated by labels, catalogues, and the art press. Art was ‘read’ as well as seen. The gallery therefore provides a material and theoretical model to explore the mid- to late nineteenth century as a shared world of portraits and texts. Taking the establishment of the National Portrait Gallery in 1856 as its starting point, the thesis observes a series of occasions on which the portrait was taken up by mid- to late nineteenth-century writers, namely Edmund Gosse, Walter Pater, Thomas Hardy, and Vernon Lee. In each case, it considers what it was about the portrait that might have interested and troubled them, and examines the rhetorical strategies they employed to understand, replicate, and adapt the traditions of portraiture for the written text. It reveals how the practice of ‘reading’ the portrait gallery reached beyond the building and the art periodical into biography, the novel, the short story, and poetry.

¹⁰ Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 1.

¹¹ This turn of phrase is indebted to Richard Altick, *Paintings from Books: Art and Literature in Britain, 1760-1900* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1985), p. 1; and Luisa Calè, *Fuseli's Milton Gallery: 'Turning Readers into Spectators'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 8.

How did portraits and texts interact in the mid- to late nineteenth century? In what ways did writers adapt the conventions of portraiture and the portrait gallery for the written text? This thesis seeks to answer these questions and thereby provide new narratives about the complex relationship between the visual and the verbal in nineteenth-century literature and culture. If, as many critics have shown, the visual arts strongly influenced literature,¹² this thesis observes the Victorian ‘culture of art’ with a more focussed eye to illuminate how the conditions of viewing, collecting, and circulating portraits specific to the mid- to late nineteenth century allowed the portrait gallery to serve as a particularly compelling arena for the literary imagination.

Portraiture in the Mid- to Late Nineteenth Century

In 1863, the physician and writer, Oliver Wendell Holmes, reflected on the process of developing a wet collodion photographic negative. He poured the liquid, waited, and observed:

Stop! What is that change of colour beginning at this edge, and spreading as a blush spreads over a girl’s cheek? It is a border, like that round the picture, and then dawns the outline of a head, and now the eyes come out from the blank as stars from the empty sky.¹³

Holmes describes the portrait image materialising on the plate as gradually as a blush travels across the cheek of a face. He subsequently fears that the shadows are beginning to fade from visibility just as mysteriously as they had arrived; but, with the further application of chemicals and light, the lineaments form with precision, to make the

¹² Notable studies of the relationship between the visual and the verbal in nineteenth-century culture include Alison Byerly, *Realism, Representation and the Arts in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Kate Flint, *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Julia Thomas, *Pictorial Victorians: The Inscription of Values in Word and Image* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2004).

¹³ Oliver Wendell Holmes, ‘Doings of the Sunbeam’, in *Soundings from the Atlantic* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1864), pp. 228-81 (p. 242). The essay was originally published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, 12.69 (July 1863), 1-15. The episode is analysed by Jennifer Green-Lewis in *Victorian Photography, Literature, and the Invention of Modern Memory: Already the Past* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), pp. 1-2.

fleeting expression permanent. From the negative, positive prints can be made. The Victorians saw more portraits than any generation before them. While the eighteenth century has been named by Kamilla Elliott as ‘the age of portraiture’, portraits pervaded nineteenth-century British culture like never before as part of a series of expansions in art viewership.¹⁴ The most notable of shifts came with the development of photography, which was used for portraiture almost immediately after its invention in 1839. Photography emerged with Louis Daguerre’s invention of the daguerreotype, a direct positive image on a copper plate. Almost simultaneously, Henry Fox Talbot developed the calotype, a positive paper print produced from a negative, to establish photography as a reproducible mode of portraiture. The development of the collodion process, involving a glass-plate negative, fully industrialised the photograph from 1851, before André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri patented the *carte de visite* (a nine-by-six-centimetre photograph mounted upon card) in 1854. Photography transformed the production and consumption of portraiture with a democratising effect.

Elizabeth Eastlake (a historian and the wife of the National Gallery director, Charles Lock Eastlake) celebrated the new photographic technology for its capacity to bridge diverse corners of Victorian society. Photography, she declared:

has become a household word and a household want; is used alike by art and science, by love, business, and justice; is found in the most sumptuous saloon, and in the dingiest attic – in the solitude of the Highland cottage, and in the glare of the London gin-palace – in the pocket of the detective, in the cell of the convict, in the folio of the painter and architect, among the papers and patterns of the millowner and manufacturer, and on the cold brave breast on the battlefield.¹⁵

¹⁴ Kamilla Elliott, *Portraiture and British Gothic Fiction: The Rise of Picture Identification, 1764-1835* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), p. 3. Elizabeth Fay similarly identifies the eighteenth century as the ‘age of portrait painting’. See *Fashioning Faces: The Portraiture Mode in British Romanticism* (London: University Press of New England, 2010), p. 8.

¹⁵ [Elizabeth Eastlake], ‘Photography’, *Quarterly Review*, 101.202 (April 1857), 442-68 (p. 443). Eastlake’s essay is a response to recent publications and lectures on photography, including *History and Practice of Photogenic Drawing, on the true principles of the Daguerreotype, with the New Method of Dioramic Painting*, in which Daguerre’s idea was first published by the French Government. Eastlake is

Photographs, often taking the form of portraits, became a uniting denominator for different spaces and social spheres that, in Eastlake's words, were now 'bound together by a new sympathy'.¹⁶ '[T]ens of thousands', she stated, including 'the nobleman, the tradesman, the prince of blood royal, the innkeeper, the artist, the manservant, the general officer, the soldier', 'are now following a new business, practising a new pleasure, speaking a new language'.¹⁷ Some feared that photography would bring the death of portraiture, reducing fine art to a mechanical or documentary science.¹⁸ It certainly provoked anxiety, challenging assumptions about representation, truth, and authenticity that informed nineteenth-century art, science, and literature. Scholars have excavated nineteenth-century discourse on photography to reveal that it had more than one Victorian identity; as suggested by Daniel Novak, for many photography could be more unreal than real with the capacity to 'efface' individuality as well as to give permanent record to the faces of those who previously would have passed through history unrecorded.¹⁹ Yet the overriding narrative of photography in the second half of the nineteenth century was one of proliferation, whether advantageous or troublesome. With the invention of photography, coupled with technological advancements in low-cost printing methods, the medium in which faces could be recorded was revolutionised, the

identified as the author by *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*: <<http://wellesley.chadwyck.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 443.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 444, 443.

¹⁸ Andrew Wynter, a leading critic of photography, responded to this fear, arguing that '[i]t is a great mistake to suppose that the art of [photographic] portrait-taking has degenerated into a mere mechanical trade'. See 'Photographic Portraiture', in *Subtle Brains and Lissom Fingers: Being Some of the Chisel-Marks of our Industrial and Scientific Progress. And other Papers* (London: Robert Hardwicke, 1869 [1863]), pp. 297-317 (p. 308).

The visual conventions of photography and painting were far from dichotomous, even if their methods of production differed. Portrait photographs were compositionally staged in the manner of paintings, and some photographers attempted to capture painterly effects, most famously Julia Margaret Cameron. On the complex interplay between painting and photography, see Heather McPherson, *The Modern Portrait in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁹ Daniel Novak, *Realism, Photography, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 5. Owen Clayton similarly argues that 'when realists invoked photography, it was rarely to advance the aims of a "normative realism"'. See *Literature and Photography in Transition, 1850-1915* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 5.

classes of society that could afford to be immortalised expanded, and the spaces in which portraits were seen proliferated.

In reflection of its historic and aesthetic importance from the mid-nineteenth century, photography plays a prominent role throughout this thesis. Yet the implications of its development for artistic and literary realism does not form the thesis's central question since photographs were not the only portraits with which the Victorians were coming into regular contact, nor were they the only portraits that occupied writers' imaginations. The narrative of portrait proliferation that defines the mid- to late nineteenth century must be extended to encompass the rapid development of visual reproduction technologies that made a broad range of media available for the dissemination of portraiture. For much of the period, photography co-existed with engraving, lithography, and other technologies that aimed to make fine art more accessible to a wider society.²⁰ Mary Ann Stankiewicz therefore defines the second half of the nineteenth century as a 'picture age'.²¹ '[T]he goal', she states, 'was not to refine the sensibilities of a few; instead, the rhetoric of picture study stressed the value of the picture, particularly the fine-art masterpiece, as a way to introduce all students to the highest ideals of art'.²² In the 1870s and 1880s, photo-mechanical printing began to dominate to the point that other forms became superfluous, but older prints were retained as part of private art collections and the aim remained the same: to cultivate public taste. The Blashfields, a husband and wife editorial team who produced a new edition of

²⁰ For an overview of the development of visual technology for portraiture, see Henry Miller, *Portraits Personified: Portraiture, Caricature, and Visual Art in Britain c. 1830-80* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), pp. 5-9. See also Antony Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking: An Introduction to the History and Techniques*, Second Edition (London: University of California Press and The British Museum Press, 1997 [1980]).

²¹ See Mary Ann Stankiewicz, 'A Picture Age: Reproductions in Picture Study', *Studies in Art Education*, 26.2 (Winter 1985), 86-92 (p. 86). Stankiewicz appropriates the term 'picture age' from G. Stanley Hall, in 'The Ministry of Pictures', *Perry Magazine*, 2.6 (1900), 243-45 (p. 243).

²² Stankiewicz, p. 90.

Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of Several of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* in 1897, celebrated how

[t]o-day a more faithful reproduction can be bought in a ten-cent weekly than could be obtained for any money fifty years ago. [...] photographers enable the stay-at-home student of to-day to have within his reach what the man of half a century ago could not hope to compass in a lifetime of travel, or by the expenditure of a fortune.²³

Access to fine art was popularised through the sale of fine art prints and within the pages of the increasing number of periodicals that were dedicated to art, and which combined image with text.²⁴

Looking at the second half of the nineteenth century not simply as a 'picture age', but specifically as a 'portrait age', this thesis focusses on the viewership, rather than the production, of portraits across visual and literary culture. It therefore relies upon the interplay between the multiple portrait mediums that were concurrently accessible in an expanding marketplace. Paintings, sketches, photographs, and prints are woven throughout the thesis's chapters to reflect how the Victorian literary imagination often drew upon contrasting forms. Observing nineteenth-century portraiture through its literary reception also necessitates a wider historical glance, to include portraiture from previous centuries in addition to that produced by nineteenth-century practitioners. Many writers at the end of the century, including Edmund Gosse, Walter Pater, and Vernon Lee, participated in a cultural turn towards the past, to find their artistic subjects in the eighteenth century, in the Renaissance, and in Antiquity.²⁵ The varying implications of finish, authorship, and authenticity that are associated with different portrait media and

²³ E. H. and E. W. Blashfield, Preface to *Lives of Several of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, by Giorgio Vasari, Edited and Annotated in the Light of Recent Discoveries by E. H. and E. W. Blashfield, with A. A. Hopkins, 4 vols (London: George Bell & Sons, 1897), i, p. xxii.

²⁴ On the democratisation of art viewership through prints, see Martha Tedeschi, "'Where the Picture Cannot Go, the Engravings Penetrate': Prints and the Victorian Art Market", *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, 31.1 (2005), 8-19, 89-90.

²⁵ On the Victorian interest in the Renaissance, see J. B. Bullen, *The Myth of the Renaissance in Nineteenth-Century Writing* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); and John E. Law and Lene Østermark-Johansen, eds., *Victorian and Edwardian Responses to the Italian Renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

historical traditions provided mid- to late nineteenth-century writers with valuable metaphors through which to reflect upon their literary art.

Some of the spaces listed by Eastlake will be traversed in the course of this thesis. Yet it begins in a more formal arena that she does not mention, but that significantly contributed to the democratisation of art viewership in the nineteenth century: the public gallery. The idea that art galleries should be freely open to the public stood at the centre of the nineteenth-century aim to educate a wider middle class about the fine arts. The National Gallery opened in 1824, before a gallery dedicated to portraiture was founded in 1856 with the purpose of presenting the nation's history through the faces of its worthies. Family portrait galleries, representing a personal history, were already common within elite homes,²⁶ but it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that a portrait gallery became a national and public space, in which anyone and everyone could access fine art and familiarise themselves with their nation's past. The National Portrait Gallery serves as the starting point for this thesis because it provided the terms by which subsequent portrait collections, of various sizes and shapes, would be measured. When photography studio shop windows created alternative portrait-viewing spaces, they were celebrated in the press for multiplying 'national portrait galleries *ad infinitum*'.²⁷ Shop windows pulled exhibition space onto the street, before informal portrait galleries entered homes in the form of photograph albums.

Elliott recognises that the expansion of portrait viewership performed a 'downward mobility' in class structure, the beginnings of which she dates to the second half of the eighteenth century. '[C]hanges in who was represented by portraits, who was

²⁶ Shearer West notes that 'portraits of family members were an important component of art collections from the ancient world' and that galleries dedicated portraiture have been consistent through history, with varying emphasis on family, political, and historical interests. See *Portraiture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 44.

²⁷ [Unsigned], 'Cartes-de-Visites', *Art-Journal*, 82 (October 1861), 306-07 (p. 306).

granted authority to read portraits, and how portraits were read produced changes in how social identities were understood and valued', she writes.²⁸ While Elliott's period of study ends in 1835, this thesis contends that the 'downward mobility' was accelerated from the mid-nineteenth century with the development of photography and the establishment of the National Portrait Gallery. The gallery sometimes worked antagonistically with photography – it initially barred photographic portraits from its collection. Yet, together, they signalled that portraiture, now more accessible than ever, had truly become a democratic art as part of an expanding and increasingly diversified art market.

Spaces of portrait exhibition became sites of portrait exchange. Growing scholarly attention on the art market emphasises the growing relationship between art and commerce that distinguished the art world of the nineteenth century.²⁹ Like Elliott, John Brewer acknowledges that 'the English were infatuated with "face-painting"' in the eighteenth century: 'they filled their houses with portraits, gave portraits as gifts and used any number of occasions to sit for their picture'.³⁰ He also notes that these portraits 'never really entered or left the art market' since they rarely left the family.³¹ Portraits were exhibited at the Royal Academy from its foundation in 1768, but the mid-nineteenth century marks a key moment when portraits left the private sphere (and the elite sphere of the Academy) and entered the public arena. The new fluidity between (and juxtaposition of) fine art, popular prints, and visual advertising increased the distances that portraits journeyed. They crossed social boundaries and gave rise to a rhetoric that

²⁸ Elliott, p. 3.

²⁹ See Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich, eds., *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London, 1850-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011); and Thomas M. Bayer and John R. Page, 'The Victorian Era', in *The Development of the Art Market in England: Money as Muse, 1730-1900* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 99-117

³⁰ John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 209.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

blurred the demarcation of public and private space. The National Portrait Gallery built its collection through donations from private homes, and, outside the public institution, photograph albums similarly brought ‘ordinary’ men and women into proximity with celebrities to form a collection of ‘the family portraits of the entire community’ or nation.³²

For Eastlake, the resulting diversification of portrait viewership was a cause for celebration. Yet for some, the shift in value systems that was brought with it – portraits were no longer preserved as luxury objects, but included as items of commodity – was more a matter of concern.³³ In 1862, only a few years after Eastlake’s article was published, American journalist Fanny Fern highlighted the radical changes that were occurring for artistic taste and social relations, two issues that were becoming increasingly bound. ‘There was a time when the presentation of one’s “likeness” meant something’, Fern recalls;

But we have changed all that now. People like their faces to hang at street doors, and in galleries, to lie on everybody’s and anybody’s table in albums, and to be hawked about promiscuously and vulgarly like a fashion print.³⁴

The Victorians were fascinated by faces and they looked upon likenesses of themselves, loved ones, historic figures, and contemporary celebrities with affection, amusement, and anxiety. The overwhelming effect of observing a collection of portraits and the intimacy of an encounter with a single image played against each other. How portraits were seen was significantly informed by the environments in which they were displayed, exchanged, and encountered.

³² [Unsigned], ‘Cartes-de-Visites’, *Art-Journal*, 82 (October 1861), 306-07 (p. 306).

³³ Gerard Curtis notes that the use of portraits in advertising figures as part of ‘a broad shift from the iconic status of the portrait as a luxury item signifying wealth and power to a new status as mass-produced likeness and tool of commodity promotion’. See ‘Portraits of the Author’, in *Visual Words: Art and the Material Book* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 144-202 (p. 127).

³⁴ Fanny Fern, ‘Then and Now’, *The New York Ledger*, 18.5 (5 April 1862), p. 8. The article was reprinted in the *American Scrap Book and Magazine of United States Literature*, 2.27 (26 April 1862), p. 12. Fern’s given name was Sara Payson Willis.

The portrait gallery provides the framework for this thesis, which also acknowledges that the gallery was a permeable structure that did not keep the nineteenth-century practices of collecting strictly within its walls. Barbara Black notes that ‘Victorian society constructed museums, worked in museums, wrote about museums, and collected in homage to museums’.³⁵ Resting on the notion of a ‘museum without walls’, I take the portrait gallery to mean the physical space in which portraits were exhibited, and the conceptual idea of collecting, arranging, and interacting with portraits that permeated into the literary world.³⁶ Beginning with the National Portrait Gallery, the thesis tracks the changing idea of the portrait gallery in the mid- to late nineteenth century through its literary reception, to illuminate the interchange of visual and literary media in the consumption of portraiture. Formal or informal, public or private, physical or imaginative, the gallery structured portrait viewership during this period. The gallery became a prevalent, yet mutable, idea for the literary imagination, so much so that the principles of seriality and network suggested by portrait gallery collections are discernible in writing and reading practices. The widening market for portraits in the mid- to late nineteenth century created a marketplace of ideas about the interaction between people and things, about exchanges of identity, and about borrowings of affection – a marketplace which also staged borrowings between art and text. Indeed, another ‘space’ in which portraits were increasingly encountered was on the pages of literature.

³⁵ Barbara J. Black, *On Exhibit: Victorians and Their Museums* (London: University Press of Virginia, 2000), p. 4. On the Victorian enterprise of the museum, also see Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd, eds., *Governing Cultures: Art Institutions in Victorian England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); and Giles Waterfield, *The People's Galleries: Art Museums and Exhibitions in Britain, 1800-1914* (New Haven: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2015).

³⁶ Helene Roberts uses the phrase ‘museum without walls’ to describe the nineteenth-century art periodical. See ‘British Art Periodicals of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries’, *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, 9 (July 1970), 1-10 (p. 7). It originates from André Malraux’s *musée imaginaire*. See Rosalind E. Krauss, ‘Postmodernism’s Museum Without Walls’, in *Thinking About Exhibitions*, eds. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 341-48.

Portraiture: Art or Artefact?

When the South Kensington portrait exhibition was photographed and distributed as an illustrated volume in 1867, J. B. Atkinson voiced the assumption that photography be ‘expressly the fittest instrument to use when, as in portraiture, fidelity is needed’.³⁷ It is ‘perhaps all the more suited’, he suggested, ‘to the reproduction of pictures which, for the most part, are prized as likenesses rather than as works of Art’. This thesis focusses on the portrait amid the nineteenth century’s larger ‘culture of art’ not only due to its pervasive presence in Victorian society, but also because it posed a particular set of problems for nineteenth-century aesthetics.³⁸ Portraiture is *a priori* an art of imitation. It has a mimetic duty to the specific subject to which it refers and that exists outside the picture frame (or, in the case of a deceased sitter, the individual that once existed). A problem comes when it is remembered that the portrait – though not of the same imaginative appeal as history painting – nevertheless always contains imaginative elements introduced into its ‘reality’ by the artist.

Methods of portraiture have evolved throughout history, informed by the evolution of general artistic style, and of social and scientific ideas about the construction of identity.³⁹ Yet, notwithstanding the particularities of media and history, portraiture has repeatedly been identified by art historians and literary critics as a problematic form. Richard Brilliant describes it as a ‘deceptively accessible genre’; Hans Maes acknowledges its ‘fluid boundaries and grey areas’; and Wendy Steiner notes that

³⁷ Joseph Beavington Atkinson, ‘Photographs of National Portraits’, *Art-Journal* (April 1867), p. 105.

³⁸ The phrase ‘culture of art’ is borrowed from Jonah Siegel, *Desire and Excess: The Nineteenth-Century Culture of Art* (London: Princeton University Press, 2000).

³⁹ Marcia Pointon presents the art historical theory put forward by James Breckenridge in *Likeness: Conceptual History of Ancient Portraiture* (1968): ‘The portrait obeys – at the same time as it can in some cases help to determine – the general laws of stylistic development shown in all aspects of the art of a given region or period.’ See ‘Kahnweiler’s Picasso; Picasso’s Kahnweiler’, in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 189-202 (p. 194).

portraiture's contradictions cause it to 'defy classification'.⁴⁰ Steiner outlines these contradictions when she articulates the specific representational function of the portrait compared to other visual genres:

in the portrait, the pull towards representation is extreme, for the work not only points to general realms of meaning, but attempts to render a specific, existent element of reality, a specific human being. Thus the portrait poses the general artistic problem of the aesthetic versus the referential as an overt conflict: it represents a real person whose actuality it announces through its title and through 'individualising' detail; at the same time it represents itself as a work of art – framed, highly structured, of interest 'in itself'.⁴¹

Since portraiture implies the conflation of painting and subject – one name representing both person and painting – Victoria Coulson suggests that the 'realist portrait is [...] the ultimate expression of the realist semiotic gesture'.⁴² The portrait's inherent claim to imitation therefore makes it the ideal object with which to interrogate the limits of nineteenth-century realism.

In 1855 John Ruskin wrote to F. J. Furnivall about having his portrait cast by the sculptor, Alexander Munro. As a spokesman of realism most known for his writing on landscape painting, Ruskin rarely called for the detailed study of the features of the face with the same fervour he extolled towards the faithful study of rocks and trees, perhaps because of portraiture's increasing commercialism. Yet in his private correspondence he expressed portraiture's fidelity as the disclosure of knowledge of a person and shared concern about having his portrait made because of its capacity to intimately represent. 'When people know me better, I have no objection to their knowing as much about my nose and cheeks as may in anywise interest them', he wrote,

⁴⁰ Richard Brilliant, 'Portraits: The Limitations of Likeness', Introduction to the special edition of *Art-Journal*, 46.1 (Fall 1987), 171-72 (p. 172). Hans Maes, 'What is a Portrait?', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 55.3 (July 2015), 303-22 (p. 322). Wendy Steiner, 'The Semiotics of a Genre: Portraiture in Literature and Painting', *Semiotica*, 21.1/2 (1997), 111-19 (p. 114).

⁴¹ Wendy Steiner, *Exact Resemblance to Exact Resemblance: The Literary Portraiture of Gertrude Stein* (London: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 4-5.

⁴² Victoria Coulson, *Henry James, Women, and Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 51.

but I should like neither to be flattered, nor to leave what appear to me to be the facts in my face subjected, at all events for a year or two yet, to public animadversion. Whatever of good or strength there is in me comes visibly, as far as I know myself, only sometimes into the grey of my eyes, which Millais ought to have got, but didn't, and which Munro certainly cannot get. On the whole, I think (while I am very much delighted that Munro thinks he could make something of me) that nothing should be done, or shown, for a year or two yet.⁴³

Ruskin suggests that someone need only look at a portrait to know something about the sitter, knowledge usually left hidden. This knowledge can take the form of what he calls 'the facts' of the face, the physical features that compose the likeness. Yet, if the portrait primarily documents 'facts', it simultaneously possesses a power to construct: the portrait 'make[s] something' of the person. Ruskin celebrates the artist's ability to transform his figure into a work of art, but the myth of portraiture's fidelity to truth begins to be worn away when he doubts its ability to represent its subject entirely, including ambiguous qualities that can only be caught in the greys of eyes. What concerned him most, despite the very nature of portraiture to make facts visible, was something visually fleeting.

For Ruskin, the representative capacity of portraiture was something to espouse and something to question, something to celebrate and something to fear. Only thinly veiled by modesty, the letter reveals the vanity of a man whose likeness was recorded by many artists and photographers throughout his life. It also highlights the contradicting fears about portraiture's capacity to represent at a time when the self was increasingly psychologised in nineteenth-century art, literature, and science. As noted by Shearer West, 'all portraits represent something about the body and face, on the one hand, and the soul, character or virtues of the sitter, on the other'.⁴⁴ Throughout history, portraiture has been an object of anxiety because it can provoke troubling questions about the self at the

⁴³ John Ruskin to F. J. Furnivall, 17 July 1855, in *The Letters of John Ruskin I, 1827-1869*, as part of *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds. Edward Tyas Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1903-1912), xxxvi, 218-19. The Pre-Raphaelite, John Everett Millais, had painted Ruskin standing before a scene of cascading water at Glenfinlas in 1854. In this letter, Ruskin also raises the *paragone* of sculpture and painting, which further complicates portraiture's imitative function.

⁴⁴ West, p. 21.

same time as it functions to validate identity. This was especially the case for the Victorians.

Is the portrait a work of art with aesthetic closure, or is it a biographical document or historical artefact that provides information? Elliott reminds us that ‘the basic reading of portraiture as identifying a particular individual [...] was a major part of portraiture’s significance in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and therefore should not be ignored’.⁴⁵ Indeed, the portraits that were especially admired by the Victorians were those considered to be authentic, those produced from life – the viewer is able to look upon the person as the painter had done. Authenticity was essential if a portrait was to be included in the National Portrait Gallery’s collection. The gallery was ‘in search of history, not art, – collecting records, not masterpieces’.⁴⁶ It can also be argued that portraiture’s imitative nature was fulfilled by photography, which produced an image from the light that physically touched the subject. Art was often evaluated in the nineteenth century in terms of its realistic representation and its adherence to the school of Realism. Yet realist art was not always strictly ‘realistic’ and, like any other art form, portraiture was subject to the artist’s style, to the interpretative mind of the viewer, and to the creative licence of the author. Lee captured the problematic status of portraiture when she declared it to be ‘a curious bastard of art, sprung on the one side from a desire which is not artistic, nay, if anything, opposed to the whole nature and function of art – the desire for the mere likeness of a person’, at the same time as she loosened the portrait from the restraints of time, particularity, and reality in her imaginative resurrection of

⁴⁵ Elliott, pp. 33-35. Elliott defines ‘*picture identification*’ as ‘a cultural use of portraiture: an intersemiotic practice that most commonly matches an embodied, presented face to a named, represented face to verify social identity’ (p. 2). Elliott’s sequel to this study, *Victorian Fiction and the Rise of Picture Identification, 1836-1918*, is in progress.

⁴⁶ [Unsigned], ‘National Portrait Gallery’, *Art-Journal* (2 February 1857), 37-39 (p. 38).

portrait ghosts.⁴⁷ The portrait's significance in the mid- to late nineteenth century lay in its multi-faceted status as both historical artefact and work of art. The former did not preclude the latter.

For the Victorians, portraiture's tie to 'reality' strengthened its imaginative capacity so that it could not only represent, but also resurrect. As evident in Lee's and Atkinson's accounts of the gallery, portraits were imbued with a sense of agency more easily than any other art because they were perceived to have an agency of their own. Steiner suggests that the 'ability of the portrait to "render its subject present" is, in fact, its most central characteristic'.⁴⁸ Joanna Woodall similarly states that the 'desire which lies at the heart of naturalistic portraiture is to overcome separation: to render a subject distant in time, space, and spirit, eternally present'.⁴⁹ What made portraiture naturalistic, namely is mimetic function, also gave it the opportunity to defy nature. The desire to overcome the passing of years and dissolve physical distance recurs within the pages of Victorian literature in discussion of portraiture, and, as this thesis explores, some authors endeavoured to textually recreate this effect. Of course, the ability of portraiture to make a person present also points to an opposite reality: at the same time as a portrait embodies presence, it serves as a reminder of absence. This contradictory function of the portrait resonated with nineteenth-century authors as it placed reality and fantasy in play with each other.

The portrait simultaneously functions as a visual representation, material object, and complex sign, and as such demands a multi-faceted methodological approach. To this aim, this thesis takes its cue from Marcia Pointon, who applies the term 'portraiture' to denote 'all those practices connected with the depiction of human subjects and the

⁴⁷ Lee, 'The Portrait Art of the Renaissance', *Cornhill Magazine*, 47.281 (May 1883), 564-81 (p. 565).

⁴⁸ Steiner, *Exact Resemblance to Exact Resemblance*, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Joanna Woodall, Introduction to *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, p. 8.

theorization, conceptualization and apprehension of portrait representations, namely hanging and exhibition practices, the exchange and circulation of portraits, and the varying contexts of their reception'.⁵⁰ While Pointon was concerned with eighteenth-century portraiture, this thesis shifts to the unique environments in which the portrait was encountered in the mid- to late nineteenth century. In so doing it highlights another crucial context of portraiture's reception: its prevalent presence in literature.

The complex history of the portrait as both subject and object was one of which the literary world was distinctly aware, and in which it participated. Observing portraiture through its literary reception, this thesis excavates the assumptions of its representational capacity and challenges what Paul Barlow calls its 'pictorial inertia'.⁵¹ Barlow recognises that '[p]ortraiture's very position as a "fine art" may [...] be implicitly compromised by its function as an historical document'. The resulting condition, Barlow suggests,

might be described as a form of pictorial inertia, a fact which places portrait painting as a practice permitting neither the dynamic of narrative (with its attendant prospects for the incorporation of painting into traditions of literature and philosophy), nor for the liberation of abstraction (with its implicit mythology of aesthetic 'purity').⁵²

While Barlow associates portraiture with the 'arrest of narrative', this thesis brings portraiture and story-telling together by examining the rhetorical techniques that writers employed to describe and replicate portraits and portrait galleries.⁵³ Historically and theoretically, the written form most closely aligned to portraiture is biography.⁵⁴ Interest in visual portraiture grew alongside the development of biography from the eighteenth

⁵⁰ Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 1.

⁵¹ Paul Barlow, 'The Imagined Hero as Incarnate Sign: Thomas Carlyle and the Mythology of the "National Portrait" in Victorian Britain', *Art History*, 17.4 (December 1994), 517-45 (p. 517).

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 517-18.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 540.

⁵⁴ On the relationship between biography, history, and portraiture (with a focus on the eighteenth century) see Richard Wendorf, *The Elements of Life: Biography and Portrait-Painting in Stuart and Victorian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); and Pointon, *Hanging the Head*.

and into the nineteenth centuries, to when Edmund Gosse defined the ‘true conception of biography’ in 1911 as ‘the faithful portrait of a soul in its adventures through life’.⁵⁵ Biographical writing also informed the textual accompaniments to portraits that were made available in the National Portrait Gallery. Yet the proliferation of portraits in the mid- to late nineteenth century attracted the attention of diverse writers, and the different sets of literary techniques at the disposal of the novelist, short-story writer, and poet transformed the portrait for the Victorian reader. Portraiture’s various Victorian ‘identities’ as a biographical document, historical artefact, and work of art are in different moments endorsed, rejected, and debated by the writers quoted in this thesis. The ‘identities’ of portraiture that existed as part of mid- to late nineteenth-century culture were discussed in literature of the period, but that literature also played a vital role in constructing those ‘identities’.

Portraiture and Nineteenth-Century Literature

The expanding culture of portraiture in the nineteenth century is classed as distinctly Victorian because of the language used to describe it. In line with the Victorian penchant to classify and label, new compound phrases were created to identify portrait-related people, objects, and practices. Of the twenty-one portrait phrases listed by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, fifteen came into use near or after the mid-century: ‘portrait collector’ (1814), ‘portrait bust’ (1827), ‘portrait sketch’ (1834), ‘portrait sculpture’ (1840), ‘portrait statue’ (1840), ‘portrait head’ (1852), ‘portrait lens’ (1852), ‘portrait picture’ (1853), ‘portrait work’ (1859), ‘portrait group’ (1864), ‘portrait photography’ (1864), ‘portrait study’ (1874), ‘portrait ring’ (1877), ‘portrait lathe’ (1884), ‘portrait

⁵⁵ Edmund Gosse, ‘Biography’, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition, 29 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910-1911), iii, 952-54 (p. 952).

stone' (1884).⁵⁶ Many of the phrases are self-explanatory, but others are more idiosyncratic. While some were a response to new photographic technology, many evolved from existing portrait practices – for example, a 'portrait ring' is a ring in which a miniature portrait is set, and a 'portrait stone' is a flat crystal (especially a diamond) used to cover a miniature portrait.⁵⁷ The Victorians embellished an already-familiar culture of miniatures by materially adding to the portrait with precious stones and locketts of hair. They also demanded new words to describe this practice that was widely known since the eighteenth century. Building on the textual experience of portraiture that this thesis has already highlighted in and surrounding the gallery, the increase in portrait categorisation makes clear how the growing culture of portraiture – the expansion of visual formats, material contexts, and viewership spaces – also relied upon a development in terminology. This act of language, further making portraiture more accessible, serves as a backdrop for portraiture's growing presence in mid- to late nineteenth-century literature. The increased accessibility did not necessarily come with clarity, however. Literature offered another avenue through which to experience portraiture, but the literary dimension added complexity to the already-troublesome form.

Hung on the gallery wall, framed on the mantelpiece, or collected in a photograph album, the portrait was a familiar object in the nineteenth century and a recurring feature in its literature. The portrait appears in the plots of many Victorian narratives, from the 'water-colour drawing' of Laura Fairlie that Walter Hartright keeps on his writing desk in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859); to the portrait of a lost lover that forms the focus of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poem, 'The Portrait' (1870); to the portrait gallery of 'frozen Dedlocks' at Chesney Wold in Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1853); to the

⁵⁶ See "portrait, n., adv., and adj.," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, June 2017): <<http://www.oed.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* A 'portrait lathe' is a traditional lathe (a machine for turning wood, metal, ivory, etc.) adapted for turning copies of busts or medallions.

disturbing ancestral portraits of the d'Urberville women in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891); to the portrait that discloses a secret passageway in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853); to the concealed Pre-Raphaelite portrait of a 'beautiful fiend' that is at the centre of a detective enquiry in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862); to the most famous of magical and revelatory portraits in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890); and to the 'sneering' portrait in H. G. Wells's lesser-known story, 'The Temptation of Harringay' (1895).⁵⁸

In addition to featuring as a plot device, the portrait was also frequently employed by writers and critics as an analogy for the text itself. Jennifer Green-Lewis surveys a range of references to photography in reviews of novels from the mid-century, but, within the abundance of visual allusion that can be found in literary commentary, portraiture (of multiple media) and the portrait gallery recur as common motifs for critics.⁵⁹ Charlotte Brontë 'studied' Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) to 'find' an 'accurate daguerreotyped portrait of a common-place face'.⁶⁰ A reviewer for the *Illustrated London News* stated that in *Bleak House*, Charles Dickens had 'as usual [...] given to his readers many intellectual daguerreotypes [sic] to carry away'.⁶¹ The *Saturday Review* reported of George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1872): 'The book is like a portrait gallery'.⁶² Henry James declared that Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) had 'achieved the fortune of the small supreme group of novels: it has hung an

⁵⁸ Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White*, ed. John Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 48. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, ed. Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 593. Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret*, ed. David Skilton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 71. H. G. Wells, 'The Temptation of Harringay', in *The Stolen Bacillus and Other Incidents* (Yardley: Westholme Publishing, 2005), pp. 74-84 (p. 76).

⁵⁹ Green-Lewis, *Victorian Photography, Literature, and the Invention of Modern Memory*, pp. 94-98.

⁶⁰ Charlotte Brontë to G. H. Lewes, 12 January 1848, in *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë, with a Selection of Letters from Family and Friends*, ed. Margaret Smith, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995-2004), ii, 9-11 (p. 10).

⁶¹ 'These are at once called up by the mere names of the characters; and with those names they will be identified evermore.' [Unsigned], Review of 'Bleak House. By Charles Dickens', *Illustrated London News*, 645.xxiii (24 September 1853), p. 247.

⁶² [Unsigned], Review of 'Middlemarch', *Saturday Review*, 34.893 (7 December 1872), 733-34 (p. 734).

ineffaceable image in the portrait gallery, the reserved inner cabinet, of literature'.⁶³ An anonymous reviewer praised Edmund Gosse's biographical 'Portrait Gallery' of literary men, *Critical Kit-Kats* (1896), suggesting that readers will 'drop the book to think upon them with a curiously sad feeling, as if [they] had been looking at the portraits of early school-friends long since vanished'.⁶⁴

Over the last several decades, interdisciplinary studies have revealed the abundant interconnections between the visual and the verbal in nineteenth-century literature and culture. Richard Altick has highlighted paintings that adopt literary subjects, exploring the themes shared by artists and writers.⁶⁵ Lorraine Janzen Kooistra has turned her eye to illustrated texts, analysing the relation between word and image when they are bound within the same volume.⁶⁶ Ruth Bernard Yeazell and Jesse Matz have directed their attention to the pictorial nature of nineteenth-century prose as part of an effort to define literary realism and impressionism.⁶⁷ Rachel Teukolsky and Hilary Fraser stand at the forefront of the growing interest in art writing.⁶⁸ Many scholars have also persuasively highlighted the significance of the art world in fiction, which frequently employs artists as the actors, and the gallery as the stage, for its narratives.⁶⁹ Encompassing this expansive interplay between the visual and the verbal, Jonah Siegel has sought to root the modern idea of the artist within the nineteenth century, a period which also saw the

⁶³ Henry James, 'Nathaniel Hawthorne', in *The American Essays of Henry James*, ed. Leon Edel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 11-23 (p. 15).

⁶⁴ [Unsigned], 'Mr. Gosse's Portrait Gallery', *Speaker*, 13 (2 May 1896), 477-78 (p. 477).

⁶⁵ See Altick, *Paintings from Books*.

⁶⁶ See Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, *The Artist as Critic: Bitextuality in Fin-de-Siècle Illustrated Books* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995); and *Poetry, Pictures, and Popular Publishing: The Illustrated Gift Book and Victorian Visual Culture, 1855-1875* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2011).

⁶⁷ See Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Art of the Everyday: Dutch Painting and the Realist Novel* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008); and Jesse Matz, *Literary Impressionism and Modernist Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁶⁸ See Rachel Teukolsky, *The Literate Eye: Victorian Art Writing and Modernist Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Hilary Fraser has complemented Teukolsky's study by focussing on women art writers: see *Women Writing Art History in the Nineteenth Century: Looking Like a Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁶⁹ For example, Byerly and Flint.

emergence of the museum and the professional art critic, to highlight the Victorian ‘culture of art’ as one that was less stable and more complex than might initially be assumed when compared to the rise of the avant-garde.⁷⁰ Yet the complexities of the culture of portraiture, which led a multitude of Victorian writers and their critics to turn to the language and spaces of portraiture and the portrait gallery, still warrants greater attention.

Several studies dedicated to portraiture have begun to explore its influence for eighteenth-century culture. Elizabeth Fay has identified a ‘portraitive mode’ in literature, a phrase she has coined to encompass a Romantic manner of self-reflexivity centred on the portrait.⁷¹ The ‘character’ of the Romantic era, she argues, is marked by ‘how obsessively people during this period looked for themselves to be reflected back, to be portrayed by the world of things’.⁷² In her words, she is concerned with ‘portraiture writ large, portraitive practices rather than portraits per se’.⁷³ Christopher Rovee has observed how portraiture reimagined the identity of British society in the late eighteenth century. He similarly approaches portraiture for ‘its symbolic and social valences, instead of what is signified in a given portrait’.⁷⁴ Kamilla Elliott’s study of picture identification in the Gothic imaginary is similarly presented as ‘a cultural use of portraiture’.⁷⁵ This body of scholarship reveals the fluidity of the portrait’s painterly and literary representational significance, but a trend emerges across the scholars’ work: that of departing from the portrait as a portrait. It is a move most clearly performed by Françoise Meltzer when she takes up ‘the painted portrait (with a frame around it)’ as a lens through which to observe

⁷⁰ See Jonah Siegel, *Desire and Excess*.

⁷¹ Fay, p. 8.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁷⁴ Christopher Rovee, *Imagining the Gallery: The Social Body of British Romanticism* (Stanford: University of Stanford Press, 2006), p. 8.

⁷⁵ Elliott, p. 2.

the mechanics of verbal representation across history.⁷⁶ Despite her reference to the materiality of the portrait, she is not concerned with contextualising literary portraiture within the history of visual art. In fact, her choice to focus on the portrait was, she states, ‘essentially arbitrary’. In such studies, the portrait is assigned various roles – including ‘topos’, ‘motif’, ‘vehicle’, and ‘scenario’ – in order to identify its malleable function for literature.⁷⁷ Portraiture is a recurrent motif in scholarly studies about nineteenth-century literature, exploring the role of women, politics, and selfhood.⁷⁸ Most recently, Michal Peled Ginsburg identified a sub-genre of ‘portrait stories’ – narratives in which fictive portraits serve as plot devices.⁷⁹ As a result, the portrait becomes part of an iconography of gender, sexuality, politics, authorship, and science, and is an opportunity for scholars to explore something else, to the point that the specificity of portraiture as an art appears irrelevant.

This thesis places the portrait in dialogue with some of these broader issues, but it primarily seeks to illuminate how the material conditions of portrait viewership specific to the mid- to late nineteenth century informed writing and readership practices: the evolving idea of the portrait gallery in literature. In its emphasis on the cultural and literary consumption of portraiture, the thesis takes a methodological cue from Dehn

⁷⁶ Françoise Meltzer, *Salome and the Dance of Writing: Portraits of Mimesis in Literature* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 1.

⁷⁷ Other studies that observe the relationship between portraiture and literature in the eighteenth century include Alison Conway, *Private Interests: Women, Portraiture, and the Visual Culture of the English Novel, 1709-1791* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Lyn Shepherd, *Clarissa's Painter: Portraiture, Illustration, and Representation in the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁷⁸ On portraiture and the role of women, see Colleen Denney, *Women, Portraiture, and the Crisis of Identity in Victorian England: My Lady Scandalous* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009). On portraiture and politics, see Henry Miller, *Portraits Personified: Portraiture, Caricature, and Visual art in Britain c. 1830-80* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015). A. S. Byatt's *Portraits in Fiction: Based on the Heywood Hill Annual Lecture 2000, the National Portrait Gallery* (London: Vintage, 2001) offers an introductory view of the treatment of portraiture in nineteenth-century literature. Victoria De Rijke, Lene Østermark-Johansen, and Helen Thomas zoom in on a specific part of the face to explore its representation in art and literature: the nose. See their edited collection, *Nose Book: Representations of the Nose in Literature and the Arts* (London: Middlesex University Press, 2000).

⁷⁹ See Michal Peled Ginsburg, *Portrait Stories* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015).

Gilmore's study of *The Victorian Novel and the Space of Art*, which persuasively goes beyond a critical catalogue of which images attracted the Victorians' gaze to explore the mechanisms of how they looked at art. Gilmore argues that Victorian novelists looked to the institutional conditions that shaped how art was viewed when considering their own anxieties concerning the form of the novel and its appeal to a changing readership. She calls for further research on the communication between literature and art viewership, suggesting that 'the story waits for more plot lines and illustrations'.⁸⁰

The plot line of this thesis follows the portrait, and its narrative is one of reading the portrait gallery. It employs textual analysis in conjunction with an attention to the wider material contexts of literary publication and circulation that, it argues, intersected with art viewership practices, specifically those surrounding the portrait. In the mid- to late nineteenth century, the practices of portrait exhibition and collection were as influential on writers as portraiture's pictorial composition. The thesis borrows from art historical and material studies' approaches in consideration of the Victorian text, and uses literary techniques to 'read' portrait images.⁸¹ Drawing on art history alongside literary, museum, and material studies, it reveals the network of interaction between viewing portraits and reading texts that occurred over the mid- to late nineteenth century.

While Gilmore restricts her study to the novel, a range of genres must be examined to understand the wide reach that portraiture had in the literary world and to appreciate the complexity of the exchange between portraits and texts. This thesis therefore brings art criticism, biography, fiction, and poetry in contact with each other. The authors who could have featured in this thesis are numerous and include George

⁸⁰ Dehn Gilmore, *The Victorian Novel and the Space of Art: Fictional Form on Display* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 166.

⁸¹ In *Visual Words: Art and the Material Book in Victorian England* (Aldershot: Ashgate: 2002), Gerard Curtis similarly claims to examine 'literary culture from the "image/object" perspective of art history, bringing to literature the interplay which is more evident in art history' (pp. 2-3).

Eliot, Henry James, and Oscar Wilde. Each have received wide critical attention regarding their interaction with the visual arts and on their use of the portrait in the plots of their fiction.⁸² After visiting the National Portrait Gallery, Charles Allston Collins commented that the proportion of the gallery's portraits that depicted authors was greater than the portrayal of individuals from 'other pursuits'.⁸³ He took this as an illustration of the fact that '[a]uthors and artists have been generally much mixed up in social life'. Several nineteenth-century writers undertook artistic training; numerous pursued careers, or at least dabbled, in the growing professionalisation of art criticism; and many had their texts illustrated. Countless writers were concerned with their public image and used (or rejected) portraits of themselves when shaping their literary identity.⁸⁴

⁸² See Hugh Witemeyer, *George Eliot and the Visual Arts* (London: Yale University Press, 1979), especially the chapter 'Portraiture and Knowledge of Character', pp. 44-72; Viola Hopkins Winner, *Henry James and the Visual Arts* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1970); and Michèle Mendelssohn, *Henry James, Oscar Wilde and Aesthetic Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007). For a study of the influence of John Singer Sargent on Henry James, see David M. Lubin, *Act of Portrayal: Eakins, Sargent, James* (London: Yale University Press, 1985). On Wilde's use of portraits and mirrors in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, see Christopher Craft, 'Come See About Me: Enchantment of the Double in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*', *Representations*, 91.1 (2005), 109-36.

⁸³ [Charles Allston Collins], 'National Portraits', *All the Year Round*, 10.237 (7 November 1863), 252-56 (p. 252). *Dickens Journals Online*: <<http://www.djo.org.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017]. Collins is identified as the author by Jeremy Parrott. Information received through personal correspondence (31 July 2016). On his identification of the authors who wrote for *All the Year Round*, see chapter one of this thesis.

⁸⁴ Interest in the relationship between portraiture and nineteenth-century authorship is growing. As part of her research into 'picture identification', Kamilla Elliott has argued that 'literary celebrity did not live by literature alone', but was established through 'competing, conflicting, changing intersemiotic relations between the words and images that navigated from anonymity to celebrity'. See 'The Celebrity of Anonymity and the Anonymity of Celebrity: Picture Identification and Nineteenth-Century British Authorship', *Celebrity Studies*, 7.4 (2016), 526-44 (pp. 528, 541). The portrait is also identified as a valuable (and troublesome) item for creating an author's brand in *Women Writers and the Artifacts of Celebrity in the Long Nineteenth Century*, eds. Ann R. Hawkins and Maura Ives (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012). See chapter 3, 'The Portrait, the Beauty, and the Book: Celebrity and the Countess of Blessington', pp. 50-78. On the portraits of Charles Dickens and their function as advertisements, see Gerard Curtis, 'Portraits of the Author', in *Visual Words*, pp. 144-202. On portraits of Mary Elizabeth Braddon in relation to her fiction, see Colleen Deeney, '"Sex, Money and Dirt": Mary Elizabeth Braddon, William Powell Frith, and the Business of Respectability', in *Women, Portraiture, and the Crisis of Identity in Victorian England: My Lady Scandalous* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 39-75. Julian North's book on visual and verbal portraits of Victorian authors, *Picturing the Author*, is currently in progress.

This body of research expands the word-image relation established by the frontispiece portrait, the beginnings of which Janine Barchas dates to the eighteenth century. See 'The Frontispiece: Counterfeit Authority and the Author Portrait', in *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 19-59.

The use of a photographic portrait of Thomas Hardy on a cigarette card is examined as a complex item of advertisement in chapter three of this thesis.

The authors I have selected exhibited specific interest in the space of portraiture and its collections. Pater visited many galleries in his international tours. Lee spent much time in Italy, unearthing its cultural identity through its architecture, music, sculpture, and portraits. Hardy was an avid gallery-goer and had many photographs of himself taken throughout his life. Gosse collected portrait photographs and prints of his contemporaries. They were all, in Collins's words, 'mixed up' in the world of portraiture, and they translated the experience into their writing. By focussing on Gosse, Pater, Hardy, and Lee, the thesis forms a 'gallery' of nineteenth-century literary tastemakers who worked within a range of literary genres, and each of whom looked to the democratic art of portraiture to reflect upon their literary art. It becomes clear that the methods of biographical and fiction writing in the mid- to late nineteenth century were, in fact, not so unlike in their treatment of portraiture.

Outline

Reading the Gallery brings together a series of meeting points between the visual and the verbal to form a narrative about the creative exchange between portraits and texts in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Chapter one centres on the National Portrait Gallery and examines the literature surrounding its early years, including commentary in the periodical press, unpublished administrative documents, and gallery catalogues, to ask: how was the portrait gallery written? The public gallery and art periodical were comparable visual-verbal spaces that not only reflected, but also actively shaped public taste in the fine arts. First, the chapter reads one of the leading art periodicals of the period, the *Art-Journal* (1839-1912), to track the development and impact of the National Portrait Gallery and South Kensington portrait exhibitions, which were announced, celebrated, and debated in the press. Second, it looks more closely at the literary

mechanisms used by critics that went beyond art reporting to narrate the experience of walking through the portrait gallery. An analysis of the rhetorical strategies employed by Percy Fitzgerald, Charles Allston Collins, and Joseph Beavington Atkinson demonstrates how the experience of viewing portraits was distinctly textual as well as visual. By establishing a critical narrative about the official language and spaces of portraiture in the second half of the nineteenth century, the chapter provides a framework for reading the gallery in its subsequent author-based chapters that widen the exploration of portraiture's literary reception.

Chapter two examines the literary portrait galleries of Edmund Gosse and Walter Pater as distinct products of the late nineteenth century and its proliferation of visual portraiture. *Critical Kit-Kats* (1896) is a volume of biographical essays and Pater's *Imaginary Portraits* (1887) is principally a collection of short fiction, but the chapter highlights the authors' interweaving of genre in their treatment of portraiture and primarily links the volumes to the developing museum and collectors' cultures of portrait 'galleries'. Gosse and Pater were collectors of the visual who drew upon numerous sources in the composition of their literary portrait galleries, including Renaissance paintings, eighteenth-century portraiture, and nineteenth-century photographs and prints. Navigating their interaction with such eclectic visual libraries illuminates how Gosse and Pater borrowed from and, to a greater degree, adapted the models provided by the National Portrait Gallery and other portrait collections to create their diverse pantheons of real and imagined, contemporary and historic characters for a growing portrait-viewing public.

Chapter three traces a narrative of the portrait photograph as an object in the work of Thomas Hardy. Scholars looking at the significance of photography for nineteenth-century fiction have typically focussed not on the photograph as an object, but on the

photographic image-making process as a metaphor for ways of seeing and writing in the age of realism. The chapter examines how the material conditions specific to the nineteenth-century portrait photograph challenged and interacted with its visuality, and in so doing recasts the role played by the photograph in Hardy's novels and poems. In dialogue with the increasing critical interest in 'things' in Victorian fiction, the chapter identifies the *carte de visite* at the heart of a portable and circulating gallery from the 1860s and as an emotive item that is frequently exchanged, sold, hidden, found, and burnt in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895) and other work. Examining the differing demands of narrative and description inherent to a novel or poem, the chapter reveals how, for Hardy, the portrait photograph always had a story to tell about those with whom it came into contact. As the thesis shifts from the subject of the portrait to the portrait itself, the photograph also increasingly seems to have a life of its own.

Chapter four pursues a dialogue of haunted portraiture across Vernon Lee's literary career, bringing together her *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy* (1880), her critical essay on the Renaissance 'Portrait Art' (1883), her short story about an unfinished portrait in 'Oke of Okehurst; Or, The Phantom Lover' (1886), and her reflections on seeing 'Ghosts in a Roman Photograph Album' (1920). The dialogue uncovered suggests that Lee dismantled the realist notions of portraiture as a form of representation to destabilise the narrative framework of her fiction. The chapter thereby redirects the portrait's meaning from the destabilisation of Victorian sexual identity – as it is commonly read by Lee's critics – to illuminate a destabilisation that is symptomatic of her grappling with the problem of representing the ghostly in art. Through a close reading of 'Oke of Okehurst', the chapter re-evaluates the significance of the supernatural in Lee's writing, and her place within the literary tradition of haunted

portraiture, to locate the haunting precisely within the diegetic fabric of her text constructed from multiple frame-stories.

David Piper has asserted that the art of portraiture ‘cannot but fit awkwardly into any intellectual theory of painting as a liberal manifestation of the imagination; it is tied too closely to imitation’.⁸⁵ This thesis challenges Piper’s statement to show how, through the conditions of viewing, circulating, and collecting portraits specific to the mid- to late nineteenth century, the portrait served as a subject and object of imaginative possibility for many writers. Gosse, Pater, Hardy, and Lee each used the portrait to reflect upon anxieties about writing and reading: the problem of intimately representing real and imaginary characters; of reading catalogues of objects in fiction; and of not losing the ghost in the supernatural story. For each, the portrait also opened up new imaginative spaces. They tested the inherent limitations of portraiture as an art of imitation to realise its imaginative capacity for communicating with close and distant, contemporary and historic figures. They recognised that writing offered a way of constructing the affective and imaginative conversations that could be had with – and the stories that could be told about – portraits and portrait collections.

⁸⁵ David Piper, *The English Face* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1992), p. 120.

CHAPTER ONE

Writing the Portrait Gallery

As we promenade through the many chambers of this handsome new Portrait Gallery, it is a surprise to find such crowds of ‘middle-class’ visitors all eagerly passing from face to face; reading off the names and comparing them with their catalogues – always an entertainment in church, chapel, or gallery – or studying with some interest some gorgeous fanciful dress. Many, of course, know nothing whatever of the personages here shown, such as an ‘Earl of Shaftesbury’ or a ‘James Harris’; but if there is a speaking face, powerful features, denoting a really ‘strong man’ or a characteristic attitude, the gazer would be attracted and drawn to look. There is, in short, here the dramatic element present, there are innumerable figures and faces; rich, old-fashioned dresses, just as on the stage [...] Hence, as I say, this miscellaneous crowd, shuffling from room to room and posting up the short flight of stairs, as though it feared to be late or something, has the general air of being thoroughly interested or even amused. [...]

It is, indeed, a curious and original feeling to find yourself among faces and nothing but faces.¹

These are the words of Percy Fitzgerald, writing in November 1896, as one of the many visitors that flocked to the National Portrait Gallery following its establishment at St Martin’s Place, London (figs. 1.1, 1.2).² The idea to build a national collection of art dedicated to portraiture had been agreed in the House of Commons in 1856. The growing collection moved around the city, each location becoming as inadequate as the last for the display of fine art, before it found its permanent, purpose-built home at the end of the century. In his account, Fitzgerald presents the portrait gallery as a crowded social arena, as a national institution (the ‘miscellaneous crowd’ is ‘watched and cared for by State officials’), and as a theatre for the enactment of British history as a visual drama.³ It was

¹ Percy Fitzgerald, ‘A Walk Round the National Portrait Gallery’, *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 281.1991 (November 1896), 520-30 (p. 520).

² H. W. Brewer produced sketches of the National Portrait Gallery at St Martin’s Place. They were reproduced to illustrate ‘The New National Portrait Gallery and Some of its Treasures’, *Graphic*, 1375 (4 April 1896), 21-24.

³ Fitzgerald, ‘A Walk Round the National Portrait Gallery’, p. 520.

a place of learning and a space for entertainment. The gallery's didactic aim to gather historic portraits of the nation's great figures, at the same time as portraiture was becoming popularised through contemporary photography, rests on the fact that the gallery had become a public space. While Fitzgerald aligns himself with the educated, upper-class reader of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, it would not have been as surprising to see middle-class visitors in the National Portrait Gallery as he suggests. Indeed, the gallery sought to make the nation's leading faces accessible to a wider society that was becoming increasingly interested in the arts. Portraiture exemplified the democratisation of art that occurred across the mid-nineteenth century art world, as artistic taste reached below the elite to gain currency in the working classes.

Fitzgerald also portrays the National Portrait Gallery as an arena in which the visual and the verbal were combined. The visitor was not only 'drawn to look', but also drawn to read. As Rachel Teukolsky observes, the 'Victorian experience of art was shaped by a flurry of accompanying captions, poems, guidebooks, and other linguistic signs, producing a wholesale entwining of writing and seeing'.⁴ In the portrait gallery, the nineteenth-century viewer's eye would have moved alternately between the painted portrait, its label, and the accompanying catalogue that guided visitor response with a biography of the sitter. This written biography, and the visual 'biography' represented by the portrait itself, together located the painted figure within the nation's metaphoric book of history and animated them with bodily presence before the visitor's eye.

As well as describing the interaction between the visual and the verbal that characterised the nineteenth-century gallery space, reviews such as Fitzgerald's essay embodied this conflation of media on their pages. The periodical press provided another

⁴ Rachel Teukolsky, *The Literate Eye: Victorian Art Writing and Modernist Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 16.

‘space’ of portrait viewership outside the brick and mortar walls of the public gallery. While the *Gentleman’s Magazine* covered a range of subjects, many periodicals were established that were dedicated to reporting the events of the art world and commenting on recent art exhibitions. Developments in visual technology also enabled periodicals to print reproductions of paintings with increasing reliability, as part of making art available to a growing readership. If, as Helene Roberts has persuasively argued, the nineteenth-century art periodical epitomised the long-standing ‘attempt to create a museum without walls’,⁵ the desire to replicate a museum in a form that could be ‘read’ by many was in the nineteenth century especially popular for galleries housing portraits.

Writing about the Second International Exhibition of 1862 – eleven years following its more famous counterpart held at the purpose-built Crystal Palace – a reviewer for the *Art-Journal* declared portraits to be ‘notoriously the favourites in all exhibitions’.⁶ This is perhaps a bold claim, but it is testament to the prevalence of portraits being made public and to their ability to draw attention in the press. The popularity of portrait exhibitions, and the significance of their textuality, was realised in the number of portrait publications that existed as paper-back equivalents to the National Portrait Gallery and which therefore extended its reach.⁷ These publications comprised of portrait prints and photographs of celebrities from diverse professions, accompanied by written biographies charting the sitter’s character-defining deeds. They were often published as a series of volumes, for example *Portraits of Men of Eminence in Literature, Science and Art* (six volumes, 1863-1867) and *Men of Mark, A Gallery of*

⁵ Helene E. Roberts, ‘British Art Periodicals of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries’, *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, 9 (July 1970), 1-10 (p. 7). The phrase ‘museum without walls’ originates from André Malraux’s *musée imaginaire*. See Rosalind E. Krauss, ‘Postmodernism’s Museum Without Walls’, in *Thinking About Exhibitions*, eds. Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 341-48.

⁶ [Unsigned], ‘The Portrait Gallery at the Exhibition of 1862’, *Art-Journal* (November 1861), 331-32 (p. 332).

⁷ I take the phrase ‘portrait publications’ from Gertrude Prescott’s doctoral thesis, *Fame and Photography: Portrait Publications in Great Britain, 1856-1900* (University of Texas: PhD Thesis, 1985).

Contemporary Portraits of Men Distinguished in the Senate, the Church, in Science, Literature and Art, the Army, Navy Law, Medicine, etc. (seven volumes, 1876-1883). Paper-back galleries were also serialised in popular illustrated magazines such as the *Strand*, which included a series of portrait galleries from 1891. Each month the *Strand* provided a gallery of ‘the most eminent men and women of the day at different times in their life’, beginning with Alfred Lord Tennyson before turning to the actress Ellen Terry, the reverend C. H. Spurgeon, and the banker-come-writer Sir John Lubbock.⁸

Elizabeth Fay draws our attention to similar publications that pre-existed the National Portrait Gallery. She similarly presents the ‘portrait gallery volume’ of the eighteenth century as ‘an extra-literary product, a coffee table book’ that re-created ‘a domesticated version of the physical and aesthetic experience of visiting a gallery of painted portraits, and supplements this act of substitution with the readerly experience of perusing a baronetage’.⁹ When the nineteenth-century periodical replaced the baronetage, however, a larger and more diversified reading public had access to the portrait gallery. The portrait itself was also turned into a popular collector’s item. In his study of photographic authority in the periodical press, Geoffrey Balknap calculates that in its first decade of publication from its foundation on 3 December 1869, the popular magazine the *Graphic* reproduced one thousand four hundred and fifty portraits from photographs of celebrities including Charles Darwin and Charles Dickens – a much higher number than the reproduction of photographic images that were not portraits.¹⁰ The portraits were

⁸ ‘Portraits of Celebrities at Different Times of Their Lives’, *Strand* (January 1891), pp. 45-48. All the portraits are engravings from photographs.

⁹ Elizabeth A. Fay, *Fashioning Faces: The Portraiture Mode in British Romanticism* (London: University Press of New England, 2010), p. 69.

¹⁰ Geoffrey Belknap, *From a Photograph: Authenticity, Science and the Periodical Press, 1870-1890* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), p. 25. Belknap examined publications of *The Graphic* printed between 3 December 1869 and 27 December 1879. On the development of illustrating techniques and practices used in the nineteenth-century periodical press more generally, see Brian Maidment, ‘Illustration’, in *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, eds. Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 102-23.

reproduced of a quality that meant they could be cut out, framed, and hung on the walls of its readers' homes. Anne Helmreich observes how, 'printed on heavy paper stock and carefully protected from subsequent print pages of the journal by sheets of tissue paper', the 'very materiality' of prints in the *Art-Journal* 'insisted on their value as commodities'.¹¹

As this thesis will show, the literary products that served to replicate the portrait gallery in book-form in the mid- to late nineteenth century were wide ranging and included biography and fiction. This chapter begins with the most immediate of these textual outputs: the art periodical. The art periodical offers insight into how the nineteenth-century art world functioned and, through the interaction between the visual and the verbal within its pages, it also serves as a comparable space of art viewership. Over the last decade, scholars have built upon the work of Helene Roberts to illuminate the value of art periodicals for the study of nineteenth-century art writing, alongside the work of leading art critics such as John Ruskin and Walter Pater, who generally published their commentaries as books for posterity rather than in journals for more short-term consumption.¹² It is now recognised that the Victorian gallery and art periodical were comparable visual-verbal spaces that not only reflected, but also actively shaped public taste in the fine arts. Still, little attention has been paid to how specific arts

¹¹ Anne Helmreich, 'The Death of the Victorian Art Periodical', *Visual Resources*, 26.3 (September 2010), 242-53 (pp. 245-46).

¹² Notable scholarly work in this field includes, besides that of Geoffrey Belknap and Anne Helmreich, Elizabeth Prettejohn's 'Aesthetic Value and the Professionalization of Victorian Art Criticism', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 2.1 (1997), 71-94; Kate Flint's *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), especially the chapter, 'The Rôle of the Art Critic', pp. 167-96; and the work of Julie Codell: 'Art Periodicals', in *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, pp. 377-89, and 'The Art Press and the Art Market: The Artist as "Economic Man"', in *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London, 1850-1939*, eds. Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 128-50.

While Ruskin and Pater became known for their book publications, it must be noted that they also published in the periodical press – with greater repute than the increasing number of critics that began to write about art, but whose commentaries were often unsigned.

were represented in the press, measuring the role that the art periodical played in confirming or rewriting the history of individual viewership practices.

This chapter focusses on the life of the portrait within the pages of select nineteenth-century periodicals to show how the experience of viewing portraits during this period was not only visual, but also distinctly textual. While the art press inherently brought fine art closer to popular visual culture in the nineteenth century, its representation of portraiture forms a particularly eclectic narrative. Portraiture's history from private to public spheres of consumption most readily illustrates the art periodical's aim to widen public tastes for art. First, this chapter reads one of the leading art periodicals of the period, the *Art-Journal* (1839-1912), as a way of tracking the development and impact of the National Portrait Gallery and the South Kensington portrait exhibitions, which were announced, celebrated, and debated in the art press. Second, this chapter more closely observes the rhetorical strategies employed by critics who went beyond reporting on the art world to narrate the experience of walking through the portrait gallery. The National Portrait Gallery and South Kensington portrait exhibitions operated as a stimulus for visitor response and imaginative texts. Within the 'walls' of the art periodical, the critics Percy Fitzgerald, Joseph Beavington Atkinson, and Charles Allston Collins successfully replicated responses to a gallery's painted population through words alone. Reading took place in the gallery, but the gallery was also read.

The Gallery Space of the Art Periodical

The art periodical and public gallery arose alongside one another in the nineteenth century and shared the aim of making the gallery space more accessible. From the early

nineteenth century, periodicals and newspapers became entwined with daily life as part of a network of technology that brought people closer together. As noted by Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton, this was possible due to ‘improvements in printing technology; advances in methods of information gathering and dissemination; increases in literacy rates; and the elimination of the taxes of knowledge’.¹³ The result was a ‘democracy of print’, a phrase coined by Richard Altick to express the downward movement in readership from the elite few to the working masses, and the related change in publication practices that shifted from multi-volume novels to periodical serialisation.¹⁴ By mid-century, the fine arts were also increasingly bound with the art market and daily life, and therefore became a regular and popular subject in periodicals, those dedicated to art and otherwise. Initially, however, art periodicals only covered the art collections in private houses. Teukolsky notes that, ‘[w]hile art criticism began to appear with increasing regularity in periodicals of the early nineteenth century, the art-viewing opportunities for most people were generally scarce’.¹⁵ The gallery was reserved as a privileged space for the elite. The Royal Academy charged a fee for entry and the British Museum required visitors to apply for tickets in advance, the issue of tickets being dependent on the person’s name and social standing.¹⁶ If artistic taste was not to continue as the cultivation of the cultivated, a change had to take place in the art world to meet the democracy in print.

It did not take long for this change to occur, indicated by the opening of the National Gallery in 1824. As observed by Giles Waterfield, the notion that art was the property of the public of the entire nation quickly came to define art viewership in the

¹³ Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton, Introduction to *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, p. 1.

¹⁴ Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 1.

¹⁵ Teukolsky, p. 12.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

nineteenth century.¹⁷ The Museum Act was passed in 1845, followed by the Libraries and Museums Act in 1850, which gave councils the power and funds to form municipal museums. A rising exhibition culture was then firmly established with the Great Exhibition of 1851, whose items became the permanent collection of the new South Kensington Museum, created in 1857. As already noted, the National Portrait Gallery was subsequently founded in 1856 (with its doors opening three years later), followed by the Natural History Museum in 1881 and the Tate Gallery in 1897. From the mid-nineteenth century, the public gallery and art periodical were working together as part of a great democratisation of the arts. John Eagles famously recognised in 1853 ‘a great talking about the fine arts’, which were to be ‘the national care’.¹⁸ The increasing reach of the gallery, now open to the public, was extended further by the proliferation of art periodicals, which in turn came to depend upon the regularity of public exhibitions.

The art periodical’s aim to widen accessibility to the arts functioned on two levels. Paintings, previously restricted from public view, not only had to be seen, but also understood. The periodical critic became an authority on the type of art in which the public should be interested, and modelled the response that the, perhaps little-uneducated, visitor should perform when looking at a painting. In his article on ‘The Influence of Periodical Literature on the State of the Fine Arts’, published in the *Monthly Chronicle* in 1839, Samuel Laman Blanchard characterised the power of the press as ‘one of the most striking characteristics of our times’, operating with ‘gradual but irresistible

¹⁷ Giles Waterfield, *The People’s Galleries: Art Museums and Exhibitions in Britain, 1800-1914* (New Haven: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2015), p. 15.

¹⁸ [John Eagles], ‘The Fine Arts and Public Taste in 1853’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 74 (July 1853), 89-104 (pp. 92, 104). Eagles is identified as the author by *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*: <<http://wellesley.chadwyck.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017]. On Eagles’s essay, see George P. Landow, ‘There began to be a Great Talking about the Fine Arts’, in *The Mind and Art of Victorian England*, ed. Josef L. Altholz (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), pp. 124-45.

force in producing and modifying our feelings and opinions'.¹⁹ Lamenting that 'the Fine Arts are too often regarded merely as the luxuries of advanced civilisation', he argued for the arts to be recognised as 'the most effectual means for reviving and purifying public taste' – that is if the 'periodical press, standing as it does midway between them [professional artists] and the public', functioned at its full potential with 'an intelligent, vigilant, and, above all things, honest watchfulness'.²⁰

The intermediary position occupied by the periodical press in the nineteenth century points to its complex role to both reflect and participate in the art market of the period. Reviewing the 1833 exhibition of the Society of British Artists, an unnamed critic for *Arnold's Magazine of the Fine Arts* chose their metaphor for the art press carefully. 'The Press has been compared to an engine of mighty power', they stated;

we would rather liken it to a large picture, filled with broad lights and shadows, producing a diversity of tone and colouring, and acting with an almost irresistible influence on the spectator. In such a composition the critics occupy a conspicuous place. [...] they are looked upon as the express organs of public opinion and public taste, and on all matters, in any way connected with the subject, their critical voice has a value attached to it which is co-important with art itself.²¹

The collapse of metaphor is by no means a lack of imagination on the critic's part. Rather, it is a bold statement about the interdependence of artistic creation and art reporting at a time when the disciplinary boundaries were coming under pressure. In 1848 John Ruskin and James McNeill Whistler would find themselves on opposite sides of what would be the most famous lawsuit in nineteenth-century art. Ruskin criticised Whistler's lack of finish and Whistler argued for painting's autonomy in what essentially became a 'war [...] between the brush and the pen', a war that informed the Aestheticism

¹⁹ [Samuel Laman Blanchard], 'The Influence of Periodical Literature on the State of the Fine Arts', *Monthly Chronicle*, 4 (1839), 502-08 (p. 502). Blanchard is identified as the author by *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*: <<http://wellesley.chadwyck.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 503, 507.

²¹ [Unsigned], 'Critical Notices: Society of British Artists', *Arnold's Magazine of the Fine Arts*, 3.2 (December 1833), 160-80 (p. 160).

movement.²² Yet, in the periodical, the art critic's role to explain an art work, to translate it into words, came to have almost equal importance to the artist's original act of creation. As the critic's pen began to rival the artist's brush for its ability to visualise art for the masses, the art periodical was granted the capacity to imitate the experience of seeing a work of art on the gallery wall. In the words of Judith L. Fisher, the nineteenth-century art critic took pride in their ability 'to dissolve the image into language'.²³ While the press had the power to make and break a painter's reputation, it could also more broadly disseminate a national message about art and realise the establishment's wish for art to be an educative tool for the improvement of the working classes. Artists began to choose relatable subjects of daily life, those which the art press would choose to reproduce and comment on as part of its aim to educate a wider public.²⁴

Compared to the multi-volume work of John Ruskin, reviews in the periodical press were humble in status. Charlotte Brontë's response to reading the first volume of Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1843-1860) reflects the way he established art writing as a literary enterprise and demonstrates his influence across nineteenth-century culture. She wrote in 1848: 'I feel now as if I had been walking blindfold – this book seems to give me eyes'.²⁵ *Modern Painters* was essentially a proclamation of the act of seeing: 'the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something, and tell what it saw in a plain way'.²⁶ When Philip Hamerton listed the eleven duties of the ideal art

²² James McNeill Whistler, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* (London: Heinemann, 1892), p. 30. For a transcript and analysis of the Whistler-Ruskin trial, see Linda Merrill, *A Pot of Paint: Aesthetics on Trial in Whistler v. Ruskin* (London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992).

²³ Judith L. Fisher, 'Magnificent or Mad? Nineteenth-Century Periodicals and the Paintings of Joseph Mallord William Turner', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 29.3 (1996), 242-60 (p. 246).

²⁴ Martha Tedeschi argues that the print trade 'had a profound, reverse effect on what artists chose to paint in the first place'. See "'Where the Picture Cannot Go, the Engravings Penetrate": Prints and the Victorian Art Market', *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, 31.1 (2005), 8-19, 89-90 (p. 10).

²⁵ Charlotte Brontë to W. S. Williams, 31 July 1848, in *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë, with a Selection of Letters by Family and Friends*, 3 vols, ed. Margaret Smith (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995-2004), ii, 94.

²⁶ John Ruskin, 'Of Modern Landscape', in *Modern Painters III*, as part of *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds. Edward Tyas Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1903-1912), x, 317-53 (p. 333).

critic for *Cornhill Magazine*, he could have been writing about Ruskin. According to Hamerton, they must have practical art training, they must have spent as much time travelling as they are able, they must have extensive knowledge of the history of art, they must write sincerely, and they must always seek to ‘enlarge their powers of sympathy’, among other responsibilities.²⁷ Indeed, Ruskin declared his authority in similar terms: ‘Twenty years of severe labour, devoted exclusively to the study of the principles of Art, have given me the right to speak on the subject with a measure of confidence’.²⁸ In contrast, in-depth art training, while it was greatly appreciated, was not required by early art periodical critics, which were rapidly growing in number. Kate Flint discusses the availability of reporter’s handbooks for the novice to follow if they wanted to appropriately articulate paintings from a recent exhibition for the public.²⁹ The first piece of advice was to ‘Get a catalogue’.³⁰ A commentary could then be written using a glossary of pre-prepared words and phrases. Roberts gives examples of the kind of evaluative phrases that ‘sprinkled’ art criticism, but that often had little meaning for understanding the technical aspects of painting: ‘chaste and brilliant colouring’, ‘exemplary grace blended with glamour’.³¹ After all, art criticism was perhaps as much concerned with cultivating manners and taste as it was with furthering artistic knowledge. It was for this reason Hamerton suggested that much art criticism in the press may deserve only to be ‘looked over with some anxiety by the young artists, skimmed and dipped into by visitors to the Exhibitions, and skipped by the rest of the world’.³²

²⁷ [Philip Gilbert Hamerton], ‘Art Criticism’, *Cornhill Magazine*, 8.45 (September 1863), 334-43 (p. 341). Hamerton is identified as the author by *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*: <<http://wellesley.chadwyck.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

²⁸ John Ruskin, Preface to *Notes on Some of the Principle Pictures Exhibited in the Rooms of the Royal Academy* (1855), as part of *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds. Edward Tyas Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1903-1912), xiv, 5.

²⁹ Flint, *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination*, pp. 189-90.

³⁰ See E. P. Davis, *The Reporter’s Handbook* (London: F. Pitman, 1884), p. 38. Quoted by Flint, p. 189.

³¹ Roberts, ‘British Art Periodicals of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries’, p. 12.

³² [Hamerton], p. 341.

While it may have lacked the technical and moral rigour of Ruskin's criticism – or, at the century's end, the aesthetic concerns of Walter's Pater's art writing – the periodical was nevertheless a driving force in art education. Ruskin's promotion of the need to see truthfully and write plainly remained paramount to the aims of the art periodical: to allow a growing public to see and understand paintings previously out of sight. Flint identifies the role of the nineteenth-century art critic as essentially being to provide a 'commentary on a painting's contents'; a commentary that does not observe the painting as a painting, looking at the artist's technique and skill, but as one which 'often assumed an unquestioned continuity between the world represented and the world inhabited by the reader of criticism'.³³ Ruskin himself advised the novice critic simply to describe, but to describe carefully, 'the subject of the pictures he thinks likely to please simple people', particularly visual elements 'they would have missed without his help'.³⁴ Through the periodical press, such art writing could reach a large audience of readers on a regular basis. For this reason, and because there was a general acceptance of the critic's authority, the art periodical can be read as a reliable indicator of the values of art appreciation and the tools that became the norm for the growing art-viewing public of the mid- to late nineteenth century.

Elizabeth Prettejohn identifies the 1860s as the period in which many took up art criticism as a profession, leading to a 'bifurcation [...] between an elitist art criticism and more popular critical practice'.³⁵ She makes the distinction between 'generalist' art critics, who aligned themselves with the 'uninformed public' and who emphasised the emotional impact of scenes; and 'professional' critics, who championed 'art's excellence

³³ Flint, p. 169.

³⁴ John Ruskin, 'Art Criticism' (October 1884), in *Arrows of the Chace*, as part of *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds. Edward Tyas Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1903-1912), xxxiv, 576.

³⁵ Elizabeth Prettejohn, 'Aesthetic Value and the Professionalization of Victorian Art Criticism', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 2.1 (1997), 71-94 (p. 73).

in its own sphere' with greater attention to style and technique over subject.³⁶ The aims and language of art criticism changed dramatically over the course of the nineteenth century in line with the overarching narrative of subject giving way to style. While this diversification falls roughly when the National Portrait Gallery was founded mid-century, it is less noticeable on the subject of portraiture. When writing about portraits, depth of critique as to painterly technique was rarely of primary concern. Emphasis was on the sitter and their life more than on the artist and their brush. True to form, art writing on portraiture often functioned as an inventory of the contents of a person's face. Observing the portrait of the Queen of Scots at the National Portrait Gallery, the *Art-Journal* reported:

The face of Mary is oval, with a well-formed nose, and small mouth; but the upper lip is somewhat long. The eyes are blue and full, with a large and peculiarly marked upper lid. The eyebrows are faded – it cannot be that the painter left them so indistinct.³⁷

The authority of the portrait to portray its subject overrides any choice of the artist or any effect of time on the canvas. Art periodical writing on portraiture therefore remained relatively consistent in its aims to inform the reader about the sitter. The intention was to cultivate a certain kind of taste based upon character and national identity. As characterised by Blanchard:

It is but lately that the importance of the Fine Arts, in a national sense, has been generally admitted among us; and we believe few persons are yet sensible of the advantages that might accrue to our national character from a full development of that sense of beauty and harmony to which they all appeal.³⁸

The National Portrait Gallery was established for this very purpose: to improve 'national character' by putting the most notable figures from British history on public display.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 78, 84.

³⁷ [Unsigned], 'The National Portrait Gallery', *Art-Journal* (4 April 1860), p. 125.

³⁸ [Samuel Laman Blanchard], 'The Influence of Periodical Literature on the State of the Fine Arts', p. 503.

The art periodical played a significant role in presenting this history, but it also participated in debate about the relative merits of originals versus copies for the telling of history, and reflected on the very nature of portraiture as works of art and as historical documents. While the *Art-Journal*'s report on Mary, Queen of Scots, represents the norm for art criticism on portraiture, this chapter seeks to illuminate the occasions on which critics used the contents of a person's face to tell a story of, or about, the portrait gallery. Since art writing on portraiture did not change dramatically from the mid-century to its end, this chapter discovers these occasions not by looking historically, but by looking sideways at the range of periodicals that commented on portraiture. Roberts has noted that 'a large and diverse number of periodicals' commented on exhibitions, reflecting art's ubiquitous place within nineteenth-century culture at large.³⁹ This diversity holds true for the coverage of portraiture in art periodicals. As has been noted, the *Art-Journal* commented on all aspects of art viewership, including portraiture. The intellectual periodical, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, featured detailed reviews by Joseph Beavington Atkinson for the South Kensington portrait exhibitions held between 1866 and 1868. The satirical magazine, *Punch*, also regularly commented on (and mocked) the hanging of portraits in the Royal Academy. The *Contemporary Review*, *Quarterly Review*, *Saturday Review*, *Graphic*, *All the Year Round*, and *Household Words*, amongst others, also frequently commented on portraiture.

This chapter quotes broadly from these periodicals, but pays particular attention to the *Art-Journal* and *All the Year Round* as representatives of the diverse writing styles and audiences to which portraiture appealed in the mid- to late nineteenth century. The

³⁹ Helene E. Roberts, 'Exhibition and Review: The Periodical Press and the Victorian Art Exhibition System', in *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings*, eds. Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), pp. 79-107 (p. 79).

Art-Journal (originally titled *Art-Union*) was founded by Samuel Carter Hall in 1839.⁴⁰ Hall's role, as he saw it, was 'to create a public for Art'.⁴¹ The journal became a leading voice in the democratisation of art knowledge, fulfilling its declaration that 'Art should not be content to minister to the tastes of the few alone, to whom the possession of its best labours is a luxury; but its healthy influence should be felt among *the million*'.⁴² Sales of the journal were reported to have risen from seven hundred in 1839 to eight thousand in 1850, reaching nearly twenty-five thousand by the following year.⁴³ Due to its long life and wide readership, the *Art-Journal* serves as a reliable measure of the social and aesthetic concerns that informed the viewership of art in general, and of portraiture in particular, during the second half of the nineteenth century. In its monthly instalments, it analysed and debated the National Portrait Gallery's aims and practices, while predominantly serving as an art news report.

In contrast, *All the Year Round* (1859-1870) was a weekly magazine whose selling point was its inclusion of serial fiction. Replacing *Household Words* (1850-1859), it was the second of two journals 'conducted by' Charles Dickens, who, prior to becoming the popular novelist, worked as a 'penny-a-line' writer for the *British Press* at the same time as Hall was one of its reporters.⁴⁴ *All the Year Round* published the serial instalments of Dickens's own *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) and *Great Expectations* (1860-

⁴⁰ The *Art-Journal* was titled *Art-Union* up until 1848. Julie Codell focusses on the *Art-Journal* for her chapter, 'The Art Press and the Art Market: The Artist as "Economic Man"', in *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London, 1850-1939*, pp. 128-50. For a dedicated study on the *Art-Journal* and its participation in nineteenth-century fine art prints, see Katherine Haskins, *The Art-Journal and Fine Art Publishing in Victorian England, 1850-1880* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

⁴¹ Samuel Carter Hall, *Retrospect of a Long Life: From 1815 to 1883*, 2 vols (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1883), pp. 342-43. Hall reflected that '[t]he newspapers that now print many columns of elaborate and judicious criticisms on every exhibition and every Art work, then seldom devoted to the subject more than a few lines' – that was before the first issue of the *Art-Journal* was published on 15 February 1839.

⁴² [Unsigned], 'Felix Summerly's Art-Manufacture', *Art-Union*, 9 (July 1847), p. 261.

⁴³ Teukolsky, p. 13.

⁴⁴ John M. L. Drew, *Dickens the Journalist* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 6. Overviews of the history of Dickens's journals are provided in *The Dent Uniform Edition of Dickens's Journalism*, which reprints Dickens's own contributions to his journals. See especially volume 3: 'Gone Astray' and Other Papers, ed. Michael Slater (London: J. M. Dent, 1998), and volume 4: *The Uncommercial Traveller and Other Papers*, eds. Michael Slater and John Drew, (London: J. M. Dent, 2000).

1861), as well as novels by Wilkie Collins, Edward Bulwer Lytton, Charles Reade, Frances Trollope, and Edmund Yates. While it was not advertised as an art magazine, it also frequently commented on the portrait gallery and related subjects. Writers for *All the Year Round* often used the portrait gallery as a fruitful point of departure for discussions about art and faces as part of its broad concern with contemporary social and cultural topics.⁴⁵ John Drew comments that the ‘contours’ of Dickens’s career were shaped by his ‘grounding in the graphic technique and the timely, topical dimension of periodical writing, against which the priorities of the imaginative artist continually pull and stretch’.⁴⁶ His words serve also as an accurate picture of the shifting boundaries of *All the Year Round*, its content and style combining social reporting and literary curiosity. As Lorna Huett has shown, Dickens’s journal held a unique place in the magazine market. Its plain appearance and small size allowed it to exploit the working-class market, while the originality and imaginative colouring that Dickens ensured of its style meant that it was also, in Huett’s words, ‘welcomed into the drawing rooms of the middle classes.’⁴⁷ Unsurprising given its weekly format, sales of *All the Year Round* surpassed those of the *Art-Journal*, with an average of one hundred thousand a year.⁴⁸

Much of the commentary on portraiture that is of interest for this chapter was published anonymously. Anonymity was common practice for the news updates in the *Art-Journal* and, as Drew notes, was a conscious decision by Dickens, aware that

⁴⁵ A recent study has focussed on the discussion of music in Dickens’s journals. See Robert Terrell Bledsoe, *Dickens, Journalism, Music: Household Words and All the Year Round* (London: Continuum Literary Studies, 2012). Little attention, however, has been paid to the recurrence of portraiture through their pages, in *All the Year Round* especially.

⁴⁶ Drew, *Dickens the Journalist*, p. 174.

⁴⁷ Lorna Huett, ‘Among the Unknown Public: *Household Words*, *All the Year Round* and the Mass-Market Weekly Periodical in the Mid-Nineteenth Century’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 38.1 (Spring 2005), 61–82 (p. 70).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 69. The sources for Huett’s calculations are Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader*; and John North, ed., *The Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals, 1800–1900*, Second Series (Waterloo: North Waterloo Academic Press, 2003).

‘anonymity went hand-in-hand with sales-boosting speculation about authorship’.⁴⁹

Where possible, I identify the author of the articles discussed. Charles Allston Collins, Dickens’s son-in-law, featured anonymously in *All the Year Round*, but he can now be identified as the author of several articles on portraiture and the portrait gallery.⁵⁰ Percy Fitzgerald (who owed his career to Dickens) and Joseph Beavington Atkinson inconsistently signed their names to their criticism published in the periodical press.

The varying motivations and audiences of the periodicals that commented on portraiture reveal its capacity to both address serious social critique and inspire amusing story-telling by art critics and fiction writers alike. Scholars have repeatedly illuminated the interactions between art and literary criticism during the early nineteenth century. Roberts notes that ‘[m]ost writers on art in Victorian periodicals had a literary background and wrote literary as well as art criticism’, causing most attention to be directed at ‘paintings with narrative subjects’.⁵¹ Prettejohn similarly speculates that ‘[e]arly Victorian art criticism was so closely related to literary and dramatic criticism that it might make sense to study it in that context’.⁵² Doing just that, this chapter highlights portraiture’s imaginative appeal that crossed the disciplinary boundary between art writing and fiction, and that remained evident into the later decades of the nineteenth century. A question arises: in what ways does a portrait, an image of a single sitter in a single moment, function in narrative terms? Reading nineteenth-century art

⁴⁹ Drew, *Dickens the Journalist*, p. 151.

⁵⁰ A definitive table of contents and contributor list for *Household Words* is provided by Anne Lohri, *Household Words: A Weekly Journal, 1859-70, Conducted by Charles Dickens* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973). (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973); and is noted as part of *Dickens Journals Online*: <<http://www.djo.org.uk/>>. The identification of contributors to *All the Year Round* were unknown until Jeremy Parrott’s recent discovery of a marked set of the entire first series (up to 1868), annotated in Dickens’s hand. I am very grateful to Parrott for his assistance in the identification of the authors of several articles about portraiture and the portrait gallery published in *All the Year Round* that are discussed in this chapter. When known (for articles published up to 1868), the authors are identified throughout this thesis. For more information on Parrott’s discovery, see Jeremy Parrott, ‘The Skeleton out of the Closet: Authorship Identification in Dickens’s *All the Year Round*’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 48.4 (Winter 2015), 557-68.

⁵¹ Roberts, ‘Exhibition and Review: The Periodical Press and the Victorian Art Exhibition System’, p. 83.

⁵² Prettejohn, 72.

periodicals makes it clear that the Victorians frequently wrote about portraiture in the manner of telling a story.

‘Portrait! Portrait!! Portrait!!!’: Overcrowding at The Royal Academy

One of the most frequently reported art events prior to the establishment of the National Portrait Gallery was the Royal Academy’s annual exhibition. The Royal Academy of Arts, founded in December 1768, stood at the centre of the London art market in the early nineteenth century. As Pamela Fletcher and Ann Helmreich note, ‘[w]hile it was not technically a public institution, it assumed the cultural role of representing and fostering a national school of British art’ and served as a ‘barometer’ of artistic taste.⁵³ In order to understand the impact of the National Portrait Gallery on the viewership of portraiture in the mid- to late nineteenth century, and how public response was represented in the press, one must first read reviews of the Royal Academy, which exhibited many portraits on its walls. For the academy’s annual exhibitions, the portrait was often an unwelcome ‘invader’, as stated by a reviewer for the *Annals for the Fine Arts*.⁵⁴ ‘Portrait! portrait!! portrait!!! intrudes on every side’ was a typical outcry read in the press. Portraits attracted visitors and guaranteed income for the academy, which acted as a saleroom, but portraiture was also considered a lower form of art that conflicted with the cultivation of artistic taste. The overcrowding was ‘favourable to the pecuniary interests of the artists, but derogatory to the character of the arts’.⁵⁵

⁵³ Pamela Fletcher and Anne Helmreich, Introduction to *The Rise of the Modern Art Market in London, 1850-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 1-24 (pp. 5, 6).

⁵⁴ [Unsigned], ‘Exhibition at the Royal Academy, 1817; The Forty-Ninth’, *Annals for the Fine Arts*, 2.4 (1818), 52-80 (p. 52).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

As expressed by Marcia Pointon, ‘portraiture was the Royal Academy’s source of sustenance and its pervasive poison’.⁵⁶ As a result, it was repeatedly the subject of critique in the press. In 1845, only eleven years before the establishment of the National Portrait Gallery, a critic for the *Art-Union* (later named the *Art-Journal*) was so offended by the ‘multiplicity of portraits’ hanging in the Royal Academy that they considered them ‘evil’.⁵⁷ Hanging practices at the Royal Academy entailed fitting as many paintings onto each wall as possible. Henry Morley calculated that if a critic spent one minute looking at each picture, it would take them twenty-five hours to view an exhibition in full.⁵⁸ Portraiture outnumbered other genres of painting at the Academy and, due to their often full-length, life-size format, they also took up more than their fair share of wall space. To illustrate this overcrowding, the *Art-Union* critic mapped the paintings hanging in the Great Room, colouring all those that were portraits in black (fig. 1.3). Of the forty paintings on display above ‘the line’ (visible above the crowd of visitors), twenty-eight were blacked in:

This year the ‘blots’ seem, and we believe are, more numerous than ever – human forms and faces, of all conceivable expressions, literally covering the walls of ‘the great room.’ North, south, east, and west, above the line of living and moving heads (and on the opening day it was impossible to see anything below them), are quadrupled rows of copies of patrons of portrait-painters; here and there you notice some ‘touch of history’ – in one sense elevated – but carry your eye round the huge apartment, and you see a crowded assemblage of inanities, of whom the world knows, and for whom it cares, nothing.⁵⁹

In a striking turn of phrase, the critic metaphorically de-faces the portraits to present the reader with a gathering of ‘blots’. While they attest to the power of portraiture to make anyone a part of history, by memorialising their figure and putting it on display, the passage is threaded with thinly-veiled sarcasm before the ‘copies’ of patrons are labelled

⁵⁶ Marcia Pointon, “‘Portrait! Portrait!! Portrait!!!’”, in *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836*, ed. David H. Solkin (London: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 93-109 (p. 93).

⁵⁷ [Unsigned], ‘The Royal Academy’, *Art-Union* (1 June 1845), 179-96 (p. 179).

⁵⁸ Henry Morley, ‘Pictures at the Royal Academy’, *Fortnightly Review*, 17 (June 1872), 692-704 (p. 695).

⁵⁹ [Unsigned], ‘The Royal Academy’, *Art-Union* (1 June 1845), 179-96 (p. 179).

as ‘inaneities’. Portraits were typically commissioned and artists’ patrons expected to see their faces on the wall of the Academy. As a result, the Great Room could become not only a saleroom, but also an arena for self-advertisement.

The *Art-Union* critic did admire one portrait, depicting Reverend Dr Brunton, by J. Watson Gordon. They considered it ‘one of the most striking portraits we have for some time seen’, the head rendered in a manner that surpasses the ‘mere mask commonly miscalled portraiture’.⁶⁰ Yet, besides the artist’s handling of light, the qualities of the portrait that helped to redeem the exhibition for the critic are difficult to identify. Even when paying a compliment, the critic establishes the norm of portraiture as a ‘mask’. Before the press articulated a narrative about national history centred on the public portrait gallery (albeit a narrative not told unanimously), portraiture at the Royal Academy informed a narrative about elite patronage.

The interaction between living and painted faces served as a useful motif for social critique and was soon exploited for comic effect in *Punch*. With regards to the same 1845 exhibition, *Punch* commented that its abundance of portraits ‘may furnish a valuable suggestion to those who are in the habit of giving expensive parties’, since ‘it is quite clear that people, who wish merely to see their friends, might derive quite as much satisfaction from seeing their portraits’.⁶¹ The critic plays on the idea of portraiture as an art promoting vanity and of the art gallery as an arena for social exhibitionism: ‘as many go to parties only to have their appearance canvassed, by having themselves canvassed before they went, much trouble would be saved to those who make it their business to criticise.’⁶² The 1847 annual exhibition was subsequently announced by *Punch* simply as

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 181.

⁶¹ [Unsigned], ‘A Portrait Soiree’, *Punch*, 8 (1845), p. 263.

⁶² Ibid., p. 263,

‘an object of interest to those who are fond of self-contemplation’.⁶³ The accompanying illustration presents a wall crowded with caricatured portraits; an aristocratic, cane-carrying gentleman and a round lady dressed in muslin, almost as caricatured as the paintings, gaze at their framed counterparts (fig. 1.4).

It was difficult for even the more serious of art periodicals to avoid satire when reporting on portraiture at the Royal Academy. The *Athenæum* described the framed figures as ‘over-dressed women dandling over-dressed children, and men standing upright, trying to look dignified’, and *Fraser’s Magazine* described the Academy floor as a ‘sea of bonnets’.⁶⁴ The overcrowded walls become discursively indistinguishable from the visiting crowds. Bonnets impeding the vision of pictures was similarly an annoyance for Henry Morley, who also lamented that some portraits were simply an excuse for ‘a display of silks and muslins’.⁶⁵ Attending the Royal Academy annual exhibition became something of a fashion and the press was all too ready to expose the comic interaction of living and painted faces to the detriment of portraiture as an art. It became so much the fashion that *Punch* asked: if ‘[t]he “Portrait of a Gentleman” is admitted, however little there may be to command attention, either in his physiognomy or in the style of its treatment; then why should the “Portrait of a Gentlemen’s Shirt” be invidiously excluded?’⁶⁶

As Roberts has observed, it is difficult to find a review of the Royal Academy in the early to mid-nineteenth century that did not ‘deplore the oppressive prevalence of

⁶³ [Unsigned], ‘The Ensuing Exhibition of the Royal Academy’, *Punch*, 12 (1847), p. 177.

⁶⁴ [Unsigned], ‘Royal Academy’, *Athenæum*, 816 (June 1843), 570-71 (p. 570). W. G. Clark, ‘On Some Pictures in the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1855’, *Fraser’s Magazine*, 51 (June 1855), 707-15 (p. 707).

⁶⁵ Henry Morley, ‘Pictures at the Royal Academy’, *Fortnightly Review*, 17 (June 1872), 692-704 (p. 695).

⁶⁶ [Unsigned], ‘Fine Arts and Fine Linen’, *Punch*, 12 (1847), p. 236.

portraits'.⁶⁷ The overcrowding invited a simple solution from *Punch*. It proposed that different rooms in the exhibition be allocated to different 'classes' of pictures:

The largest room of all will, of course, be devoted to portraits; and it is proposed to save space by hanging one before another, so that the person wishing to look at the portrait underneath – which will probably be his own – may lift up the portrait that happens to be placed directly over it.⁶⁸

The use of the word 'class' to categorise paintings within the hierarchy of artistic subjects was appropriate for what was happening in the social culture of the gallery space: it was becoming democratised with the establishment of public galleries in rivalry to the Academy. The critic targets the Academy's hanging practices, which were revealing as to the value of a painting. Where paintings were hung meant the difference between it being sold and it going unseen. *Punch* therefore mockingly called for ladders and telescopes to aid the critic (fig. 1.5).⁶⁹ Playing on the notion of 'high art', *Punch* also proposed machines for the critic wishing to see the paintings relegated to ceiling level (fig. 1.6).⁷⁰ *Punch*'s representation of the gallery space eschewed all formality, with portraits being the repeated target. It suggested that portrait miniatures, which 'only fatigue the eye', be hung in the vestibule of the staircase where 'no one would feel bound to take the trouble of looking at them'.⁷¹ Indeed, in the academy, where the social gap between sitter and viewer was sometimes small, the visitor may end up looking at portraits of themselves.

The National Portrait Gallery was considered, by many, to be the saviour of the Royal Academy. Yet this was not always a compliment for the new public gallery. A critic for the *Anti-Teapot* hoped that the 'portraits of all the Smiths, Thompsons, and Joneses' would be sent to the national gallery of portraits, so that the Royal Academy's

⁶⁷ Roberts, 'Art Reviewing in the Early Nineteenth-Century Art Periodicals', p. 12.

⁶⁸ [Unsigned], 'Hints for the Next Exhibition', *Punch*, 8 (1845), p. 246.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 246.

⁷⁰ [Unsigned], 'High Art', *Punch*, 63 (1872), p. 21.

⁷¹ [Unsigned], 'Hints for the Next Exhibition', *Punch*, 8 (1845), p. 246.

visitors would be saved from bad art.⁷² ‘If the present state of things continues much longer’, they wrote, ‘the Exhibition must inevitably sink much lower in the estimation of all lovers of art, and be gradually reduced to the low artistic level of a photographic studio at the West End or Madame Tussaud’s’. Indeed, the desire to immortalise and communicate with people through their portraits had brought together a range of mediums, including wax sculpture. Portraiture was seen to combine fine art practices with the industrial commercialism of photographic studios and the amusing novelty of Madame Tussaud’s, housed in the Baker-Street Bazaar (fig. 1.7). With its aim to exhibit the portraits of eminent men from history, the National Portrait Gallery shared much with ‘Madame Tussaud’s Gallery of Illustrious and Famous Personages’, originating from the early 1830s.⁷³ Resembling press announcements for the National Portrait Gallery, Madame Tussaud’s was advertised in 1859 as a place where the visitor could ‘become acquainted with the features and personal traits’ of historical figures and other ‘leading spirits who will largely occupy public attention’. The institutions overlap in their lifetime and biographical emphasis, but a significant difference lay in the fact that Tussaud’s exhibited the infamous alongside the famous, aiming to shock as well as educate.

A sense of amusement with portraits continued in the reception of the National Portrait Gallery. Yet the establishment of an art gallery specifically for portraits also imbued the genre with an authority that comes with the status of a public institution. The National Portrait Gallery developed a particular set of priorities that rested on the, perhaps conflicting, nature of portraiture as both a biographical document and a work of art.

⁷² [Unsigned], ‘Portraits at the Late Exhibition of the Royal Academy’, *Anti-Teapot* (August 1865), 121-23 (p. 123).

⁷³ [Unsigned], ‘Theatrical Gossip’, *Theatrical Journal*, 20.1011 (April 1859), p. 134.

The Birth of the National Portrait Gallery: A Book of History

Reflecting on the National Portrait Gallery in 1891, John Frederick Boyes praised it as ‘the Cinderella of our public collections’.⁷⁴ The gallery received limited financial support from the government, despite having royal backing, and therefore relied upon donations to build its collection. The gallery displayed portraits that previously might have been ‘lying face downwards’ in the basements or attics of private homes.⁷⁵ The *Art-Journal* described the authority of historic portraits and the importance of making them public:

Many of these pictures have been now for the first time rescued from oblivion; some were discovered stowed away in garrets and cellars; they are darkened with accumulated dirt, panels and canvases are rent, and the work survives only in its ruins. Yet how unspeakably precious are these relics; the dead, even in their ashes, kindle with wonted fire; and assuredly the student who walks these courts reverently shall gather wisdom.⁷⁶

Enacting the story of the humble Cinderella, the portraits were dirt-laden objects that were granted national significance in the realm of the gallery. From the ashes of history, these figures were given a second life on the gallery walls and in the imaginations of their onlookers. The portraits took on the role of the poor relation, magically dressed in finery and allowed to circulate among the genteel. The role of the poor relation was also played by the working-class visitor to the new portrait gallery. As reported by the *Art-Journal*, the gallery’s ‘main recommendation was that it would afford great pleasure and instruction to the industrious classes’.⁷⁷ It was praised for being ‘so emphatically the property of the people’.⁷⁸

The above passage reflects the essential tenets of the National Portrait Gallery and, by extension, the leading values placed on portraiture in the mid-to late nineteenth

⁷⁴ John Frederick Boyes, ‘The Chiefs of our National Museums: No. VI. – The National Portrait Gallery, Mr. George Scharf’, *Art-Journal* (10 October 1891), 296-99 (p. 296).

⁷⁵ [Unsigned], ‘The National Portrait Gallery’, *Art-Journal* (10 October 1857), p. 304.

⁷⁶ [Unsigned], ‘National Portrait Exhibition’, *Art-Journal* (5 May 1866), 157-58 (p. 157). A review of the first portrait exhibition at South Kensington.

⁷⁷ [Unsigned], ‘National Portrait Gallery’, *Art-Journal* (4 April 1856), 99-100 (p. 99).

⁷⁸ [Unsigned], ‘Minor Topics of the Month’, *Art-Journal* (7 July 1856), p. 225.

century: history, celebrity, and authenticity. A narrative of portraiture in the second half of the nineteenth century begins with the birth of the National Portrait Gallery, and was read on the pages of the *Art-Journal*, ‘anxious to enlist in [the gallery’s] cause the hearty sympathy of [its] readers’ – though it also questioned some of the gallery’s practices.⁷⁹

The idea of a national gallery of British portraits was first brought before the House of Commons in 1846 by the Earl of Stanhope. He raised the issue a second time in June 1852, before returning on 4 March 1856 as a member of the House of Lords. His third speech was quoted by the *Art-Journal*.⁸⁰ Stanhope, it was reported, wished to establish ‘a gallery of original portraits, such portraits to consist as far as possible of those persons who are most honourably commemorated in British history as warriors or as statesmen, or in arts, in literature, or in science’.⁸¹ He had two aims for the gallery. First, it should support the work of British painters by providing examples of fine portraits from history, enabling artists ‘to soar above the mere attempt at reproducing a likeness, and to give that higher tone which was essential to maintain the true dignity of portrait painting as an art’.⁸² The National Portrait Gallery did not ignore the value of portraiture as art, but its second aim took priority: the gallery should educate the public about the nation’s history by presenting a pantheon of its worthies. The fine arts, Stanhope proposed, ‘were to be ranked, not merely among the ornaments of human life, but among the appointed means for the elevation and improvement of the human mind’.⁸³

The National Portrait Gallery was formally established in December 1856 and, alongside Stanhope, its founding trustees were Benjamin Disraeli, Charles Lock Eastlake,

⁷⁹ [Unsigned], ‘National Portrait Gallery’, *Art-Journal* (2 February 1857), 37-39 (p. 38).

⁸⁰ The full proceedings can be read on *Hansard: The Official Reports of Debates in Parliament, 1803-2005*. See ‘Lords Sitting of 4 March 1856: Gallery of National Portraits’, series 3, vol. 140: <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

⁸¹ [Unsigned], ‘National Portrait Gallery’, *Art-Journal* (4 April 1856), 99-100 (p. 100).

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

and Lord Ellesmere, who donated the gallery's first portrait of its collection, the Chandos portrait of William Shakespeare (c. 1600-1610). The gallery's first secretary and keeper, George Scharf, implemented strict rules for the trustees to follow when acquiring portraits for the collection. The gallery's selection criteria indicate what officially entailed a worthy portrait in the mid-nineteenth century: the figure must be 'valuable as illustrating the civil, ecclesiastical, or literary history of the country'; no individual still living would be admitted (except for the ruling sovereign); nor would any individual who had been deceased less than ten years; finally, modern copies of original portraits would not be accepted.⁸⁴ The two points of art and celebrity that determined the value of a portrait conflicted from the start. As a result, paradoxes troubled the collection. While the gallery strictly excluded photographs because they were not considered to be fine art, it did not primarily collect painted portraits as art, but as people. The deciding factor was the importance of history:

In this new institution we are in search of history, not art, – collecting records, not masterpieces. Of course, where we can have history illustrated by high art, as where we can have high art illustrated by history, always and in every case the better, – but it is important, nevertheless, to our present object that the two ideas shall be kept distinct.⁸⁵

While the National Gallery housed the nation's masterpieces, the National Portrait Gallery was to gather the nation's worthies and to accumulatively present British history.

Despite its strict regulations and limited funding, the gallery's collection soon outgrew its initial accommodation at twenty-nine Great George Street, Westminster. Scharf's notebook shows how portraits and busts were arranged in a clustered fashion around a fireplace in what was a private Georgian home (housing the director as well as

⁸⁴ 'Rules: Which the Trustees Have Adopted for their Guidance [...] By Order, George Scharf, Secretary and Keeper' (1872). Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG 7/1/1/3/2: Specimens of Gallery Forms (1859-1872), form no. 14. The rules were later published as part of the gallery's official catalogue.

⁸⁵ [Unsigned], 'National Portrait Gallery', *Art-Journal* (2 February 1857), 37-39 (p. 38).

the portraits) (fig. 1.8).⁸⁶ The irony of locating the public gallery in a private home was not missed by the press. When the gallery was finally opened to the public on 15 January 1859, the *Art-Journal* celebrated that it had at last removed ‘the bolt from its door’.⁸⁷ Even then, however, access was restricted to Wednesdays and Saturdays, and only permitted ‘by virtue of tickets to be delivered by Messrs. Colnaghi, Pall Mall East, Messrs. Graves, Pall Mall, or Mr. John Smith, New Bond Street’. The *Art-Journal* asked whether Stanhope had any ‘objection to aprons’, pointing out that ‘the arguments used in Parliament when this new establishment was applied for were expressly of the kind that do not exclude the paper cap’. The reality of a national gallery of the people for the people was slow to come about, but in 1861 tickets were dispensed with, making admission ‘as free as it is to the National Gallery’.⁸⁸

Charles Allston Collins visited the gallery in 1863, when its one hundred and sixty-four portraits were housed at twenty-nine Great George Street. In his review for *All the Year Round*, he lamented the crowded location: ‘Let us hope that it will not be much longer that the collection remains buried in these most inconvenient and ill-lighted apartments’.⁸⁹ ‘[T]he pictures could not be seen to less advantage’, he wrote,

some of them can not be seen at all, either by reason of the dark corners in which they are placed, or through their being so ingeniously lighted that their surfaces reflect the different objects in the gallery with such fidelity, that you can see all the pictures in the room except the one you are looking at. The is pre-eminently the case with the portraits of John Wesley and Willian Shakespeare: in looking at either of which you get a very much better idea of your own proportions than of those of the preacher or the poet.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Sketches by George Scharf showing arrangement of the portraits at Great George Street. Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG 66/1/2/1.

⁸⁷ [Unsigned], ‘National Portrait Gallery’, *Art-Journal* (2 February 1859), p. 56.

⁸⁸ [Unsigned], ‘The National Portrait Gallery’, *Art-Journal* (10 October 1861), p. 317.

⁸⁹ [Charles Allston Collins], ‘National Portraits’, *All the Year Round*, 10.237 (7 November 1863), 252-56 (p. 252). *Dickens Journals Online*: <<http://www.djo.org.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017]. Collins is identified as the author by Jeremy Parrott. Information received through personal correspondence (31 July 2016).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

His sensational juxtaposition of living and painted faces is reminiscent of critics writing about the Royal Academy. The decadence of patrons being faced with portraits of themselves in the academy is counterpointed in Collins's account by the idea of the working classes seeing their own face in the canvas (albeit as a reflection). Nevertheless, Collins celebrated the founding idea of the gallery: to satisfy the '[h]unger for a sight of the countenance of an illustrious individual of any kind, being an appetite strongly developed in all human beings'. The *Art-Journal* confirmed the issue of housing the portraits in such compact rooms not designed for the purpose, reporting that 'the pictures are necessarily hung with a view to make the most of the space, whereas it is desirable that they should be classed in chorological order'.⁹¹ In search for a sufficient exhibition space, the collection subsequently moved to locations in South Kensington and Bethnal Green, before it settled at St Martin's Place (figs. 1.10 - 1.12).⁹² At Bethnal Green, the portraits were hung chronologically, but were relegated to the upper floor of a large exhibition hall. Each location determined the gallery's hanging practice and accessibility to the public.⁹³

Besides the celebrity of the sitter, the ideals of history and authenticity worked in conjunction to distinguish a worthy portrait, as deemed by the National Portrait Gallery. Thomas Carlyle was an important figure in the gallery's early years. Already famous for his work *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History* (1841), he wrote in 1854 of his yearning for a 'good' portrait from the perspective of a historian:

in all my Historic investigations, it has been and is one of the most primary wants to procure a Likeness of the personage inquired after; a good *portrait* if such

⁹¹ [Unsigned], 'The National Portrait Gallery', *Art-Journal* (10 October 1861), p. 317.

⁹² See National Portrait Gallery photographs: Display of the Collection: South Kensington: 1885 (August-September 1885). NPG 22/2/1. And National Portrait Gallery photographs: Display of the Collection: Bethnal Green: 1895 (1895-1904). NPG 22/2/2.

⁹³ On the social implications of the gallery's different homes, see Lara Perry, 'The National Portrait Gallery and its Constituencies, 1858-96', in *Governing Cultures: Art Institutions in Victorian England*, eds. Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 145-55.

exists; failing that, an indifferent if sincere one; in short *any* representation made by a faithful human creature of that Face and Figure which *he* saw with his eyes, and which I can never see with mine, is now valuable to me, and much better than none at all.⁹⁴

Carlyle's words were recited by Stanhope in his 1856 address, shortly before Carlyle became a trustee of the National Portrait Gallery in 1857 (following Ellesmere's death). An authentic portrait – or 'sincere' portrait, as Carlyle termed it – was one that had been painted from life. As expressed by Paul Barlow, authenticity provided the 'suggestion that the viewer could in imagination stand in the place of the original artist as he had once looked at the sitter, and so travel in time back to the moment when the sitter had lived'.⁹⁵ In the nineteenth century, authenticity became an expectation that often rested on the authority associated with historical literature. Scharf verified the gallery's portraits using James Granger's *Biographical History of England* (1769), and the National Portrait Gallery itself became known as 'the fitting illustration of our Book of History'.⁹⁶ The *Art-Journal* echoed Carlyle when it expressed the satisfaction of, 'after persons have been reading about the exploits of some eminent man, to be able afterwards to realize the man by seeing his portrait'.⁹⁷ As a likeness that outlives its subject, the visual portrait gives – to use the words spoken in the House of Commons – 'visible and tangible shape' to a verbal account of history.⁹⁸ As expressed by Carlyle, 'the Portrait was a small lighted candle by which the Biographies could first of all be *read*, and some human

⁹⁴ Thomas Carlyle to David Laing, 3 May 1854, *The Carlyle Letters Online* [CLO], ed. Brent E. Kinser (Duke University Press, 2007-2016), vol. 29: <www.carlyleletters.org> [accessed 24 June 2017].

⁹⁵ Paul Barlow, 'Facing the Past and Present: The National Portrait Gallery and the Search for "Authentic" Portraiture', in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 221.

⁹⁶ Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, p. 228. [Unsigned], 'National Portrait Gallery', *Art-Journal* (2 February 1857), 37-39 (p. 37).

⁹⁷ [Unsigned], 'Art in Parliament', *Art-Journal* (9 September 1859), p. 289.

⁹⁸ These properties of portraiture were praised by Viscount Palmerston in the House of Commons. See 'Commons Sitting of 6 June 1856: Supply – Miscellaneous Estimates', *Hansard: The Official Reports of Debates in Parliament, 1803-2005*, series 3, vol. 142: <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

interpretation made of them'.⁹⁹ This essential value of portraiture was, for the *Art-Journal*, fulfilled by the gallery: 'We have from the first regarded this Portrait Gallery not so much a pictorial divertisement as a valuable adjunct to all our literature directly and indirectly historical.'¹⁰⁰

While a portrait could valuably illustrate a biographical volume, in the gallery the portrait took centre stage, with the biographical text playing a supporting role in the form of a catalogue. The gallery's intention to textually accompany the collection with written biographies was evident from the start. Eastlake had written to Stanhope in 1856 expressing his support for 'an extensive gallery of portraits, with catalogues containing good and short biographical notices'.¹⁰¹ Brevity was crucial to avoid the experience at the Palace of Versailles, where a 'bulky and inconvenient official catalogue' was provided for the portrait gallery.¹⁰² 'Consequently', Austen Henry Layard noted, 'the visitor or the student, who wanders through the labyrinth of halls, finds his brain as much wearied as his feet'. Yet, if the catalogue should be brief, it also had to be regulated and accurate. In the *Athenæum*, Robert Lemon expressed that '[e]very portrait would have, more or less, a biography attached to it, and these, with well-regulated registers and indices, would form a body of well-attested information, that cannot be too highly appreciated'.¹⁰³ When Carlyle presented the portrait as an artefact for the history student, he similarly argued that the catalogue entries should be 'historical, lucid, above all things exact':

I would give the *essence* of the men's history, *condensed* to the very utmost; the dates, his birth, death, main transactions – in short, the *bones* of his history; then add reference to books and sources (carefully distinguishing the good from the

⁹⁹ Thomas Carlyle to David Laing, 3 May 1854, *The Carlyle Letters Online* [CLO], ed. Brent E. Kinser (Duke University Press, 2007-2016), vol. 29: <www.carlyleletters.org> [accessed 24 June 2017].

¹⁰⁰ [Unsigned], 'Art in Parliament', *Art-Journal* (9 September 1859), p. 289.

¹⁰¹ [Unsigned], 'National Portrait Gallery', *Art-Journal* (4 April 1856), 99-100 (p. 99).

¹⁰² [Austen Henry Layard], 'Art: Historical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures, Busts, &c., in the National Portrait Gallery, by George Scharf', *Quarterly Review*, 166 (April 1888), 339-76 (p. 341). Layard is identified as the author by *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*: <<http://wellesley.chadwyck.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

¹⁰³ Robert Lemon, 'National Gallery of Portraits', *Athenæum*, 1467 (8 December 1855), p. 1434.

less good), where his history and character can be learned farther by such as wish to study it. Afterwards, in a line or two, indicate the actual *habitat* of the picture here exhibited; *its* history, if it have one; that it is *known* to be by such and such a master (and on what authority), or that it is only guessed.¹⁰⁴

Carlyle reduces the biographical accompaniment to bare bones, the visual portrait providing the ‘flesh’.

Initially, the National Portrait Gallery’s catalogue was not a catalogue per se, a public document available to visitors, rather it was a record produced for reference of the trustees. In its early days, it was ‘customary’ for the gallery only ‘to distribute gratuitously printed lists of the portraits it contained’.¹⁰⁵ Yet a handwritten manuscript, dated 1857 and containing biographical descriptions in draft form, reveals that the kind of catalogue envisioned by Carlyle was planned from the beginning. An official catalogue was printed and made available for the public opening of the gallery in 1859.¹⁰⁶ From this date, for the cost of one shilling, the visitor could read about the (at that time) fifty-seven painted figures that comprised the gallery’s collection: the dates of their birth and death, and the character-defining deeds of their lives.¹⁰⁷ As the collection grew, catalogue supplements were printed. The first was required in March of the same year to cover the additional nine paintings acquired by the gallery (and could be purchased for two pence).¹⁰⁸ True to Carlyle’s suggestion, the catalogue provided the textual context necessary for the portraits to be interpreted as historic documents. Labels were also ‘affixed to each portrait, with the name of the person whose likeness it was, the dates of

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Carlyle to David Laing, 3 May 1854, *The Carlyle Letters Online* [CLO], ed. Brent E. Kinser (Duke University Press, 2007-2016), vol. 29: <www.carlyleletters.org> [accessed 24 June 2017].

¹⁰⁵ [Layard], p. 259.

¹⁰⁶ *Catalogue of Pictures in the National Portrait Gallery* (November 1857). Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. MS. NPG 7/1/2/2/1. A handwritten draft of the 1857 catalogue and draft biographies for the printed catalogue. Some of the annotations were made by Trustee, 5th Earl of Stanhope.

¹⁰⁷ *Catalogue of the Pictures in the National Portrait Gallery, 1 January 1859* (London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1859). Held by the Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. The title page has been annotated and signed by Scharf, noting that this was the first catalogue printed for public sale.

¹⁰⁸ The addition was bound with *Catalogue of the Pictures in the National Portrait Gallery, 1 January 1859* (London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1859).

his birth and death, and the principal deeds or qualities for which he was distinguished'.¹⁰⁹ A proposal for an illustrated catalogue that would place image and word together on the same page was made in 1891, but it was abandoned two years later due to the expense.¹¹⁰ The catalogue was regarded as a 'manual of English History', but it was not ordered chronologically.¹¹¹ Instead, the catalogue listed the portraits in the order they would have been encountered on the walls, offering textual support to the visitor's journey through the gallery space. Since the catalogue also contained only brief factual biographies, a complementary imaginative leap had to be performed by the gallery visitor (with the help of the art critic).

In the nineteenth-century imagination, an authentic portrait adopted and surpassed the qualities of a relic. 'If one would buy an indisputably authentic *old shoe* of William Wallace for hundreds of pounds and run to look at it from all ends of Scotland', Carlyle supposed, 'what would one give for an authentic visible shadow of his face, could such by art natural or art magic, now be had!'¹¹² Of course, the painted portrait is not like a shoe. It does not preserve a physical record of the subject since it is made through the intermediary hand of the artist. In this regard, the portrait photograph had a stronger claim to authenticity, a distinction which Carlyle might have had in mind when he wrote of 'art natural' and 'art magic'. Since photographs were not permitted by the trustees, however, the ability of a relic to preserve direct touch was perhaps better represented by another item that, from 1873, was also on display at the National Portrait Gallery. Alongside portraits, 'original letters as specimens of handwriting' were exhibited in cabinets – visible in Scharf's sketch of the layout for South Kensington and in the

¹⁰⁹ [Layard], p. 259.

¹¹⁰ *National Portrait Gallery Illustrated Catalogue, 1891* (1890-1893). Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. MS. NPG 7/1/2/2/7.

¹¹¹ [Layard], p. 359.

¹¹² Thomas Carlyle to David Laing, 3 May 1854, *The Carlyle Letters Online* [CLO], ed. Brent E. Kinser (Duke University Press, 2007-2016), vol. 29: <www.carlyleletters.org> [accessed 24 June 2017].

photograph of him seated in the gallery in 1885 (figs. 1.9, 1.10).¹¹³ In Carlyle's words, a genuine autograph is one of 'the directest impressions one can hope to get of the man'.¹¹⁴ Suggesting a sense of character through touch, it functioned as a supplementary likeness to the portrait.

A problem arose, however, when the press exposed that some of the autographs were 'fac-simile reproductions of originals at the British Museum'.¹¹⁵ The *Art-Journal* challenged the gallery's refusal to include modern copies of portraits – a copy was defined as a photographic reproduction of a painting, or as a painting not drawn from life – to expose another irony in the trustees' selection criteria. The *Art-Journal* argued that for the gallery's purpose of gathering a superior pantheon of figures, 'a good copy will serve as well as an original'; 'by the means of *copies* thus obtained we may be constantly adding picture-links to our historical and chronological series'.¹¹⁶ As it was, the importance the gallery placed on authenticity limited the number of portraits it could accept, and obstructed its ability to form a collection determined purely by the moral worth of its subjects.

Nevertheless, the contentious reality of authenticity revealed its significance as an ideal, something founded not upon fact, but upon belief. It was a belief that echoed throughout accounts of the National Portrait Gallery in the second half of the nineteenth

¹¹³ See National Portrait Gallery photographs: Display of the Collection: South Kensington: 1885 (August – September 1885). NPG 22/2/1. And National Portrait Gallery building records: National Portrait Gallery building at South Kensington: Displaying the permanent collection: National Sketches and notes by Sir George Scharf showing the location and layout of named and numbered NPG portraits (1861-1872). NPG 66/2/2/3.

As reported by the *Art-Journal*, The National Portrait Gallery's collection of 'very valuable autographs' grew alongside its portrait collection over the following years. The autographs were acquired by donation. [Unsigned], 'The National Portrait Gallery', *Art-Journal* (10 October 1879), p. 216.

¹¹⁴ Thomas Carlyle to David Laing, 3 May 1854, *The Carlyle Letters Online* [CLO], ed. Brent E. Kinser (Duke University Press, 2007-2016), vol. 29: <www.carlyleletters.org> [accessed 24 June 2017].

¹¹⁵ [Unsigned], 'The National Portrait Gallery', *Illustrated Review* (19 June 1873), 654-56 (p. 656).

¹¹⁶ [Unsigned] 'National Portrait Gallery', *Art-Journal* (2 February 1857), 37-39 (p. 38). The argument is repeated in 'Minor Topics of the Month: The National Portrait Gallery', *Art-Journal* (9 September 1857), p. 291.

century. Alongside the catalogue, the autographs were scriptural items that augmented the visual experience of the portrait gallery. Their presence makes clear the important role played by the written text in validating the idea of portraiture's authenticity. In their study of the museum experience as dialogic exchange, Spencer R. Crew and James E. Sims note that 'authenticity enforces the social contract between the audience and the museum, a socially agreed-upon reality that exists only as long as confidence in the voice of the exhibition holds'.¹¹⁷ This voice was provided by the written documents that supported the nineteenth-century gallery experience, but was heard loudest on the pages of the art periodical, which accepted and constructed the imaginative appeal of portraiture's authenticity.

'The portrait-painter, in a scheme like this of Lord Stanhope's, wields Agrippa's glass', the *Art-Journal* stated: 'the great figures in the procession of history pass, by this means, before the student's eyes, each with his moral written on his forehead'.¹¹⁸ Referring to the occult philosophy of Renaissance thinker Henrich Cornelius Agrippa, the drama of history is materialised for the reader. As has been mentioned, the suggestion that a portrait is a reflection-made-permanent better fitted the new photographic technology. The nineteenth-century photograph was coined by Oliver Wendell Holmes as a '*mirror with a memory*',¹¹⁹ and was advertised in *Punch* as such:

You see yourself within this frame,
And, in a looking-glass, the same.
The glass, though, must reflect your eyes,
Or straight the charming image flies:
But fixed you have your shadow here,
So that it cannot disappear.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Spencer R. Crew and James E. Sims, 'Locating Authenticity: Fragments of a Dialogue', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, eds. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 159-75 (p. 163).

¹¹⁸ [Unsigned], 'National Portrait Gallery', *Art-Journal* (2 February 1857), 37-39 (p. 38).

¹¹⁹ Oliver Wendell Holmes, 'The Stereoscope and the Stereograph', in *Soundings from the Atlantic* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1864), 124-65 (p. 129). The essay was originally published in *Atlantic Monthly*, 3.20 (June 1859), 738-48.

¹²⁰ *Punch* published the poem in full:

Yet, with the aid of history, the mirror was employed in the press as a surface synonymous with the portrait more generally. Percy Fitzgerald used similar imagery in his account of the South Kensington portrait exhibitions, where, he suggested:

We shall be inclined to drop our eyes in confusion or reverence [...] for we shall know that most of these canvases rested on easels not a yard away from the great sitters, and might be said to reflect their faces like a looking-glass.¹²¹

While Collins had lamented how poor lighting at Great George Street had caused the portraits to merely reflect the room, Fitzgerald employed the metaphor of the portrait as a looking-glass to grant power to the portrait itself, a power that equated to authenticity. Indeed, the portrait is given the power to memorialise the sitter with such immediacy that it was as if the historic figure was standing beside the viewer and being reflected on the canvas. '[A] careless walk through' the National Portrait Gallery would, Fitzgerald noted, therefore 'raise many a ghost'.¹²² The authenticity of portraiture was a collaborative effort between the gallery and its visitors, and between the visual and the verbal that supplemented each other in the creation of the gallery experience. The critic's

Depicted by the solar rays,
What loveliness this form displays!
The figure, was surpassing grace!
What radiant harmony of the face!
Who such a likeness could have done?
No meaner artist than the Sun.

You see yourself within this frame,
And, in a looking-glass, the same.
The glass, though, must reflect your eyes,
Or straight the charming image flies:
But fixed you have your shadow here,
So that it cannot disappear.

This portrait as it is will last;
And, when some twice ten years have passed,
Will truly show you what you were;
How elegant, how fresh and fair.
I wonder what the mirror will,
Compared with it, exhibit still.

[Unsigned], 'To Charlotte with her Photograph', *Punch*, 42 (26 April 1862), p. 169.

¹²¹ [Percy Fitzgerald], 'Portraits', *All the Year Round* (19 August 1865), 91-93 (p. 92). Fitzgerald is identified as the author by Jeremy Parrott. Information received through personal correspondence (31 July 2016).

¹²² Fitzgerald, 'In the National Portrait Gallery', *Theatre: A Monthly Review of The Drama, Music, and the Fine Arts* (1 October 1896), 204-08 (p. 204).

ability to conjure for the reader the ghosts that were said to be lying dormant within the frames on the gallery wall, made the authenticity of its portraits true enough.

When we look at the framed figures in the National Portrait Gallery, the *Art-Journal* reflected,

we see them as they were in life; by a very slight stretch of the imagination, we can hear them speak with their tongues as they will speak in their books as long as our language lasts; and it is easy to read here of the memorable deeds that make them famous for all time.¹²³

The critic's choice of verb to describe the process by which a portrait's content and meaning was understood is significant. In and surrounding the National Portrait Gallery, written texts supplemented the visual experience of the art gallery. Labels, autographs, and catalogues, and criticism took an active role in guiding the visitor's comprehension of portraits as historical, authentic, and imaginative objects. Yet, in the nineteenth century, the mechanisms of reading were not restricted to texts. They were also employed to understand visual media. If history was something previously written by scholars and read in bound volumes, for the Victorians it could also be 'read' on the walls of the National Portrait Gallery. In turn, the art periodical recreated the textual experience of portraiture outside the gallery. According to the conventions of nineteenth-century art viewership, the practice of reading in the portrait gallery soon became a process of reading the portrait gallery.

¹²³ [Unsigned], 'The National Portrait Gallery', *Art-Journal* (5 May 1870), p. 143.

Reading (in) the Portrait Gallery

Mary Cowling suggests that to understand Victorian art, we must develop methods of picture reading that were second nature to the Victorians.¹²⁴ Indeed, in the nineteenth century, pictures were items to be read. Kate Flint has persuasively argued that for ‘mid-Victorian spectators, their favourite paintings were those which told stories. Art had the function of confirming the narratives which they used to make sense of the world.’¹²⁵ The most ‘readable’ paintings were therefore those that could tell a narrative. As such, genre scenes of daily life grew in popularity and were circulated widely as prints, for example David Wilkie’s sentimental pieces and William Powell Frith’s urban scenes. This kind of nineteenth-century narrative painting overcame the temporal limits of the canvas by providing visual clues recognisable to the Victorian viewer. Looking at Frith’s *The Railway Station* (1862), the eye is invited to navigate the busy scene and construct, from its network of interacting individuals, a complete narrative (fig. 1.13). Frith condensed, in one frame, the eighteenth-century tradition of telling a story through a series of panels, a format made famous by William Hogarth.

Yet portraiture is not like other visual scenes and it therefore demanded a particular kind of intuitive reading. It is more difficult to locate a narrative in a portrait because it is, by nature, an image of an individual person depicted at one moment in their life. Paul Barlow refers to the condition of portraiture as ‘pictorial inertia’, which, he argues, precludes its contact with the narrative-driven mechanisms of literature.¹²⁶ Yet, in the mid- to late nineteenth-century gallery, the portrait provided many stories. The overriding portrait narrative explored by this chapter so far has been that of British

¹²⁴ Mary Cowling, *The Artist as Anthropologist: The Representation of Type and Character in Victorian Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 2.

¹²⁵ Flint, p. 197.

¹²⁶ Paul Barlow, ‘The Imagined Hero as Incarnate Sign: Thomas Carlyle and the Mythology of the “National Portrait” in Victorian Britain’, *Art History*, 17.4 (December 1994), 517-45 (pp. 517-18).

history, but more narratives can be uncovered in the periodical press. The ideals of the portrait gallery were expressed through fictional anecdotes, a walk through the portrait gallery was narrated as a collaborative journey, and the portrait object served as a starting point for personal narratives.

The narrative of British history was told through the inherent seriality of a portrait exhibition, each portrait providing one ‘scene’ of the larger story about what (or who) made the nation great. Yet the individual portrait could also be read if it was observed with an eye for physiognomy – and most Victorian eyes observed with such a gaze. In her study of character in Victorian painting, Cowling notes that ‘[i]n art, faces were read as they were in life; and in life, everybody read faces’.¹²⁷ In this sense, the story of a portrait is the character of its sitter, a story which was constructed through the central tenet of physiognomy that assumed that the external features of a likeness served as indicators of inner life. Physiognomy therefore accessed and created depth in a portrait, in compensation for its potential temporal stillness. Using the words of Eliza Lynn Linton for *Household Words*, there was a ‘great picture-book to be read in London streets’ and it could also be read in the portrait gallery.¹²⁸

Physiognomic theories had existed since Roman antiquity, but they experienced a revival from the late eighteenth century with the treatises of Johann Caspar Lavater, who identified portrait painting as ‘the most natural, most noble, and the most useful of all the Arts’ – also ‘the most difficult, however easy it may appear, and ought to be’.¹²⁹ For

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

¹²⁸ [Eliza Lynn Linton], ‘Passing Faces’, *Household Words*, (14 April 1855), 261-64 (p. 264). Linton is identified as the author on *Dickens Journals Online*: <<http://www.djo.org.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

¹²⁹ Johann Caspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy: Designed to Promote the Knowledge and the Love of Mankind, Illustrated by more than Eight Hundred Engravings Accurately Copied, Executed by, or under the Inspection of, Thomas Holloway, Translated from the French by Henry Hunter*, 5 vols (London: John Murray, H. Hunter, and T. Holloway, 1788-1799), iii, 239.

Lavater, portrait painting was a revelatory practice. He recognised that the portrait could be more revealing than the living face:

Every well painted portrait is an interesting picture, because it brings us acquainted with the soul and character of a particular individual. In it we see him think, feel, reason. We discern in it the peculiar character of his propensities, of his affections, of his passions; in a word, the good and bad qualities of his heart and mind. And in this respect the portrait is even still more expressive than Nature, in which nothing is permanent, where every thing is only a rapid succession of movements infinitely varied; rarely does Nature present the human face in a light so advantageous as a skilful painter can procure for it.¹³⁰

Physiognomic expression in art often implied an exaggeration of reality. However effortless a portrait appeared, as if it were merely a mirror, it was never a straight reflection. In his study of *The Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression as Connected with the Fine Arts* (1883), Charles Bell instructed the artist to exaggerate the features of their subject that signalled higher qualities and de-emphasise those associated with baser passions: ‘whilst he has preserved the likeness, he has refined it’.¹³¹

The revelatory insight offered by physiognomy was practised across nineteenth-century culture, informing literary as well as artistic methods of character representation.¹³² As noted by Sharrona Pearl, in the nineteenth century ‘physiognomy went paperback’.¹³³ Reading faces by a physiognomic handbook was a daily practice. This handbook existed as *The Pocket Lavater* (1801) and could also be read in the pages of the Victorian novel.¹³⁴ Recalling Lavater, Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s character, Phoebe

¹³⁰ Lavater, iii, 241.

¹³¹ Charles Bell, *The Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression as Connected with the Fine Arts*, Seventh Edition (London: George Bell and Sons, 1883), p. 63. Bell first published *Essays on The Anatomy of Expression in Painting* in 1806, which was later re-published as *Essays on The Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression* in 1824.

¹³² On the relationship between physiognomy and nineteenth-century fiction, see Graeme Tytler, *Physiognomy in the European Novel: Faces and Fortunes* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982); and Lucy Hartley, *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹³³ Sharrona Pearl, *About Faces: Physiognomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 12.

¹³⁴ *The Pocket Lavater, or, The Science of Philosophy, to which is added an Inquiry into the Analogy Existing Between Brute and Human Physiognomy, from the Italian of Porta, Embellished with 44 Copper-*

Marks, espouses that ‘a painter is in a manner inspired, and is able to see, through the normal expression of the face, another expression that is equally a part of it, though not to be perceived by the eye’.¹³⁵ The secret of Lady Audley that lies at the centre of Braddon’s 1862 novel is suggested by the portrait of the protagonist, which is sensationally described to the reader as being painted in a Pre-Raphaelite style, before it is fully revealed through the unfolding of events making up the detective plot. Revelatory portraits featured widely in Victorian fiction and embodied the essential premise of Oscar Wilde’s novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). The manipulation of features that became a part of physiognomy could, in fact, be more easily applied by the Victorian novelist to construct a literary portrait in words, than by the portrait painter working with canvas and paint. The artist, faced with a particular set of facial features in front of them and (in theory) having a duty to mimetic representation, did not have the same creative freedom.

Writing for *All the Year Round*, Charles Allston Collins attempted to apply the rules of physiognomy to the portraits on the walls of the National Portrait Gallery, but found it too reductionist to be of real use:

That strong tendency to classify which lurks in most minds comes out with special force in a National Portrait Gallery, and you try to reduce the multitude of physiognomies represented, into something like order. All the heads of inventors, for instance, should have such and such characteristics; [...] the artist type should be of this kind; the poetical of that – but it will not do. You go round the rooms, catalogue in hand, and all your favourite theories are confuted at every turn. Foreheads, eyes, noses, and chins, set themselves against you quite malignantly.¹³⁶

plate Heads (Wartford: Andrus and Judd, 1832). This edition has been translated from the French. On physiognomy, Lavater states that ‘Most persona are daily in the practice of this art’ (p. 16).

¹³⁵ Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley’s Secret*, ed. David Skilton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 71.

¹³⁶ [Charles Allston Collins], ‘National Portraits’, *All the Year Round*, 10.237 (7 November 1863), 252-56 (p. 255).

Sharrona Pearl identifies physiognomy as both an interpretative and a creative tool for the artist. The artist, she writes, relied upon physiognomy first to observe their sitters and second:

to give information about their subjects to portrait viewers, who were demanding not only mimetic accuracy in representation but also biographical detail. Like other natural history specimens, human subjects acted as sources of classificatory knowledge, and artists were scientists whose job was to produce pedagogically useful copies of the original.¹³⁷

The visitor to the National Portrait Gallery would have expected to see biographical details within the visual language of the portrait. Yet mimetic detail and biographical detail were not necessarily aligned, as Collins realised. While physiognomy underpinned the idea of the National Portrait Gallery and its premise that portraits could be used to tell a visual history of the nation, Collins's account reveals that a collection of portraits may refuse to tell a single story. Nevertheless, he did see one universal aspect clearly visible in the gallery: 'energy, purpose, or whatever else it may be called—is proclaimed on every face, and written in a character so legible that no man can mistake it'.¹³⁸ By making this observation, Collins fitted more neatly into the physiognomic norm of reviews on the portrait gallery and contributed to the gallery's aim of promoting self-improvement.

Collins's resistance to the physiognomic reading of portraits that became the norm for reviews of the National Portrait Gallery can be explained by way of the remit of the journal for which he was writing. He was not writing for the *Art-Journal*. He was writing for a magazine that was broader in scope and that took creative liberties in its commentary on fine art physiognomic readings of faces. As the century progressed, physiognomy was relegated to a 'pseudo-science', but it continued to be exploited in

¹³⁷ Sharrona Pearl, *About Faces: Physiognomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 103.

¹³⁸ [Charles Allston Collins], 'National Portraits', p. 255.

literature for its sensational possibilities. The significance of the portrait in Victorian fiction lay not in the reality that claimed to be accessed through physiognomy, but in the imaginative schema that physiognomy created for the telling of stories about the human face – stories that began with, but were not limited by, Lavaterian rules. This was also the case for some art critics in the popular literary press. They started with the portrait in front of them at the gallery, but, similarly unconstrained by the limits of visual representation, they used the portrait to traverse a wider path through nineteenth-century social culture. This is where the textual imagination entered art criticism to augment portraiture's representational capacity. The interaction of genre is most noticeable in literary periodicals such as *All the Year Round*.

The physiognomic reading of portraits was evident in the early administrative practices of the National Portrait Gallery, revealing the official portrait assumptions from which the periodical critic would build. The gallery's trustees made detailed, even obsessive, tables on the colours of portraits in their collection, specifically those which were to be lent to the first two South Kensington exhibitions of 1866 and 1867. Conforming to the stereotypically Victorian penchant for classification, they listed under each portrait the colour of the sitters' 'eyes', 'eyebrows', 'hair', and 'whiskers'; they described their 'complexion', 'cheeks', and 'lips'; before they provided any additional observations about the figures' 'beard[s]' or 'moustaches'.¹³⁹ In many cases, the details listed were strictly inventorial, but in some instances a sense of character was integrated into the, otherwise formulaic, colour descriptions. Lucy Harrington Countess of Bedford is said to have 'black & shining eyes', 'soft brown and broad' brows, 'sepia black' hair, a 'fair' complexion 'shaded with earthy red & strong red', and 'full & bright red' lips. A

¹³⁹ *Notes on the Colours of Features of Hair and Complexion of Portraits Lent to the South Kensington Exhibition of 1866 and of 1867*. Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. MS. NPG 7/2/4/8. The MS is a hand-written document, containing a list of portraits in alphabetical order by the sitter's name.

more creative licence seems to have been applied with regards to the portrait of Lady Arundell of Wardour, who is described as having ‘black sleepy’ eyes. Due to the alignment of the note, the interpretation of the eyes’ sleepiness appears to have been an after-the-fact addition to their blackness. Besides the exaggerated concern for facial hair, eyes attract the most creative attention and many of the portrait subjects are attributed with sleepy eyes. Was this a common trait in aristocratic sitters? Was it the result of artistic technique? Most likely, the recurrence reveals a tendency in the observing eye of the gallery’s administrators: to read character in the colours of portraits, a practice not applied in the gallery’s official, public catalogues.

The unpublished document reveals a more creative side to the administration of the National Portrait Gallery to the one that has so far been observed, but the periodical press was required to realise the full imaginative potential of the physiognomic reading of portraits. As part of a series of articles presenting eye-witness accounts of London events, Charles Allston Collins parodied the seriousness of the art critic by placing him in the witness box before the jury, his readers. The invented critic, David Fudge, stands in opposition to the kind of commentary Collins wrote for *All the Year Round*. Fudge ‘mounts the witness-box with a catalogue of the national collection in his hand’.¹⁴⁰ Since he has ‘a long and careful Art Education’, having ‘been engaged, during a great period of his life, in Art-studies’, he considers himself ‘qualified to give an opinion on matters connected with the Fine Arts’. Collins was himself a trained artist, and had great promise within Pre-Raphaelite circles, before he turned to journalism. Yet he mocks this conventional training for an art critic and, rejecting Fudge’s earnest and ostentatious demeanour, paves the way for a different kind of criticism in his own writing – a kind

¹⁴⁰ [Charles Allston Collins], ‘Our Eye-Witness at the National Gallery’, *All the Year Round*, 3.60 (16 June 1860), 222-28 (p. 222). *Dickens Journals Online*: <<http://www.djo.org.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017]. Collins is identified as the author by Jeremy Parrott. Information received through personal correspondence (31 July 2016).

that borrowed from techniques usually found in fiction, to emphasise the popular appeal of the portrait gallery.

In 1863, Collins illustrated the National Portrait Gallery's didactic function by way of a narrative anecdote. 'The blackened engineers who drop into these rooms for an hour from the works hard by, and the other intelligent mechanics who find their way here on Saturday afternoons,' Collins imagines, 'are probably stimulated by the sight of the self-made men who have risen to the distinction of having their portraits hung in a National Portrait Gallery':

'Here,' says the workman, 'is a man who began at the very bottom of the ladder, who placed his foot upon its lowest round, and looking up with resolute eye, undaunted by the prospect of a task which would leave him little time for rest or leisure, has mounted step by step to the very topmost place, [...]' And so the man goes away (all the Cardinals on earth, except the cardinal virtues, notwithstanding) with one incentive more to active exertion, and armed a little more than before against the dangerous seductions of the gin-shop and Saint Monday.¹⁴¹

The scenario would not be out of place in one of Collins's father-in-law's novels, which sought to reveal the idiosyncrasies of the lower fabric of London society. The fictional gallery visitor offers a focal point for Collins's story that suitably portrays the gallery's purpose of providing moral models for the working classes to emulate, but he goes beyond what is necessary for such a textual illustration. The story extends beyond the gallery space and animates its characters through speech. In another piece for *All the Year Round*, Collins replaces the 'blackened engineer' with a carpenter and leaves the gallery space entirely:

It was once the fortune of the writer of these lines to employ a carpenter who, whenever he inserted a screw into any part of his work, always, before he did so, took the trouble of anointing the instrument with tallow or some other kind of grease, which he called the 'friend.' On being asked what was his motive for administering this function, his reply was that he did it for the benefit of the person, whoever he might be, who should have, one of these days, to extract that

¹⁴¹ [Charles Allston Collins], 'National Portraits', p. 255.

same screw, and whose task this application of grease would render very much easier of execution than it otherwise would have been.¹⁴²

The anecdote seemingly has little connection to the National Portrait Gallery, until Collins explains:

This small anecdote is appropriate here, because the project, the carrying out of which is to be urged in this paper, is one which, in some respects, affects those who will live after us more than it does ourselves. [...] those who will walk on this stage, when we have walked off it. The project in question is the formation of a National Collection of Photographic Portraits of eminent and remarkable persons, to be got together and preserved in some public institution.¹⁴³

Collins was aware that the present would soon become part of the history that was presented in the National Portrait Gallery and, as part of his enthusiasm to enhance the popular appeal of the public institution, he argued for the inclusion of photographs alongside paintings.¹⁴⁴

Joseph Beavington Atkinson wrote with a similar awareness of how literary techniques could animate the gallery experience in his reviews of the South Kensington portrait exhibitions, which, as Collins had desired, extended its display to include living figures (though the portraits still had to be paintings). In May 1865, Lord Derby proposed a chronological series of portrait exhibitions, comprised of paintings acquired on loan from the National Portrait Gallery, to be held at the South Kensington Museum between 1866 and 1868. The first exhibition included portraits up to the reign of James II; the second began from the reign of William and Mary; the third and final exhibition continued from the reign of George III up until 1867, and therefore included living subjects. These three portrait exhibitions would, Lord Derby hoped, present ‘portraits of all the most eminent contemporaries of their respective eras, but might also serve to

¹⁴² [Charles Allston Collins], ‘A New Portrait-Gallery’, *All the Year Round*, 18.436 (31 August 1867), 229-32 (p. 229). *Dickens Journals Online*: <<http://www.djo.org.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017]. Collins is identified as the author by Jeremy Parrott. Information received through personal correspondence (31 July 2016).

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

¹⁴⁴ For another example of how Collins drew upon fiction in his commentary on photograph collections, see chapter three of this thesis.

illustrate the progress and condition, at various periods, of British Art'.¹⁴⁵ In his aims for the exhibitions, Lord Derby gave artistic improvement equal footing with moral improvement, but Atkinson pays little attention to the exhibitions' artistic standards, prioritising the value of portraits as ghosts that can be resurrected for the nation.

Unlike official gallery catalogues, Atkinson's essays were not meant to be read within the gallery space. Going beyond the role of a tour guide, Atkinson recreated the gallery experience for his reader, who, as they progressed line by line, could imaginatively journey through the exhibition from home:

We would ask the reader's company while we walk through a Gallery crowded with the illustrious dead. At the entrance door we are met by Geoffrey Chaucer and John Wycliffe. The portly figure of Henry VIII. swaggers in the court beyond, and round the corner we come upon good Sir Thomas More, seated in the midst of his family, deep in books and serious thought. Such a sight induces meditative mood, and we cannot but observe, among the moving crowd who come to hold converse with statesmen, poets, and philosophers of a by-gone age, a fitting sobriety of manner. There is a cloister stillness in the air, the foot falls softly on the floor, and the voice is low. A lady looks into the face of Jane Grey or of Mary Queen of Scots, and draws a sigh; a statesman approaches the figure of Wolsey or of Bacon, and is taught the instability of power and the fallibility of the human intellect. It is surprising how the lapse of a few centuries clears the mental vision – how the mist which blinded the eyes of contemporaries, in the lapse of years are dispelled – how passion and personal interests subside, so that there remain but justice and and [sic] truth in the balance of historic judgement. And again, the contact with men, even through their portraits, who have shaken the world and then fallen under the ruins, seldom fails to awaken sympathy. [...] Surely it is salutary thus to reanimate, and in imagination live amid, past times, surrounded by the men who made those times great or disastrous.¹⁴⁶

Atkinson presents the experience of walking through the portrait gallery as an opportunity to intimately converse with framed figures, and with the past. He portrays the gallery as a sacred space that functions through imaginative animation. His repeated use of the first-person plural pronoun ('we'), is a linguistic technique that reflects the aims of the gallery and the nineteenth-century art periodical to promote sympathy between the

¹⁴⁵ [Joseph Beavington Atkinson], 'Historic Portraits', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 100.613 (November 1866), 571-84 (p. 577). Atkinson is identified as the author of the essay by *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*: <<http://wellesley.chadwyck.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 571.

critic and the reader, and between the individual and the nation. It stands in contrast to the 'I' that was common to Romantic criticism by William Hazlitt, writing about private art collections. Hazlitt introduces his commentary on the 'Pictures at Burleigh House' (1822) by noting: 'The yellow evening rays gleam through thy fretted Gothic windows; but I only feel the rustling of withered branches strike chill to my breast'.¹⁴⁷ The essay comprises his personal recollections, 'associations' he 'could not well get rid of', for example about 'The *Rembrandts*' on show: 'I saw hard lines and stained canvas [...] [t]he picture was nothing to me.'¹⁴⁸ Maryanne Ward makes the distinction between Hazlitt's criticism and the kind that developed in the nineteenth century. 'Although Romantic, evocative language provided an expressive vehicle for describing paintings', she writes, 'the characteristic movement inward to meditation, although personally satisfactory, in its very exclusivity is unsuited for public art criticism'.¹⁴⁹ While Hazlitt gave *his* emotive reaction to art, Atkinson aimed to construct a universal response to be performed by his readers, the mass public that was now flocking to the national gallery.

Little is known about Atkinson, but he was remembered in the *Academy* (following his death in 1866) for his dedication to art: art was to him 'a subject of the deepest study [...] the consecrating principle of character and conduct'.¹⁵⁰ His training, the obituary notes, meant that he knew 'better than most critics – how to appreciate mere technique, his chief concern always lay with the composition of the particular work'. Matthew Potter provides the fullest account of Atkinson, suggesting that his extensive art training included visiting international galleries and collecting fine art engravings,

¹⁴⁷ William Hazlitt, 'Pictures at Burleigh House', in *Sketches of Some of the Principal Picture-Galleries in England* (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1824), pp. 145-60 (p. 145). The essay was originally published in *New Monthly Magazine* in 1822.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

¹⁴⁹ Maryanne Ward, 'Preparing for the National Gallery: The Art Criticism of William Hazlitt and P. G. Patmore', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 23.3 (1990), 104-10 (p. 109).

¹⁵⁰ J. S. C., 'Obituary: J. B. Atkinson', *Academy*, 756 (30 October 1886), 298-99 (p. 299).

activities which equipped him with the knowledge to be a regular art writer for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (as well as for other periodicals).¹⁵¹ Prettejohn attests to Atkinson's professionalism, speculating that he and F. G. Stephens were two of the first English writers to rely upon art criticism to make their living.¹⁵² Due to his authority on art, Atkinson is regularly quoted in Victorian scholarship on art writing in connection to the Aesthetic Movement.¹⁵³ Less often quoted, however, are his essays on portraiture and portrait galleries, which appear anomalous given his conservative approach to the purpose of art. Potter suggests that 'Atkinson wished to encourage art that would spread moral virtues and "improve" audiences, rather than pander to low public tastes'.¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the portrait exhibitions at South Kensington attracted his attention and he adapted his critical style to meet the demands of writing about portraiture.

Indeed, spreading moral virtue and pandering to popular tastes were not dichotomous when it came to portraiture. In the nineteenth century, portraiture did both and, by inviting the common visitor to the gallery to share his response to the portraits, Atkinson simultaneously lowered himself and raised his readers in matters of artistic taste. He invites the gallery visitor to judge the faces of the painted portraits: 'Truly the face remains for ever as a witness for or against man; upon the features are indelibly graven the good or evil deeds of a whole life.'¹⁵⁵ Rather than categorise the framed figure – something which Collins had struggled to do – Atkinson employed physiognomy to positively expand individual identity into that of a collective nation. For Atkinson, painted heads 'may be read as in the pages of an open book', disclosing 'the deeds and

¹⁵¹ Matthew C. Potter, 'The Twilight of the Nazarenes: Joseph Bevington Atkinson and British Art-Critical Responses to Germany, 1856-86', in *The Inspirational Genius of Germany: British Art and Germanism, 1850-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), pp. 56-92 (p. 57).

¹⁵² Prettejohn, p. 76.

¹⁵³ Noted by Potter, p. 1. On Atkinson and aesthetic value, see Prettejohn, pp. 84-6.

¹⁵⁴ Potter, p. 60.

¹⁵⁵ [Joseph Bevington Atkinson], 'Historic Portraits', p. 571.

the thoughts that made the owners of these heads illustrious'.¹⁵⁶ Continuing with the metaphor of a portrait as a book, he suggested that 'Wordsworth's face serves as a title-page or table of contents to his works – reflective, simple-minded, prosaic, slow'. As a result, Atkinson reflected, 'a carefully-painted portrait serves as a biography of the individual man, a whole gallery becomes a history or diagram of humanity at large'.¹⁵⁷

Atkinson's animation of portraits, and his use of narrative techniques to do so, was common to commentary on the portrait gallery published in the periodical press. This meeting of disciplines is explicit in Charles Dickens's piece on the National Portrait Gallery for his own journal, *Household Words*. Like Boyle, who turned to Cinderella for a metaphor for the National Portrait Gallery, Dickens drew upon a fairy tale to illustrate the gallery experience. For Dickens, it was like 'a tawdry fancy ball in the Sleeping Beauty's palace during the hundred years of enchantment'.¹⁵⁸ The fakery of the gallery was celebrated for its performative aspect and the sense of personage it gave him. He distinguishes between the 'polite bearing of the Fine Arts' and 'the rudeness of real life':

Inside the gallery, all the people in the pictures had pointedly referred to me in every cock of their highly feathered hats, in every wrinkle of their highly slashed doublets, in every stride and straddle of their highly muscular legs. Outside, I did not observe that I exercised any influence on the crowd who were pursuing their business or their pleasure; or that those insensible persons at all altered the expression of their countenances for my sake. Inside, nothing could be done without me. Were a pair of eyes in a question, they must smirk at me; were a pair of spurs in question, they must glint at me; were a pair of boots in question, they must stretch themselves out on form and benches to captivate me.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Joseph Beavington Atkinson, 'National Portraits', *Contemporary Review* (1 September 1868), 179-202 (p. 199).

¹⁵⁷ [Joseph Beavington Atkinson], 'Historic Portraits', pp. 571-72. Supporting Pearl's argument that physiognomy progressed through the nineteenth century to increasingly become 'a way to talk about groups rather than individuals, and to paint communities in broad strokes rather than in specific detail', Atkinson applied physiognomy in the context of the public gallery to bring individuals together under a national identity. See Pearl, p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ [Charles Dickens], 'An Idea of Mine', *Household Words*, 17.416 (13 March 1858), pp. 289-91 (p. 289). Dickens is identified as the author by *Dickens Journals Online*: <<http://www.djo.org.uk>> [accessed 18 July 2016].

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

Animating the canvas was a response to the common understanding of portraiture as memorial to the deceased, a response that challenges the stillness of death at the same time as it works to overcome the static nature of painting. Neighbouring portraits had already been coming to life in eighteenth-century reviews of the Royal Academy:

The portrait of *Mrs. Smith*, from its situation in the Academy, stares West's *Sermon* full in the face. That she should be *opposite* to St Peter is well; and that she should be in full view of the Prince of Wales, is better. Her back is of course *turned* on the clergy in an undress; but that she should be putting on her glove, and seemingly taking a walk towards the Lord's Supper, is totally improper.¹⁶⁰

If the titles of the paintings were not italicised, the portraits could be read as living people. The discursive technique of animating portraits was by no means exclusive to accounts of the National Portrait Gallery. Yet reviews of the Victorian public institution stand out for the way in which portraits interact once they are animated: they converse not only with each other across the gallery walls, but also with the gallery visitor.

The press coverage of the National Portrait Gallery and South Kensington portrait exhibitions in the mid- to late nineteenth century was also distinguished from earlier critical writing on portraiture by the increase in, and variety of, critics that turned to the subject. The genre of such texts becomes difficult to pinpoint. For *All the Year Round*, Walter Thornbury wrote a series of essays on 'Old Stories Re-Told' and in June 1867, the year of the second portrait exhibition at South Kensington, he published a piece on the portrait of the murderess, Sarah Malcolm, by William Hogarth (1872-1873) (fig. 1.14). The essay begins in the manner of an exhibition review as Thornbury walks his reader through the gallery:

In one of the snug apartments, tapestried with pictures, of the Historical Portrait Exhibition now open at South Kensington, the visitor comes suddenly upon a woman's face that at once fascinates and repels him. There is a hard shameless

¹⁶⁰ *Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser* (3 May 1785). Quoted in Mark Hallett, 'Reading the Walls: Pictorial Dialogue at the Eighteenth-Century Royal Academy', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 37.4 (Summer 2004), 581-604 (p. 581).

beauty about the full rounded forehead; the eyes are steely and fixed like those of a bird of prey, the thin compressed lips are stern and cruel.¹⁶¹

Thornbury interprets Malcolm's character from her painted features in a manner of imaginative reading not untypical of the art critic. Yet he subsequently leaves the portrait gallery and writes the sitter's story. His commentary on the portrait painting comprises only two paragraphs, while the narrative of the events that led to Malcolm's imprisonment and execution occupy the periodical's subsequent seven pages. The portrait may appear as incidental pretext, but Thornbury's narrative relies upon the portrait's claim to authenticity. He suggests that Hogarth painted the portrait the same day the artist visited Newgate and saw Malcolm through 'the spiked hatch' – from this observation, the narrative commences.¹⁶²

The essay is unique in Thornbury's series of re-told stories as the only one based upon a portrait, but the portrait served as an apt starting point for his hybridity of storytelling. The essay that begins in the context of the portrait gallery, and that rests upon the historic as its central object, blurs the boundaries of art criticism, the formal exhibition review, historical biography, and fiction. While portraits may not have been able to tell stories in the same manner as other visual scenes, through the textual frames in which they were experienced in the mid- to late nineteenth century – gallery catalogues, labels, autographs, and art periodicals – they invited people to tell, and to repeatedly re-tell, 'old stories' about them.

¹⁶¹ [(George) Walter Thornbury], 'Old Stories Re-Told: Sarah Malcolm [xxvii]', *All the Year Round*, 17.425 (June 1867), pp. 589-96 (p. 589). Thornbury is identified as the author by *Dickens Journals Online*: <<http://www.djo.org.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 589.

The Portrait Gallery in Print

Following the second portrait exhibition at South Kensington in 1867, Atkinson advertised in the *Art-Journal* that the entire series was available as a book of reproductions: in ‘ten volumes, half bound in morocco, at the price of £62’.¹⁶³ Alternatively, someone of more modest means could purchase ‘one volume of one hundred portraits for six guineas; a packet of sixteen for one guinea; or a single plate for one shilling and sixpence’. The portrait gallery had become a consumer product, answering the *Art-Journal*’s call in 1857 to photograph the collection and combine it with biographical accompaniment ‘at a price almost nominal, amongst the people’:

Besides their collective access to the great national library of portrait [sic], individuals will like to keep a volume or two at home, for fireside perusal, – and it is an object well worth the care of a paternal government thus to furnish them with the means. Hero-worship is a natural instinct; and since the popular mind *will* have its idols, it is no light duty to assist towards their choice in a sound direction. This cheap distribution, as a method of popular instruction, seems one form, and no unimportant one, of the gain that may be extracted out of the new National Portrait Gallery.¹⁶⁴

It was not long after the foundation of the National Portrait Gallery that the idea of multiplying and circulating a gallery of portraits outside its walls, in book form, was sounded and realised. Also for ‘fireside perusal’, portraiture was increasingly made available to be consumed through words.

Within the walls of the nineteenth-century portrait gallery, through the words of the art periodical, and in the pages of literary portrait galleries, it was ‘indeed, a curious and original feeling to find yourself among faces and nothing but faces’, as noted by Percy Fitzgerald.¹⁶⁵ For this thesis, a literary portrait gallery is a text that seeks to replicate the experience of a portrait gallery within the material conditions typically

¹⁶³ Joseph Beavington Atkinson, ‘Photographs of National Portraits’, *Art-Journal* (April 1867), p. 105.

¹⁶⁴ [Unsigned], ‘National Portrait Gallery’, *Art-Journal* (2 February 1857), 37-39 (p. 39).

¹⁶⁵ Fitzgerald, ‘A Walk Round the National Portrait Gallery’, p. 520.

reserved for a book. The desire to see and interact with past and present figures in the form of a gallery took advantage of the new spaces that print made materially and imaginatively available. Print made the portrait gallery imaginary possible.



Figure 1.1 'The New National Portrait Gallery' at St Martin's Place, as seen from Charing Cross Road. Photograph of a sketch by H. W. Brewer, 1896. © Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG 66/4/3/2/5.

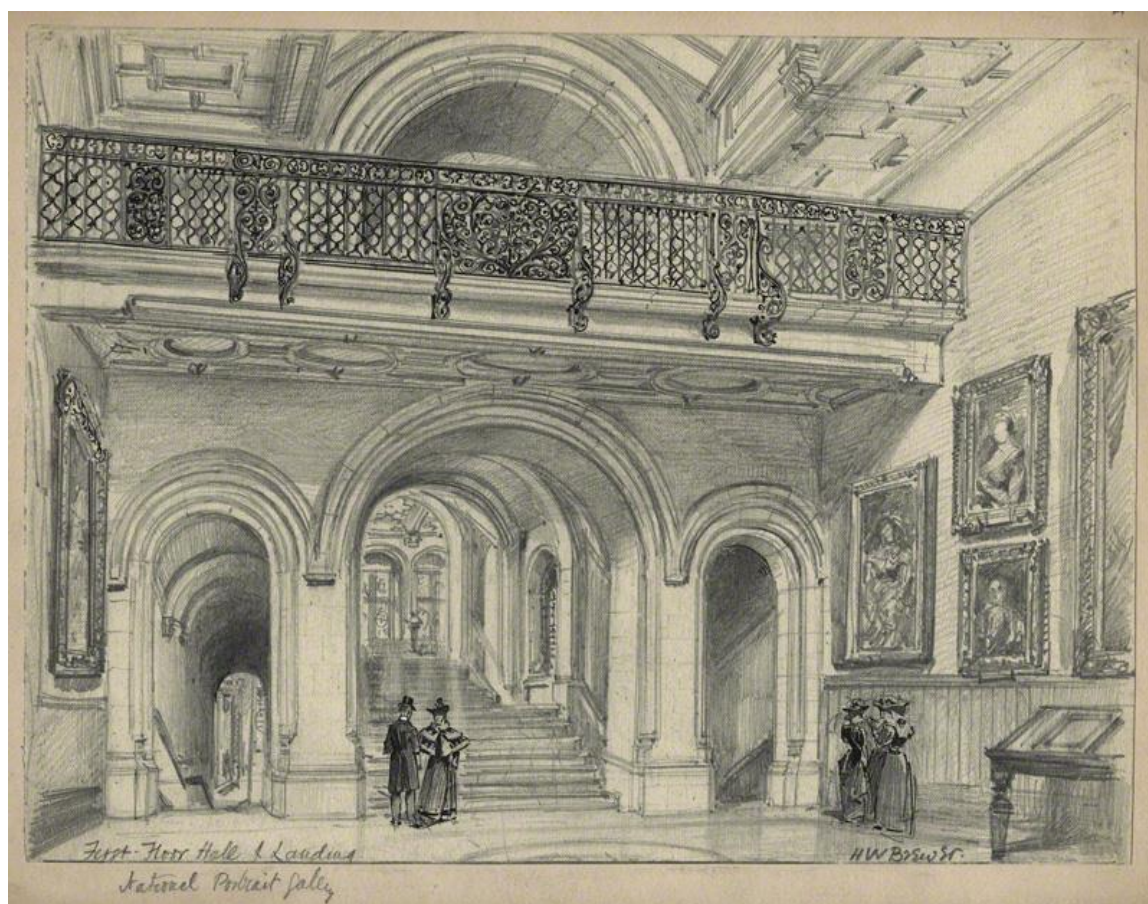


Figure 1.2 Sketch of the first floor hall and landing of the National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, by H. W. Brewer, 1896. © Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG 66/4/3/2/3.

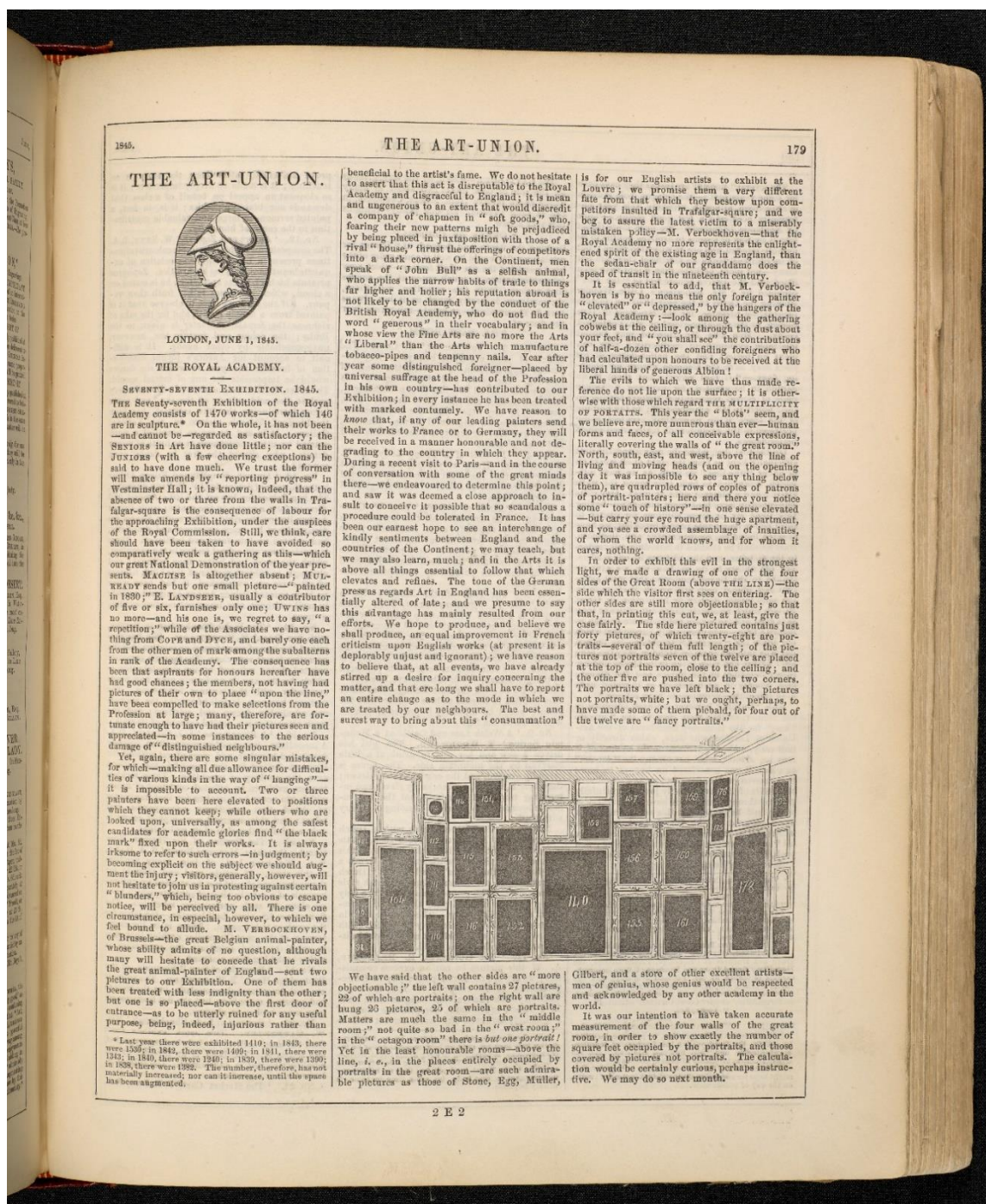


Figure 1.3 'The Royal Academy', *Art-Union* (1 June 1845), 179-96 (p. 179). © British Library Board. P.P.1931.pc.



Figure 1.4 'The Ensuing Exhibition of the Royal Academy', *Punch*, 12 (1847), p. 177. Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. N. 2706 d. 10.

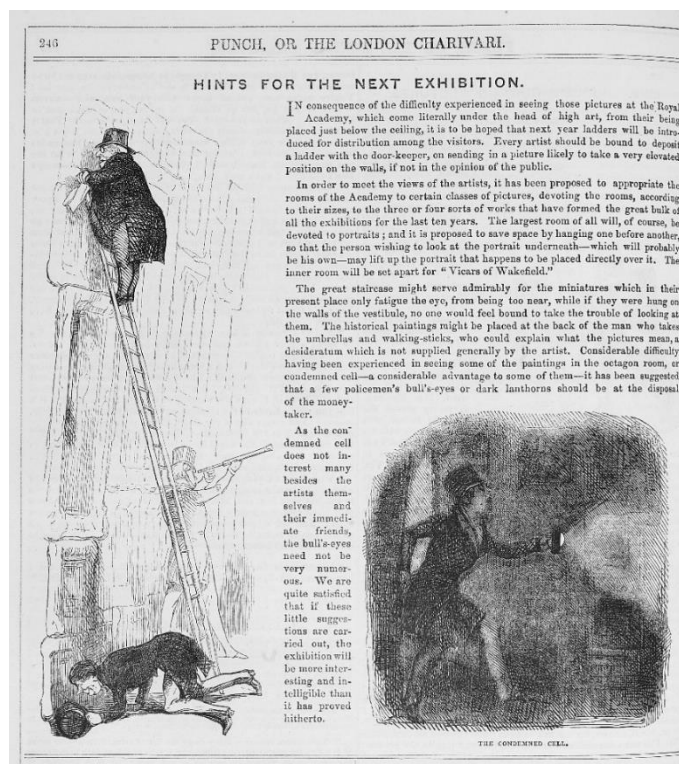


Figure 1.5 'Hints for the Next Exhibition', *Punch*, 8 (1845), p. 246. Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. N. 2706 d. 10.

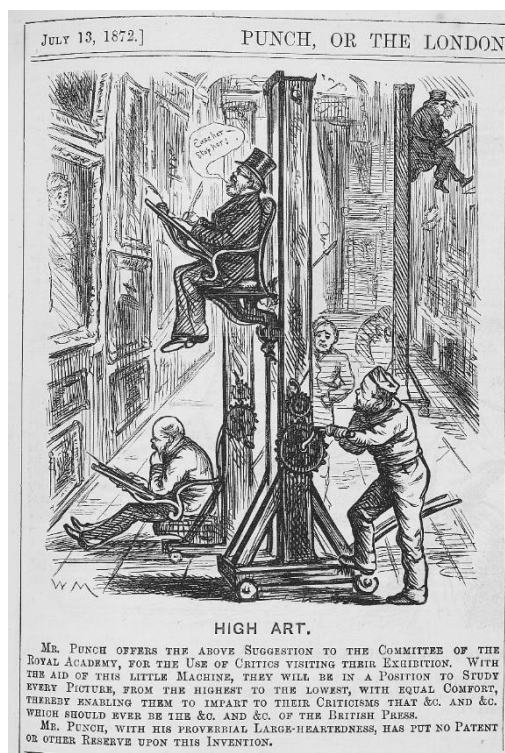


Figure 1.6 'High Art', *Punch*, 63 (1872), p. 21. Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. N. 2706 d. 10.

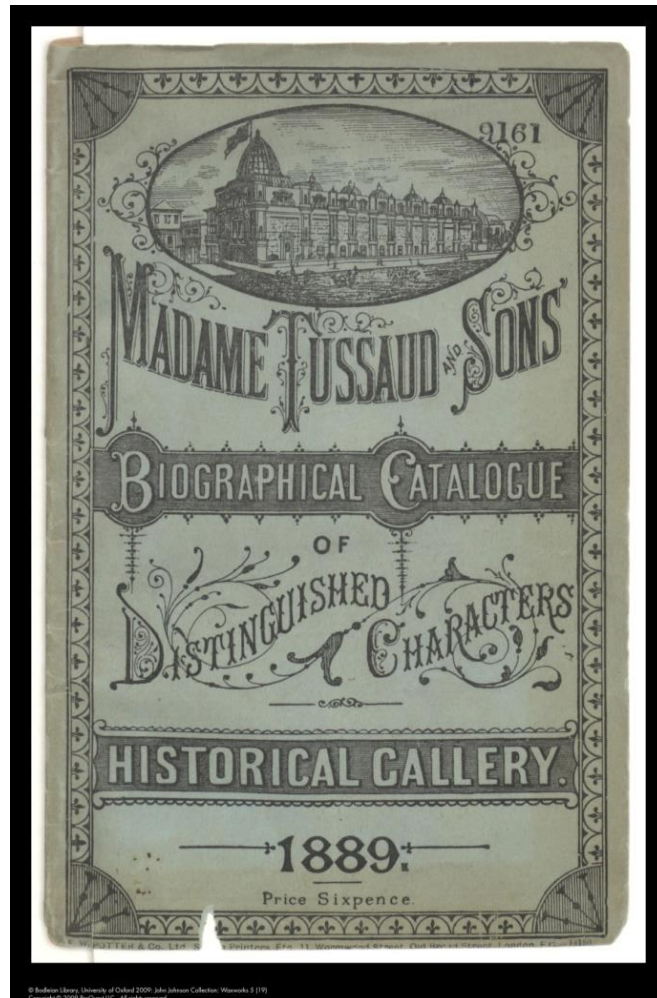


Figure 1.7 Front cover of ‘Madame Tussaud & Sons’ Biographical Catalogue of Distinguished Characters Historical Gallery’, depicting the coat of arms (1889). Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. John Johnson Collection: Waxworks 5 (19). *The John Johnson Collection: An Archive of Printed Ephemera*: <<http://johnjohnson.chadwyck.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].



Figure 1.8 Sketch of the arrangement of portraits at Great George Street (front room), by George Scharf, 1865. © Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG 66/1/2/1.

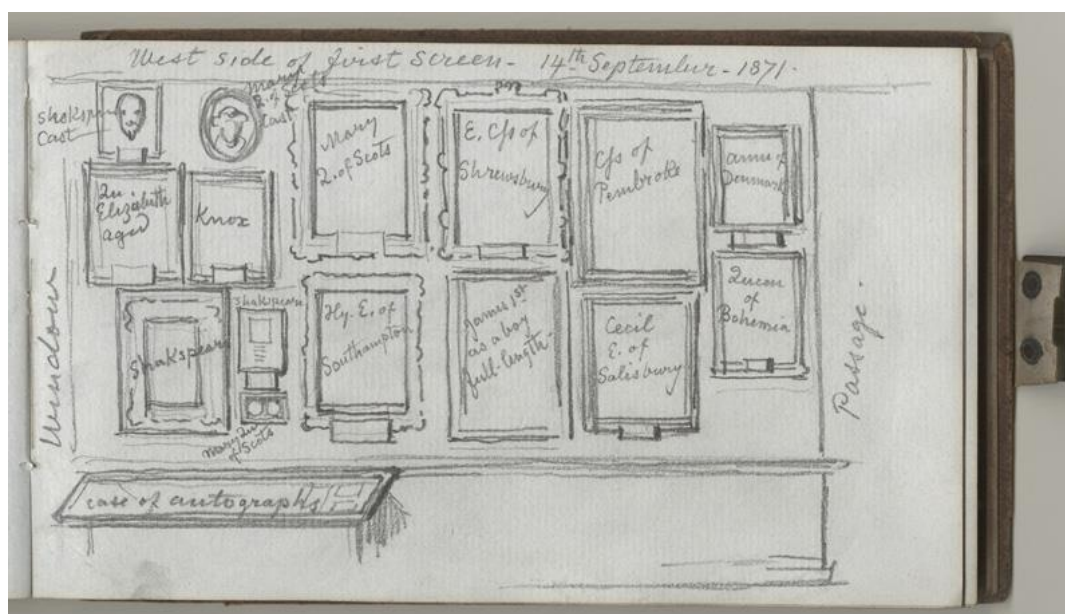


Figure 1.9 Sketch of the arrangement of portraits at South Kensington (west side by first screen), by George Scharf, 14 September 1871. © Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG 66/2/2/3.



Figure 1.10 Photograph of George Scharf at the National Portrait Gallery, South Kensington, 1885. © Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG 22/2/1/a.



Figure 1.11 Photograph of the display at the National Portrait Gallery, Bethnal Green (first floor), 1895. © Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG 22/2/2/d.



Figure 1.12 Photograph of the display at the National Portrait Gallery, Bethnal Green (first and ground floors), 1895. © Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG 22/2/2/b.



Figure 1.13 William Powell Frith, *Railway Station*, 1862. Oil on Canvas. © Royal Holloway, London.



Figure 1.14 After William Hogarth, *Sarah Malcolm*, late 18th-19th century (after 1873). Engraving and stipple. Plate: 8 ¹⁵/₁₆ x 8 ¹⁵/₁₆ in. (22.7 x 22.7 cm). Sheet: 9 ¹/₄ x 9 ¹⁵/₁₆ in. (23.5 x 23.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 91.1.32. Gift of Sarah Lazarus, 1891. This image is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution [1.0 Public Domain Dedication]. To view a copy of this licence, visit: <https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/>

CHAPTER TWO

The Real and the Imaginary: Comparing the Literary Portrait Galleries of Edmund Gosse and Walter Pater

Following Walter Pater's death on 30 July 1894, Edmund Gosse wrote an essay in commemoration of his friend's life and career. He titled it 'Walter Pater: A Portrait' and it was published in the *Contemporary Review* later that year.¹ The sub-title marks the importance of portraiture as an analogy for Gosse's biographical writing; his essay on Pater is one portrait in the long 'gallery' of Victorian men and women that he produced over the course of his career as a writer of lives. Gosse created literary portrait galleries when he bound his biographical essays to form the volumes, *Critical-Kit-Kats* (1896) and *Portraits and Sketches* (1912). The earlier of the two collections, named after a specific eighteenth-century portrait tradition, provides the focus for the first half of this chapter. The second half subsequently explores how Gosse's choice of title for his 1894 essay also recalls Pater's frequent allusion to portraiture to describe his own writing: Gosse's essay is a portrait of a portraitist. Pater made a clear gesture to portraiture in 1878 when he published a short story in *Macmillan's Magazine* with the heading 'Imaginary Portraits'.² He subsequently brought together a collection of short fiction under that title in 1887. Both Gosse's *Critical Kit-Kats* and Pater's *Imaginary Portraits* include essays that did not originally have portrait titles. In fact, none of the four stories that comprise Pater's 1887 volume had that title when originally published (the 1878 story was not

¹ See Edmund Gosse, 'Walter Pater: A Portrait', *Contemporary Review*, 66.348 (December 1894), 795-810. The essay was reprinted, with only minor revisions, in *Critical Kit-Kats* (London: William Heinemann, 1896). Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text, with the abbreviation CK. Select portrait essays are reprinted in *Portraits from Life*, ed. Anne Thwaite (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1991).

² The story's full title was 'Imaginary Portraits: I. The Child in the House', published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, 38.223 (August 1878), 313-21.

included). Yet Gosse and Pater's editorial acts of gathering a corpus of short texts about living or imaginary figures created the literary equivalent of a portrait gallery, the individual parts of which acquired new meaning when read as a collection.

Gosse's *Critical Kit-Kats* and Pater's *Imaginary Portraits* diverge on numerous points. Gosse's portraits are 'critical', and Pater's are 'imaginary'. Gosse's subjects were his recently-deceased contemporaries, whereas Pater resurrected mythical figures from the past. While Gosse's portraits are chiefly biographical, Pater's are primarily works of fiction. Yet, on closer study, these lines of divergence begin to look as if they converge. The biographical essays that make up Gosse's *Critical Kit-Kats* combine fact with a sense of imaginative colouring in presentation of their subjects. Pater's short fiction follows the biographical format of recounting a life, sometimes a life with historical or mythical precedence, to present history perceived through the imagination. Both collections, therefore, interweave fact with the imagination, participating in the stylistic exchange between the genres of biography and fiction that, as critics have noted, became commonplace as the century progressed.³ Typical of the period, Gosse and Pater developed eclectic literary careers. Pater wrote historical biography, art criticism, and fiction; and Gosse was not only a biographer, for which he is best known, but also a poet, novelist, and art critic: roles which overlap in the construction of their literary portrait galleries.

This chapter brings Gosse and Pater together as literary portraitists. It reads their literary portrait galleries in direct dialogue with their visual counterparts to advance understanding of how portraiture was used as a model for writing – and reading – about

³ See Ira Bruce Nadel, *Biography: Fiction, Fact and Form* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984); Laura Marcus, *Auto/biographical Discourses: Theory, Criticism, Practice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994); and Max Saunders, *Self-Impression: Life-writing, Autobiografiction, and the Forms of Modern Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

people in the late nineteenth century. What is a literary portrait? What did it mean to be a literary portraitist in the late nineteenth century? The answers to these questions differ from one another more than might initially be supposed. Historically and critically, the relationship between literary portraiture and visual art has not been a straightforward assumption. Essentially, a *literary portrait* is a portrait drawn in words: the description of a real or imagined person. A *portrait* can be loosened from the visual (and from the face) to be defined figuratively as ‘something which represents’, ‘a representation in speech or writing’, alongside its literal meaning as ‘a drawing or painting of a person’ (now the usual sense of the word).⁴ Cynthia Wall therefore presents *description* as synonymous with *portraiture*, since they traditionally share the aim to represent, to ‘make us see’ something.⁵ Literary portraiture has been practised throughout history by the biographer, historian, novelist, and poet with limited reference to the visual, which is also often absent in scholarly accounts of the literary art. Jeffrey Wallen has noted that ‘[t]he terms “portrait” and “portraiture” are used freely in discussions of biographical writing, and often no distinction is made between portrait and biography’.⁶ As a result, he explains, ‘[t]he words “sketch and “portrait” are also often used without any attention to the artistic practices these words connote or to the differences between visual and verbal representation’. It is perhaps for this reason that Gosse’s biographical writing has received little attention in terms of visual portraiture, and that *Critical Kit-Kats* remains undervalued compared to his longer (auto)biographical work, *Father and Son* (1907).⁷

⁴ “portrait, n., adv., and adj.,” *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, June 2016): <<http://www.oed.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

⁵ Cynthia Wall, *The Prose of Things: Transformations of Description in the Eighteenth Century* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 7.

⁶ Jeffrey Wallen, ‘Between Text and Image: The Literary Portrait’, *Auto/Biography Studies*, 10.1 (Spring 1995), 50-65 (p. 54).

⁷ Since Ann Thwaite’s biography, *Edmund Gosse: A Literary Landscape* (Stroud: Tempus, 2007 [1984]), *Father and Son* has dominated critical attention on Gosse. Hermione Lee chooses to focus on *Father and Son* for her study of Gosse as a pioneering biographer. See ‘Writing Victorian Lives and Victorian Life-Writing: Gosse’s “Father and Son” Revisited’, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 8.1 (2003), 108-18. Yet she also points to the value of Gosse’s broader literary output. She suggests that, even without this seminal text,

In contrast, Pater's relationship with the visual arts has been extensively explored,⁸ and, thanks to Lene Østermark-Johansen's new scholarly edition of *Imaginary Portraits*, interest in Pater's portrait volume is growing alongside *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), for which he is best known.⁹ Yet both Gosse and Pater's lesser-studied texts remain their most explicit portrait texts. By focussing on their lesser-known texts, this chapter places new emphasis on the specificity of visual portraiture for their work. When studied individually, *Critical Kit-Kats* and *Imaginary Portraits* reflect upon the negotiation between biography, history, and portraiture that is evident across each of the authors' careers. When compared, the volumes also point to the creative exchange that was developing between viewing portraits and reading texts in the late nineteenth century.

In the context of the nineteenth century, a period in which the visual and the verbal were increasingly entwined, Gosse's and Pater's practices of literary portraiture demand greater attention, first, in terms of visual portraiture and, second, for the developing museum and collectors' cultures of portrait 'galleries' with which they interacted. It is widely acknowledged that literary portraiture became a cultivated and complex art during the period, as authors became concerned with providing a more and more detailed and penetrating picture.¹⁰ As noted by Michael Irwin, every major

Gosse would be a figure of great interest as 'the pre-eminent, prolific, established and influential late-Victorian man of letters' (p. 111). Exceptions include Ira Bruce Nadel's *Biography: Fiction, Fact and Form*, which turns to *Critical Kit-Kats* alongside other late nineteenth-century biographical volumes.

⁸ On Pater and the visual arts, see Elicia Clements and Lesley J. Higgins, eds., *Victorian Aesthetic Conditions: Pater Across the Arts* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); and Lene Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

⁹ See Walter Pater, *Imaginary Portraits*, ed. Lene Østermark-Johansen (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2014). All quotations from Pater's *Imaginary Portraits* will be taken from this edition and given in parentheses in the text, with the abbreviation *IP*.

¹⁰ See, for example, Graeme Tytler, *Physiognomy in the European Novel: Faces and Fortunes* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982); and Ed Block Jr., 'Walter Pater, Arthur Symonds, W. B. Yeats, and the Fortunes of the Literary Portrait', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 26.4 (1986), 759-76. on George Eliot's literary portraiture, see Hugh Witemeyer, *George Eliot and the Visual Arts* (London: Yale University Press, 1979), especially the chapter 'Portraiture and Knowledge of Character', pp. 44-72; and

nineteenth-century novelist attempted to ‘encourage and enable the reader to visualise the characters concerned’, to the point that character description often became a ‘full-scale psychological portrait’.¹¹ Readers also wanted to see the author’s faces, a desire which the National Portrait Gallery strove to fulfil. The opening pages of its 1888 catalogue quotes Joseph Addison’s observation (originally dating to 1711) that ‘a reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure till he knows whether the writer of it be a black or a fair man, of a mild or choleric disposition, married or a bachelor [...]’.¹² From the eighteenth century, frontispieces served this purpose, before the general longing to visualise people in words was fulfilled and propelled further in the late nineteenth century through the increasing availability of visual portraits of historic and contemporary celebrities.¹³ Gosse’s and Pater’s portrait studies participate in the tradition of literary portraiture, but they are also distinct products of the late nineteenth century, a time when more visual portraits, in a variety of media, were in circulation.

Gosse and Pater wrote in the context of what Norman Kelvin calls the ‘multiform background of portraits’ in the nineteenth century.¹⁴ Kelvin identifies a direct relationship between the nineteenth-century fashion to use terms such as ‘portrait’ and ‘portraiture’ in the titles of texts and the growth of the portrait tradition in the visual arts. This move towards the visual marks a significant shift in the perception of the literary

Josh Epstein, ““Neutral Physiognomy”: The Unreadable Faces of Middlemarch”, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 36 (2008), 131-48.

¹¹ Michael Irwin, ‘Fictitious Faces’, in *Picturing: Description and Illusion in the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979), pp. 10-41 (p. 14).

¹² See *Historical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures, Busts, & c. in the National Portrait Gallery*, by George Scharf (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1888), p. i. Held by the Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London.

¹³ On eighteenth-century frontispiece portraits, see Janine Barchas, ‘Prefiguring Genre: Frontispiece Portraits from “Gulliver’s Travels” to “Millenium Hall”’, *Studies in the Novel*, 30.2 (1998), 260-86.

¹⁴ Norman Kelvin, ‘The Painting as Physical Object in a Verbal Portrait: Pater’s “A Prince of Court Painters” and Wilde’s “The Portrait of Mr W. H.”’, in *Victorian Aesthetic Conditions: Pater Across the Arts*, eds. Elicia Clements and Lesley J. Higgins (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 117-34 (p. 125).

portrait as a genre.¹⁵ Still, the connections between literary portraiture and the changing conditions of portrait viewership remain undervalued. Extending the growing awareness of the relationship between biography and visual portraiture in the late nineteenth century, this chapter highlights the implications of the gallery, both material and imaginary, for the nineteenth-century reader's understanding of Gosse's and Pater's portrait volumes. It suggests that, for Gosse and Pater, being a literary portraitist also meant being a collector. Gosse and Pater drew upon numerous sources in the composition of their literary portrait galleries. They looked to the portraits around them, but they also looked to history for their visual inspiration. Thus, Gosse and Pater borrowed from and, to a greater degree, adapted the models provided by the National Portrait Gallery and other portrait collections to create their diverse pantheons of real and imagined, contemporary and historic characters for a growing portrait-viewing public.

While the nineteenth-century desire to visualise people was partly fulfilled through the new convenience and availability of visual portraits, literary portrait galleries offered something more – or something else, since word and image work differently. At the same time as this chapter puts the visual back into the study of biographical portrait volumes, it does not lose sight of the fact that, as Wallen highlights, the literary portrait exists ‘between image and text’.¹⁶ By its very name, ‘the idea of literary portraiture [...] draws attention to the boundaries between word and image – verbal and visual representation’. Neither Gosse's nor Pater's literary portrait galleries were illustrated. Their lack of illustration may have been due to the periodicals in which the essays and

¹⁵ Max Saunders similarly highlights the ‘long turn of the century’ as a crucial period of change in the ‘tradition of calling literary descriptions of people, “portraits”’. See *Self-Impression*, p. 62. In his study of Arthur Benson and his family, Simon Goldhill reinforces the fact that ‘portrait’ became a ‘key term’ for biographical writing in the late nineteenth century in conjunction with how portraiture was ‘changing materially’ through impressionism, photography, and post-impressionism. See ‘A Map of Biographical Urges’, in *A Very Queer Family Indeed: Sex, Religion, and the Bensons in Victorian Britain* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2016), pp. 77-92 (p. 86).

¹⁶ Wallen, p. 54.

stories were originally published. The *Contemporary Review* and *Macmillan's Magazine* were predominantly literary letterpresses that rarely included images. Yet the fact that Gosse and Pater still omitted illustrations from the published volumes also suggests a belief in the superiority of word over image.¹⁷ Nonetheless, *Critical Kit-Kats* and *Imaginary Portraits* participate in a negotiation between word and image. While the visual was not physically incorporated into the texts, it was bound as part of the assumptions of the nineteenth-century reader and therefore informed the volumes' reception.

Pater in Gosse's Portrait Gallery

According to Thomas Wright, Pater was known for his reclusive nature and 'evasive glance': 'He never looked a man straight in the face'.¹⁸ Yet Gosse and Pater developed, in Gosse's words, 'a friendship which was never clouded for a moment in the course of more than twenty years' (*CK*, p. 254). Gosse recalled how he first 'set eyes' on Pater alighting from a hansom cab with Charles Algernon Swinburne on Cheyne Walk in 1871, before they formally met at William Bell Scott's studio the following year (*CK*, p. 254). In 1890 Pater praised Gosse's poetry as an 'exquisite' criticism of 'the soul, the life, of the nineteenth century', before Gosse shed light on Pater's seemingly quiet, solitary life after the writer's death only a few years later.¹⁹ Their relationship provided the material for Gosse's 1894 portrait of Pater, who he described as 'one of the most exquisite, the most self-respecting, the most individual prose-writers of the age' (*CK*, p. 241).

¹⁷ See Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture*, p. 1.

¹⁸ Thomas Wright, *The Life of Walter Pater*, 2 vols (London: Everett & Co., 1907), ii, 134.

¹⁹ Walter Pater, 'Mr Gosse's Poems', in *Essays from 'The Guardian'* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1920 [1901]), pp. 105-18 (pp. 113-14). Pater reviewed Gosse's *On Viol and Flute* (1873). His essay was originally published anonymously in the *Guardian*, 29 October 1890.

Gosse was not the only Victorian man of letters to dedicate an essay to Pater in the months following his death. Less than two weeks after Pater's demise, the *Athenæum* announced a piece of 'literary gossip': 'several friends of Mr. Pater should prepare reminiscences, to be gathered together into a single volume'.²⁰ Arthur Waugh similarly promoted the idea 'to evolve a memoir of Pater from a series of appreciations from the hands of the various friends who were best acquainted with him in his private life'.²¹ As noted by R. M. Seiler, the volume never materialised, but individual pieces were published by Gosse, Lionel Johnson, and William Sharp.²² Johnson mourned the loss of a writer comparable to Matthew Arnold and acknowledged Pater to have been 'the most generous and gracious of helpful friends'.²³ Sharp offered intensely personal memories of Pater, in whose eyes, he recollected, 'the inner light was always vivid'.²⁴ They shared the aim to not only memorialise Pater's professional achievements, but also provide insight into the man behind the writer. While, as a solitary and controversial figure, Pater was an intriguing subject for many life-writers at the end of the century, Gosse's piece in the *Contemporary Review* stands out for his use of the portrait to present an intimate picture of the author. Gosse later wrote the entry on Pater for the forty-fourth volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, published in 1895, but significantly never attempted an extensive biography of the writer, a task taken up by A. C. Benson in 1906 and Thomas Wright in 1907. Such a biography would have been contrary to the form of life-writing that Gosse espoused, one that valued brevity for intimate portrayal, and one

²⁰ [Unsigned], 'Literary Gossip', *Athenæum*, 3485 (11 August 1894), 196-97 (p. 196).

²¹ Arthur Waugh, 'London Letter' (dated 18 August 1894), *The Critic*, 22.654 (1 September 1894), p. 145.

²² R. M. Seiler, Preface to *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. xi.

²³ Lionel Johnson, 'The Work of Mr. Pater', *Fortnightly Review*, 56.333 (September 1894), 352-67 (p. 367).

²⁴ William Sharp, 'Some Personal Reminiscences of Walter Pater', *Atlantic Monthly*, 74.446 (December 1894), 801-14 (p. 801).

which he developed by repeatedly turning to the aesthetics of portraiture and the experience of looking at a portrait in a gallery.

Although Gosse's essay is titled a portrait, it avows in its opening paragraph to be only a 'sketch' (CK, p. 242). It does not claim to be a comprehensive or complete portrait, in part because biographical information about Pater's life was lacking. According to Gosse, Pater 'had never tempted the interviewer', he 'had never chatted to the press about himself', and he left few letters or diaries by which he might be 'illustrated' (CK, pp. 241, 271). Nonetheless, with the 'help of surviving members of [Pater's] family', Gosse attempted to construct a picture of Pater, and the portrait he presents is select, but vivid in its detail (CK, p. 242). Gosse provides 'external facts' as a chronology of Pater's life: Pater's (supposed) Dutch heritage, his education and work in Oxford, up until his death in the house he shared with his sisters (CK, p. 271). The 'external' portrait of Pater is at times visually striking. Gosse places the reader as an acquaintance of Pater's and introduces the author through the text: 'Vast is the change when we meet Walter Pater next' (CK, 250). Gosse recalls how, in May 1869, Pater 'flashed forth' at the Royal Academy in 'a new top hat and a silk tie of brilliant apple-green' (CK, p. 253). Gosse also provides insight into Pater's process of writing using small squares of paper 'like the pieces of a puzzle' (CK, p. 263) – though, while Pater was a laborious editor of his work, this anecdote may lack truth and merely be a playful idiosyncrasy exaggerated by Pater's early biographers.²⁵ While Gosse provides new access to Pater, the reliability of the result remains troubled, providing an alternative explanation for the essay's sketch-like quality. Gosse promises only 'to present the facts of the uneventful career of the author [...] with some regard to continuity and truth' (CK, p. 242).

²⁵ The anecdote is repeated by Wright in *The Life of Walter Pater*, ii, 135.

On the one hand, Gosse's portrait-sketch purports to reveal vivid details about Pater's life and work. On the other, it actively preserves a sense of distance between the 'real' Pater and his readers. Gosse's wish to maintain distance might have been motivated by a desire to protect Pater's legacy from scandal about his sexuality. Laurel Brake observes that withholding information was a common strategy for writers of obituaries in the 1890s, wanting to carefully craft the posthumous reputations of aesthetes.²⁶ It was driven by a fear legitimised by the trial of Oscar Wilde in 1895. In Brake's words, Gosse held a position that enabled him to serve as 'a gatekeeper in the dissemination of Pater's life', and, within the climate of biographical silencing, Gosse's sketch offered 'the fullest portrait of Pater we have by a contemporary, one which depicted Pater's mask [...] while insisting there was a different, lucid personage "behind" it'.²⁷ While Brake uses the term 'portrait' loosely, the suggestion that there are two faces held in balance by Gosse's pen is illuminating when it comes to his broader aims as a biographer. As a portrait-sketch, Gosse's essay does what it can to create a sense of intimacy at the same time as it preserves Pater's public mask, and in large part it succeeds in striking an effective balance. Gosse's portrait memorialises a man whose very identity was tied to a sense of mystery. It presents the writer whose work 'will be remembered' and the man whose character must remain 'shadowy' (CK, p. 271).

²⁶ See Laurel Brake, 'The Death of Heroes: Biography, Obits and the Discourse of the Press, 1890-1900', in *Life Writing and Victorian Culture*, ed. David Amigoni (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 165-93. See also Brake's chapter 'The DNB and the DNB "Walter Pater"', in *Subjugated Knowledges: Journalism, Gender and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 169-87, in which Brake highlights the censorship of Pater's homosexuality evident in the revision that took place between Gosse's 1894 essay published in *The Contemporary Review* and his 1895 DNB entry on Pater.

²⁷ Brake, 'The Death of Heroes', p. 173. Gosse's relationship with Pater needs to be qualified. Lawrence Evans notes that 'Pater seems to have been less intimate with Gosse than with younger men like Lionel Johnson, Sharp, and Symons, but the duration and steadiness of the friendship was exceeded only by Pater's friendship with Shadwell' (Charles L. Shadwell was Pater's literary executor). See the introduction to *Letters of Walter Pater*, ed. Lawrence Evans (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), xxxv. Laurel Brake similarly cautions that Gosse's presence in Pater's life can be exaggerated because of the lack of other biographical information on Pater: 'Gosse is not the one among Pater's friends whom students of Pater, and perhaps even Pater himself, would have chosen as a biographer; nevertheless, he remains the only one who knew Pater at all well to have written a sustained biography.' See *Subjugated Knowledges*, p. 183.

Gosse promised ‘to give the facts of the uneventful career of the author [...] with some regard to continuity and truth’. If only limited facts are given about Pater’s uneventful life (or a life wanting to appear uneventful), at what point is the regard for continuity and truth put aside? The answer lies more with Gosse as the artist of the sketch, than with Pater as its subject. Alison Byerly defines the seemingly ‘effortless art’ of the literary sketch by drawing on its equivalent in visual art. It is, she states,

a rapidly drawn picture that sacrifices aesthetic finish for a sense of spontaneity. [...] the artist *could* draw a detailed portrait if he wished, but chooses to give a rapid impression of certain elements of the scene rather than elaborate them into a complete picture.²⁸

While Byerly focusses on early nineteenth-century fiction by Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray, her use of the word ‘portrait’ invites Gosse’s biographical portrait-sketches to be measured against her definition. Biography, unlike fiction, is tied to the faithful representation of a living subject – though the strength of this tie is debatable. Byerly’s emphasis on the creative act of the artist has resonance for the biographer and helps to illuminate Gosse’s biographical practice. Gosse may have chosen to present an incomplete picture of Pater in order to avoid scandalous speculation, but it was also an aesthetic choice. The impression of spontaneity and effortlessness evoked by a sketch suggests an intimate and authentic picture. Gosse hoped that his portraits would ‘possess the interest which attaches to even a rude pencil-sketch of a famous person, drawn faithfully from the life’.²⁹

Gosse’s aim for biography to be a faithful drawing from life recalls the significance of authenticity for the National Portrait Gallery collection, but with a vital difference: Gosse achieved authenticity through the greater sense of intimacy that was

²⁸ Alison Byerly, ‘Effortless Art: The Sketch in Nineteenth-Century Painting and Literature’, *Criticism: A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts*, 41.3 (Summer 1999), 349-64 (p. 349). For an in-depth study of the literary sketch, see Amanpal Garcha, *From Sketch to Novel: The Development of Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

²⁹ Gosse, Preface (September 1912) to *Portraits and Sketches* (London: William Heinemann, 1912), p. vii.

provided by the sketch. Moreover, it was a sketch that showed the marks of *his* pen. While the ideals of the National Portrait Gallery made the artist's brush almost invisible (the canvas was to be so authentic that it was imagined to be a mirror), the authenticity of Gosse's portraits relied directly upon his authorship. In his preface to *Portraits and Sketches* (1912), Gosse argued that if his portraits could be faulted it was not because they were 'second-hand'.³⁰ 'Whether they are the result of a few flashing glimpses, or of the patient scrutiny of many years', he remarked, 'in either case they are my own'.

'Walter Pater: A Portrait' is an idiosyncratic sketch that reveals as much about Gosse's biographical practice as it does about Pater's life. In the nineteenth century, obituary essays were often titled simply with the name of the deceased. Besides Gosse's commemorative essay for Pater, the *Contemporary Review* also published in the 1890s Stopford A. Brooke's memorial essay for 'Robert Browning' and Agnes Grace Weld's essay dedicated to 'Tennyson', among others.³¹ Sometimes obituary essays were named with clear reference to their purpose, such as Scott Holland's piece titled 'H. P. Liddon: In Memoriam', commemorating the Oxford theologian.³² For Gosse, however, writing a biographical essay was an act of portraiture. For the *Contemporary Review*, he also 'sketched' the portraits of Lord de Tabley (John Warren) and Coventry Patmore, published in 1896 and 1897 respectively. Gosse seemingly had a fascination with the phantom lives of literary men who, for whatever reason, retreated from the public eye. He pictured Patmore as a reclusive figure of intrigue, having 'lived in a transparent shell, which slowly became impermeable to all elements except light';³³ and described Lord de

³⁰ Ibid., p. vii.

³¹ See Stopford A. Brooke, 'Robert Browning', *Contemporary Review*, 57 (January 1890), 141-52; and Agnes Grace Weld, 'Tennyson', *Contemporary Review*, 72 (November 1897), 689-96.

³² See Henry Scott Holland, 'H. P. Liddon: In Memoriam', *Contemporary Review*, 58 (October 1890), 473-80.

³³ Gosse, 'Coventry Patmore: A Portrait', *Contemporary Review*, 71 (February 1897), 184-204 (p. 190). The essay was not reprinted in *Critical Kit-Kats* (1896) or *Portraits and Sketches* (1912).

Tabley as ‘the strangest and most shadowy of men’.³⁴ For each, Gosse modestly aimed to give ‘the meagre outline of a life, whose adventures were almost wholly those of the soul’.³⁵

Two years after Gosse’s portrait of Pater appeared in the *Contemporary Review*, it was reprinted in *Critical Kit-Kats* (1896) alongside the essay on Lord de Tabley, as well as pieces on Edward Fitzgerald, Robert Louis Stevenson, Walt Whitman, Christina Rossetti, and others. The pictures that hang in Gosse’s literary gallery deserve greater study to illuminate how his biographical practice interacted not only with the sketch, but also with eighteenth-century portrait painting and nineteenth-century photography. At the centre of the resulting network of visual allusion, *Critical Kit-Kats* holds a significant position in the interaction between visual portraiture and biography at the end of the century, and in the development of modern biography more broadly.

*Miniaturising Biography:
Gosse’s ‘Little Gallery of Contemporary Kit-Kats, Modest in Proportion’*

Gosse’s genre of portrait-biography was firmly established when he created a gallery in book form. While not all the biographical essays in *Critical Kit-Kats* have the subtitle, ‘a portrait’ – the essay on Robert Louis Stevenson is headed ‘personal memories’ – the inconsistency does not detract from the visual identity of the collection. Gosse made the metaphor of the portrait concrete when he turned to the specific eighteenth-century tradition of the kit-cat as an analogy for his literary portrait gallery:

For the low comfortable rooms where people dined in the last century, there was invented the shorter and still less obtrusive picture called a Kit-Kat, and some of our most skilled painters have delighted in this modest form of portraiture, which

³⁴ Gosse, ‘Lord de Tabley: A Portrait’, *Contemporary Review*, 69 (January 1896), 84-99 (p. 85). The essay was reprinted in *Critical Kit-Kats* (1896).

³⁵ Gosse, ‘Lord de Tabley: A Portrait’, p. 87.

emphasises the head, yet does not quite exclude the hand of the sitter. I have ventured to borrow from the graphic art this title for my little volume, since these are condensed portraits, each less than half-length, and each accommodated to suit limited leisure and crowded space. (*CK*, p. ix)

In the early eighteenth century, Sir Godfrey Kneller painted the portraits of his fellow members of the Kit-Cat Club, comprised of Whig politicians and their supporters. One of his finest was the portrait of Sir John Vanbrugh (c. 1705), in which the dramatist and architect is shown holding a compass as a means of identification (fig. 2.1). The uniformity of Kneller's head-and-hand format maintained the equality of the group, while the inclusion of the hand with the head simultaneously allowed the individuality of each sitter to be expressed across a range of unique gestures. 'Kit-cat' (or 'kit-kat') subsequently became a term that persisted into the nineteenth century to denote a particular size and format of portraiture.³⁶ It was used, for example, by Mary Elizabeth Braddon to identify a portrait hanging above a 'high, narrow chimneypiece' in her little-known novel, *A Strange World* (1875), before Gosse took it up as a model for his biographical volume at the end of the century.³⁷

Gosse was more familiar with the graphic arts than his critics tend to acknowledge. His interest in art grew towards the end of the century as his circle of acquaintances came to include writers, painters, and sculptors. He is repeatedly cited for his series of four essays published in the *Art-Journal* in 1894 on 'New Sculpture', a term he coined to describe the work of an emerging generation of sculptors, including Hamo

³⁶ For a history of portrait sizes and conventions, see Jacob Simon, "'Three-quarters, Kit-Cats and Half-Lengths': British Portrait Painters and Their Canvas Sizes, 1625-1850" (April 2013): <<http://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/artists-their-materials-and-suppliers/three-quarters-kit-cats-and-half-lengths-british-portrait-painters-and-their-canvas-sizes-1625-1850.php>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

³⁷ 'The High, narrow chimney-piece was in an angle of the room, and above this hung the portrait of George Penwyn. It was a kit-kat picture of a lad in undress uniform [...]' M. E. Braddon, *A Strange World: A Novel*, 3 vols (London: John Maxwell & Co., 1875), ii, 3-4. See "Kit-cat, n.2.", *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, June 2017): <<http://www.oed.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

Thornycroft and Frederic Leighton, who sought to model the vitality of human form.³⁸ Yet Gosse is rarely recognised for his critical writing on the art of painting. At the end of the century Gosse was also working on an annotated catalogue of *British Portrait Painters and Engravers of the Eighteenth Century* (published in 1905). He wrote the introductory essay and biographical notes for this series of fine-art engravings, which included the kit-cat portrait of the engraver himself, John Smith (fig. 2.2). Unsurprisingly, Joshua Reynolds dominates the study for his significant contribution to portrait painting in the eighteenth century and after, but Gosse makes a point to emphasise that '[n]o other painter has awakened so much literary enthusiasm in England as Kneller called forth'.³⁹ Even when writing as an art historian, literary effect was on Gosse's mind. His broader knowledge of eighteenth-century portraiture informed his choices as a biographer, specifically his literary gallery published less than a decade earlier, but he adapted the idea of the kit-cat for his own purposes and for his modern readers.

It is unknown whether Gosse had the kit-cat in mind when writing his biographical essays, or whether he only applied the analogy when later compiling the volume. Indeed, the meaning of a kit-cat portrait relies, in large part, upon its function as part of a gallery. Kneller's kit-cat portraits were originally hung at Barns Elms in the

³⁸ Gosse's essays on 'The New Sculpture' were published in May, July, September, and October of 1894. The following year, Gosse published a second series on 'The Place of Sculpture in Daily Life', in the *Magazine of Art*. For a new edition of this latter series, including an overview of Gosse's writing on sculpture, see Martina Droth's 2016 edition with Soberscove Press.

Gosse's essays on sculpture significantly inform Angela's Dunstan's essay on 'Nineteenth-Century Sculpture and the Imprint of Authenticity', 19: *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 19 (2014), 1-22. <<http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017]. See also Jason Edwards, 'Generations of Modernism, or, A Queer Variety of Natural History: Edmund Gosse and Sculptural Modernity', *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*, 14.2 (Summer 2015), 1-21. <<http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

³⁹ Gosse, *British Portrait Painters and Engravers of the Eighteenth Century: Kneller to Reynolds*, 2 vols (London: Goupil & Co., 1906 [1905]), p. 36. The study was published in a limited edition using Japanese paper, with a duplicate series of one hundred illustrations.

residence of the Kit-Cat Club secretary, Jacob Tonson.⁴⁰ David Solkin comments on how the ‘Kit-Cat room brought into being a new kind of portrait gallery’:

instead of providing an array of likeness to support the dynastic claims of a family, this was a monument celebrating an entirely different network of social connections – of men linked not by blood, or by rank, but by their shared allegiance to certain political and cultural ideals.⁴¹

For Gosse, political ideals were of little concern compared to literary ones. The selection criteria set out in his preface to *Portraits and Sketches* also serves for *Critical Kit-Kats*:

the men discussed in the following pages had the common characteristic of devotion to literature; all were writers, and each had, in his own time and way, a serious and even a passionate conception of the responsibilities of the art of writing.⁴²

In his study of writers, Gosse was interested in ‘observing how personal character acts upon the work performed’. ‘It is less entertaining’, he argued, ‘to dwell exclusively on the verses of a poet, or exclusively on the incidents of his life, than to attempt the more complicated study of these elements in inter-relation to one another’. Gosse therefore adopted Kneller’s head-and-hand format as a metaphor for the dual representation of ‘the life illustrated by the work, the work relieved by the life’, in his endeavour to combine the traditional genres of ‘pure criticism’ and ‘pure biography’ in his condensed biographical essay (*CK*, pp. ix-x).⁴³ The ‘network of social connections’ represented by Gosse’s kit-cat gallery was also determined by the more idiosyncratic common factor of Gosse himself. Gosse’s ‘gallery’ was a newer kind of gallery to the kit-cat collection as it was more personal. It brought together individuals that he knew and with whom he believed the public would want to be more familiar. The result was a ‘little gallery of contemporary kit-kats, modest in proportion’ (*CK*, p. x).

⁴⁰ Kneller’s kit-cat portraits are now part of the permanent collection of the National Portrait Gallery, London, located in ‘Room 9: The Kit-cat Club’: <<http://www.npg.org.uk/whatson/display/room-by-room/room-9-the-kit-cat-club.php>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

⁴¹ David H. Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-century England* (London: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 37.

⁴² Gosse, Preface to *Portraits and Sketches*, p. viii.

⁴³ The combination is clearly expressed in Gosse’s ‘portrait’ not of a person, but of a text: Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850), reviewed for what it can reveal about its author.

By way of his gallery of kit-cats, Gosse aimed to ‘add something to historical knowledge and something to aesthetic appreciation’ (CK, p. x). If the historical knowledge he built upon was the life and work of leading writers, the central aesthetic he promoted was a modesty of proportion. Although there is little evidence to suggest that low ceilings directly motivated the invention of the kit-cat above artistic concerns,⁴⁴ the notion of limited space provided a useful analogy for readership preferences in the modern age. In Gosse’s words, it was a time when ‘studies multiply, and our shelves groan with books’, causing hastier ways of reading to be in high demand (CK, p. ix). Answers came in the form of the serialisation of the novel, the proliferation of periodicals, and the ‘choice specimen of penny fiction’ available from railway station book-stalls, selling cheap reproductions of texts ‘with which to beguile the short journey’.⁴⁵ Gosse’s response was to condense the multi-volume biography, common to the nineteenth century, into a compact biographical essay, using the kit-cat as a model. The expressive capacity of Gosse’s portraits was a direct result of their condensed size. An anonymous reviewer remarked: ‘Small as is the space at Mr Gosse’s disposal, he succeeds in painting a lifelike portrait, which if it be a “Kit-Cat” is certainly quite as much a work of art as a larger picture.’⁴⁶

At first glance, Gosse’s use of the kit-cat analogy may appear to be in tension with his repeated allusion to the sketch due to their varying degrees of finish. While a painting is typically the culmination of an artist’s process, a sketch can serve as a preparatory piece and is therefore associated with an unfinished pictorial quality. Yet the

⁴⁴ See Simon, ““Three-quarters, kit-cats and half-lengths”: British portrait painters and their canvas sizes, 1625-1850”.

⁴⁵ Agnes Repplier, ‘English Railway Fiction’, in *Points of View* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1891), pp. 209-39 (p. 209). Kate Flint notes that reading on the train was a signal of modernity. See ‘The Victorian Novel and its Readers’, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 17-36 (p. 24).

⁴⁶ [Unsigned], ‘A Gallery of Literary Portraits’, *Saturday Review*, 81.2111 (11 April 1896), 377-78 (p. 377).

sketch and kit-cat meet harmoniously on one point: they are partial portraits in either finish or size and, for both, less is more. Gosse's contemporary reviewers were seemingly untroubled by the multiplicity of visual metaphor. In 1896, George Moore wrote to congratulate to Gosse and drew eclectic visual comparisons in praise of the volume: 'Your portraits of Walt Witman [sic], of Lord de Tabley fill me with admiration and *envy*', he wrote, '[t]hey are like drawings by Holbein. Even the sketch of Christina Rossetti how good it is! And how it lives in its Whistlerean slightness!'⁴⁷ Whistler was known for the translucency of his paint application.⁴⁸ Critics successfully blurred Gosse's roles as a painter of portraits and as a draughtsman of sketches by highlighting the incompleteness of his style. One anonymous reviewer identified the aim of Gosse's art as being 'to paint a rapid sketch'; the result was, as described by another critic, a portrait of 'excellent brief strokes [...] as truthful as these'.⁴⁹ Gosse took from the sketch, the expressive power of brevity and from the kit-cat, the art of selection. C. H. Herford recognised the importance of 'felicitous selection' for Gosse's success as a biographer: omitting the 'inexpressive trunk, the useful but unideal nether limbs, the pedestrian feet, the whole mechanism of digestion and support, both simplifies his task as a portrayer and very often adds to the portrait-value of the work'.⁵⁰ The head-and-hand format of the kit-cat is treated literally by Herford in terms of anatomical dissection. For Gosse, portraiture became synonymous with the process of condensing.

Herford identified Gosse's writing as the result of a 'painter at work with his delicate brush', referring to his ability to create a speaking likeness through which the

⁴⁷ George Moore to Edmund Gosse, 4 July 1896. National Library Ireland, MS 2136. Quoted by Paul F. Mattheisen, in 'Gosse's Candid "Snapshots"', *Victorian Studies*, 8.4 (June 1965), 329-54 (p. 331).

⁴⁸ Arthur Symons wrote that Whistler 'gives to the eye just enough to catch in the outlines of things'. See *Studies on Modern Painters* (New York: William Edwin Rudge, 1925), p. 33. For more on Whistler's style, see chapter four of this thesis.

⁴⁹ [Unsigned], 'Critical Kit-Kats', *Athenæum*, 3579 (30 May 1896), p. 705. [Unsigned], 'Mr. Gosse's Portrait Gallery', *Speaker*, 13 (2 May 1896), 477-78 (p. 477).

⁵⁰ C. H. Herford, 'Critical Kit-Kats', *Bookman*, 10.59 (August 1896), 141-42 (p. 141).

reader could converse with the sitter as Gosse had done in life.⁵¹ Literary biography and visual portraiture have long been identified as analogous and Gosse's explicit allusion to the portrait encouraged his critics to replace his pen with the brush.⁵² Yet, in the context of Victorian biography, Gosse's brush was not so delicate. Nineteenth-century biography had typically entailed a polite, multi-volume work recounting the grand history of great men, but Gosse replaced these heavy volumes with the condensed biographical essay.

'One of the crying faults of modern "lives"', Gosse argued,

is their unwieldy length, and it is not beyond our power to perceive the cause of this intemperate bigness. Until you examine these huge books, you will hardly credit the carelessness with which some of them are put together. The material, which ought to be weighed and winnowed, passed through the mesh and fluttered on the sieve, until nothing but the purest flour is found to remain, is, as a concession to the breathless haste, flung together in a rough heap, without selection, without arrangement.⁵³

The values of selection and arrangement were tied to a need for judgement on the author's part. Along these lines, Gosse also challenged the Victorian biographer's obligation of discretion, arguing that he 'should start determined to reveal as much as possible, to drag his coy and retreating subject as far as can be done into the open light of day'.⁵⁴ Gosse allowed Pater to remain partly in shadow, but, with these words, Gosse anticipated modern life-writing that called for the biographer to take a more active role in the construction of the biographical text.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 142.

⁵² On the long-standing, but complex affinity between portraiture and biography, see Shearer West, *Portraiture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 50-52. For a study of the historical interrelation of biography and visual portraiture, see Richard Wendorf, *The Elements of Life: Biography and Portrait-Painting in Stuart and Victorian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

⁵³ Gosse, 'The Pitfalls of Biography, A Lecture by Sir Edmund Gosse, C. B.' (unpublished essay), p. 10. Special Collections, Leeds University Library. MS. BC 19c Gosse, D 1.58. A bound typescript draft of a lecture (33 pp.), with handwritten MS corrections and annotations. Some material from the lecture was later incorporated into Gosse's various published essays on biography.

⁵⁴ Gosse, 'The Ethics of Biography', *Cosmopolitan*, 35.3 (July 1903), 317-23 (p. 317). Gosse goes on to argue that the biographer must 'weigh in the balance the sensitiveness of legitimate self-respect of survivors against what is due to art and truth in the treatment of his subject' (p. 322).

Gosse's proposals for the direction of life-writing anticipated the work of Lytton Strachey, who similarly positioned his volume of essays, *Eminent Victorians* (1918), as a response to dense nineteenth-century biography:

Those two fat volumes, with which it is our custom to commemorate the dead – who does not know them, with their ill-digested masses of material, their slipshod style, their tone of tedious panegyric, their lamentable lack of selection, of detachment, of design?⁵⁵

Gosse's method of selection, to give the facts 'with some regard to continuity and truth', was echoed in Strachey's declaration 'to examine and elucidate certain fragments of the truth which took my fancy'.⁵⁶ Looking back from her essay 'The Art of Biography' (1939), Virginia Woolf identified Gosse and Strachey as key players in the revitalisation of biography at the end of the century: the biographer gained more freedom and could now 'hint that there were scars and furrows on the dead man's face'.⁵⁷ While not all Victorian life writing took the form of monolithic effigies of the dead, Gosse's portraits played an important role in the development of modern biography.⁵⁸ After lamenting that 'we in England bury our dead under the monstrous catafalque of two volumes',⁵⁹ Gosse breathed new life into nineteenth-century biography through his 'little gallery of contemporary Kit-kats' (CK, p. x).

Gosse's use of an eighteenth-century mode of portraiture to anticipate modern biography may seem ironic, but the kit-cat, defined by its modesty of proportion, served as a fitting emblem of something new at a time when biographers were searching for a way to adjust the proportions of life writing for the modern reader. In the late nineteenth

⁵⁵ Lytton Strachey, Preface to *Eminent Victorians*, ed. John Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 6.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Virginia Woolf, 'The Art of Biography', in *Selected Essays*, ed. David Bradshaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 116-23 (p. 117). The essay was originally published in the *Atlantic Monthly* 163.4 (April 1939), 506-10.

⁵⁸ The homogenous view of Victorian biography as multi-volume effigies has rightfully been challenged by critics to reveal the greater variation and subtlety of the genre. See Hermione Lee, *Biography: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 73; and Laura Marcus, pp. 92-93.

⁵⁹ Gosse, 'The Custom of Biography', *Anglo-Saxon Review*, 8 (March 1901), 195-208 (p. 195).

and early twentieth centuries, brevity was becoming increasingly important in challenge to what Gosse called Victorian ‘bigness’, or the ‘big-biography habit’.⁶⁰ In 1918 Strachey called for ‘a brevity which excludes everything that is redundant and nothing that is significant’.⁶¹ Yet Gosse had already understood that ‘there is no species of writing which requires the exercise of a finer sense of proportion, of a keener appreciation of the relative value of things and men’ than the art of biography.⁶² It is no coincidence that Woolf described the ‘big-biography habit’ in terms of a visual portrait: ‘the figure is almost always above life-size in top-hat and frock-coat’.⁶³ To this caricature of the Victorian gentleman – like those seen overcrowding the walls of the Royal Academy (fig. 1.4) – the kit-cat provided an apt solution.

For a change of proportion, it was crucial that the kit-cat’s head-and-hand format not only cut the dimensions of a full-size portrait, but moreover recognise that the remaining features could suggest a complete picture of the person. The literary kit-cat functioned synecdochically through a new appreciation of little details of habit. One little detail that caught Gosse’s attention was the movement of Dante Gabriel Rossetti tilting his glass when drinking. This action might have been trivial to most, but to Gosse it was a unique ‘habitual gesture’ that could suggest a complete portrait of the Pre-Raphaelite: ‘there it is in my memory; the feverish, swarthy face turned upward in profile, and the large lips sipping down the stream of liquid’.⁶⁴ Moving away from the idea of shared affinities espoused by the kit-cat collection, Gosse sought to fulfil, in his gallery, what he considered to be the ‘aim of all portraiture’, visual and literary: to depict ‘what makes the

⁶⁰ Gosse, ‘The Custom of Biography’, p. 195.

⁶¹ Strachey, Preface to *Eminent Victorians*, p. 6.

⁶² Gosse, ‘The Custom of Biography’, p. 208.

⁶³ Woolf, ‘The New Biography’, in *Granite and Rainbow: Essays by Virginia Woolf*, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: The Hogarth Press, 1960 [1958]), pp. 149-55 (p. 151).

⁶⁴ Gosse, ‘The Ethics of Biography’, p. 317.

man different from, not like, other men'.⁶⁵ While the act of publishing his portrait studies in a single volume brought together a group of comparative literary figures, Gosse aimed to emphasise their unique qualities by drawing attention to 'such traits of character as throw light on the man's intellect and imagination'.⁶⁶ For Gosse, a moment's action and a fleeting silhouette could form a lasting and meaningful mental portrait. 'These little things [...] are my delight', Gosse reflected.⁶⁷ Evan Charteris noted that 'future students who seek "the fireside ways" of Cromer, Tennyson, Coventry Patmore and a host of others, will turn not to the official biographies but to Gosse's gallery of portraits'.⁶⁸

As a historian of eighteenth-century portraiture, Gosse identified the portrait painter as dependent upon the 'world of men and women': 'He is its mirror'.⁶⁹ Yet, as a biographer and literary portraitist writing in the late nineteenth century, he did not present a straight reflection of his subjects. Rather, he 'painted' them through a complex combination of candid honesty and idiosyncratic selection. The small details of habit that Gosse recreated for his reader could be subject to his memory and imagination. In her biography of Gosse, Ann Thwaite states that '[n]ot only did his memory betray him. He also changed things deliberately, very often to make a better story'.⁷⁰ Indeed, Mattheisen highlights the discrepancies between Gosse's published kit-cats and the personal notes he made following meetings with his subjects.⁷¹ While factual inaccuracies sometimes

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 318.

⁶⁶ Gosse, Preface to *Portraits and Sketches*, p. viii.

⁶⁷ Gosse, 'Samuel Butler', in *Aspects and Impressions* (London: Cassell and Co. Ltd, 1922), pp. 55-76 (p. 75). Reviewing Festing Jones's biography of Samuel Butler, Gosse expressed what kind of biographer (and reader of biography) he was: 'That there will be readers who do not care how many times Butler brushed his hair every day, nor on what occasion he wore "the high hat which appears in the corner of the picture in his room," I am not inclined to deny, but I am not one of them' (p. 75).

⁶⁸ Evan Charteris, *The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse* (London: William Heinemann, 1931), p. 444.

⁶⁹ Gosse, *British Portrait Painters*, p. 33.

⁷⁰ Thwaite, *Edmund Gosse: A Literary Landscape*, p. 11. Paul F. Mattheisen and Michael Millgate similarly note Gosse's problematic memory. See their introduction to *Transatlantic Dialogue: Selected American Correspondence of Edmund Gosse* (London: University of Texas Press, 1965), p. 4.

⁷¹ See Mattheisen, 'Gosse's Candid "Snapshots"', p. 329.

placed him at the centre of scandal and as the subject of attack in the press,⁷² imaginative colouring became a crafted element of his biographical practice. Henry James named it a ‘genius for inaccuracy’.⁷³ Evan Charteris called it ‘criticism which [...] gossips and becomes confidential’.⁷⁴ However it is termed, Gosse’s style defined him as a modern biographer. He was practising the method put forward by Woolf: biographical writing that is constructed through anecdote and which consequently shaped fact as fiction. ‘By telling us the true facts, by sifting the little from the big, and shaping the whole so that we perceive the outline,’ she commented, ‘the biographer does more to stimulate the imagination than any poet or novelist save the very greatest’.⁷⁵ For Gosse, limiting what is disclosed and creating an illuminating picture were far from mutually exclusive.

Gosse formalised his method as the *Art of Miniature Biography*. Again looking to the past for precedence, he drew upon the work of seventeenth-century historical biographer, Tallemant de Réaux, who Gosse claimed was the first to understand ‘the value of little things, *petitesses*, in the building up of a literary portrait’.⁷⁶ While the value of limited disclosure is evident across Gosse’s *oeuvre* – especially in his work that took the form of ‘Kit-Kats’, ‘Silhouettes’, and ‘Profiles’⁷⁷ – his approach had specific implications for the relationship between literary portraiture and commentary on the portrait gallery in the late nineteenth century. ‘The miniature biographer is interested in persons, but indifferent to events’, Gosse explained:

⁷² John Churton Collins attacked Gosse’s inaccuracies as a scholar in October 1886 onwards. On the attack and their relationship, see Thwaite, pp. 284–303. For more on Gosse’s literary scandals, see Hermione Lee, ‘Writing Victorian Lives and Victorian Life-Writing: Gosse’s “Father and Son” Revisited’, p. 113.

⁷³ Henry James to Robert Louis Stevenson, 18 February 1971, in *Henry James: Letters*, ed. Leon Edel, 4 vols (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1974–1984), iii, 336–38 (p. 338).

⁷⁴ Charteris, *Life and Letters*, p. 95.

⁷⁵ Woolf, ‘The Art of Biography’, p. 122.

⁷⁶ Gosse, *Tallemant de Réaux, or the Art of Miniature Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 23.

⁷⁷ See Gosse, *Silhouettes* (London: William Heinemann, 1925); and *French Profiles* (London: William Heinemann, 1905). Gosse introduced *French Profiles* as a ‘scheme of portraiture’, but his aim was not to give complete portraits, it was to take ‘snap-shots, as it were, at the authors in the course of their progress’ (p. viii). Charteris proclaimed Gosse’s position at the forefront of a ‘band of writers’ who ‘sought to please and charm by their style, to “gossip in a library,” or give the reader “Silhouettes,” “Kit-Kats” and “Profiles” rather than the body and deeper substance of their authors’. *Life and Letters*, p. 95.

He was little concerned with the dates and facts which form the exact skeleton of the written life. He had no plan on which he built his figure. [...] much more commonly he plunges at once into his story, as though afraid of forgetting the exact form of what he had heard ten minutes earlier if he should delay another ten minutes in recording it. [...] There was never a work of literature which bore upon it more plainly the stamp of conversation.⁷⁸

By eschewing the ‘exact skeleton of written life’, Gosse was rejecting the conventions Thomas Carlyle had set forward for writing a life in the National Portrait Gallery’s catalogue: ‘the dates, his birth, death, main transactions – in short, the *bones* of his history’.⁷⁹ As shown in chapter one, fictional elements permeated accounts of the gallery space in the periodical press, but the ingredients used in the public institution were restricted to historical fact. For Gosse’s miniature biography, factual accuracy became second-hand to the intimacy of anecdotal conversation. The imaginative leap that had to be performed by the mid-century visitor to the gallery had already been performed by Gosse on the page, and was therefore at the centre of the reader’s response to his biographical portraits.

In contrast to the National Portrait Gallery’s didactic aims, Gosse reflected in 1928 that his ‘object has never been to teach’.⁸⁰ When creating his gallery, he was also ambivalent to historical longevity, noting that ‘[s]ome names are here included which history may neglect altogether; here are others which we believe will become more and more luminous with the passage of years’.⁸¹ Instead, his gallery was the product of personal ‘indulgence’: his ‘love of books and of the history of their authors’.⁸² The National Portrait Gallery’s ‘pantheon’ of worthies shrunk in Gosse’s volume to a circle

⁷⁸ Gosse, *Tallemant de Réaux, or the Art of Miniature Biography*, 12, 14.

⁷⁹ Thomas Carlyle to David Laing, 3 May 1854, *The Carlyle Letters Online* [CLO], ed. Brent E. Kinser (Duke University Press, 2007-2016), vol. 29: <www.carlyleletters.org> [accessed 24 June 2017].

⁸⁰ Gosse, Preface to *Selected Essays* (London: William Heinemann, 1928), p. 7. The volume was part of *The Traveller’s Library* series, named in line with the new desire for portable reading.

⁸¹ Gosse, Preface to *Portraits and Sketches*, p. viii.

⁸² Gosse, Preface to *Selected Essays*, p. 7

of personal acquaintances – though, it must be noted, Gosse was acquainted with a lot of people – and its aim was, in Charteris’s words, ‘to please and charm’.⁸³

While Gosse’s method appears to be a long way from the National Portrait Gallery, nineteenth-century readers probably could not help but compare Gosse’s volume to the formal institution. The essential characteristic of the portrait to make character visible was prevalent, and the language used to describe it persisted. In 1854 Carlyle had supported the gallery’s establishment with the justification that a visual portrait serves as ‘a small lighted candle’ by which biographies could be read; understood in conjunction with a visual portrait, ‘the Biographic hero’ would no longer be ‘an empty impossible Phantasm or distracting aggregate of incoherent rumours’.⁸⁴ Virginia Woolf appears to echo Carlyle when she states that by the time Gosse is ‘done’, his sitter ‘is left glowing and mantling like an old picture lit up by a dozen bright candles’.⁸⁵ ‘[I]f we want to hold a candle to some dark face in the long portrait gallery of literature’, Woolf asserted, ‘there is no better illuminant than Edmund Gosse’.⁸⁶ Despite the enduring metaphor for the way in which a portrait discloses its sitter, the difference between the approaches to writing lives offered by the public institution and Gosse’s modest volume lies in a reversal of the word and image relationship. Gosse relied upon words alone to picture the sitter, and the material he used for his means of illumination was precisely the pieces of rumour that Carlyle deemed unworthy.

As noted by Ira Bruce Nadel, the late nineteenth century was increasingly fascinated with brief lives, a fascination that stemmed from John Aubrey’s late

⁸³ Charteris, *Life and Letters*, p. 95. Gosse knew so many of the nineteenth-century’s leading names that Thwaite suggests ‘it seems as if he had known everyone’. *Edmund Gosse: A Literary Landscape*, p. 10.

⁸⁴ Thomas Carlyle to David Laing, 3 May 1854, *The Carlyle Letters Online* [CLO], ed. Brent E. Kinser (Duke University Press, 2007-2016), vol. 29: <www.carlyleletters.org> [accessed 24 June 2017].

⁸⁵ Woolf, ‘Edmund Gosse’, *The Moment and Other Essays*, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: The Hogarth Press, 1947), pp. 72-78 (p. 77).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

seventeenth-century biographical collection of that title, and that resurfaced through the literary portraiture of Gosse and Strachey.⁸⁷ An affinity between the brief life and the portrait-biography was fortified by Strachey's choice to name his 1931 biographical volume, *Portraits in Miniature*.⁸⁸ Nadel presents this renewed interest in the brief, or miniature, life as a result of three trends in the late nineteenth century: the success of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, the growing interest in psychology, and the desire for comprehensibility in reading practice. Adding to Nadel's list, this chapter argues that renewed interest in the brief literary portrait was also bound to the proliferation of visual portraiture in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Clarifying Nadel's recognition of 'the new biographical designation of literary portrait or biography in miniature', I suggest that Gosse's *Critical Kit-Kats* took advantage of developments in visual portrait viewing practices in the late nineteenth century.⁸⁹

From mid-century, both the visual portrait and literary biography were becoming increasingly miniaturised with the aid of new print and photographic technology. The desire for hastier reading practices in biography was paralleled by the desire for greater access to the portraits of celebrities. Gosse's miniaturising process can therefore be more fully understood by looking to a third portrait analogue for his biographical essays beside the sketch and the kit-cat: the nineteenth-century photograph.

⁸⁷ Nadel, pp. 59-66.

⁸⁸ Strachey's first 'portrait' in the volume, depicting Sir John Harrington, opens by describing an 'old' miniature portrait painting showing 'a young man's face whimsically Elizabethan'. Yet, compared to Gosse's use of portraiture as an analogy for his volume and for his biographical practice at large, there is little reference to visual portraiture in Strachey's collection of essays. See Strachey, *Portraits in Miniature: and other essays* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1933 [1931]), p. 1. For an overview of Strachey's method of miniature portraiture, see Charles Richard Sanders, 'Lytton Strachey's Miniature Portraits', *Emory University Quarterly*, 3.4 (December 1952), 196-207.

⁸⁹ Nadel, p. 60.

*Biography as Collecting:
Gosse's Volume of 'School-Friends Long Since Vanished'*

While Gosse looked back to the eighteenth century and found a visual model for his biographical essay in the kit-cat, a reviewer for the *Speaker* interpreted Gosse's volume of literary figures in more contemporary terms: 'we shall read, perhaps more than once, and drop the book to think upon them with a curiously sad feeling, as if we had been looking at the portraits of early school-friends long since vanished.'⁹⁰ For someone reading Gosse's volume in 1896, the portraits of their school friends would have more likely taken the form of photographs than paintings. The portrait collection most familiar to Gosse's readers would have been the photograph album. Gosse himself turned to photography to express the biographer's role of immortalising illustrious figures in the modern age:

We mortal millions glide across the disk of existence at a terrible speed, and disappear [...] But there remain a few, a small and more or less brilliant minority, who, in their rapid transit, do excite observation, and these are, in one fashion or another, focused and photographed for future study.⁹¹

If, for Gosse, the biographer was a draughtsman of sketches and a painter of kit-cats, he was also a photographer.

The portrait photograph was of even smaller proportions than the kit-cat. Since a photographic image is created from the light that touched the subject's physical form, it was more faithfully taken 'from life' than the sketch. Despite its realist claims, the photograph also similarly brought together the dialectic of fact and fiction that has been observed in Gosse's literary portraiture. At the same time as photography was considered an agent of realism, it was well known to be vulnerable to manipulation.⁹² Gosse asked of

⁹⁰ [Unsigned], 'Mr. Gosse's Portrait Gallery', *Speaker*, 13 (2 May 1896), 477-78 (p. 477).

⁹¹ Gosse, 'The Ethics of Biography', p. 317.

⁹² For more on the relationship between photographic portraiture and truth, see chapter three of this thesis.

the biographer: 'Should you touch up your photograph or leave it unchanged?'⁹³ What distinguished the photographic portrait from the sketch or kit-cat in the mid- to late nineteenth century was its abundance. The portrait photograph's small size, coupled with the ease with which it could be reproduced, exchanged, and collected as part of a 'gallery', made it the quintessential condensed portrait of the nineteenth century. Rereading *Critical Kit-Kats* in terms of contemporary photography and the expanding culture of collecting updates and clarifies the sense of intimacy with which Gosse's portrait volume was read in the late nineteenth century. The new photographic technology radically enlarged and popularised the portrait gallery. It also familiarised the portrait volume more than ever before.

The distribution of photographic portraits played a significant role in the marketing of authors' personalities during the period, and the practice of collecting likenesses offered a way of knowing people alongside reading their biography. Gosse was a collector of portraits and of books. In *Gossip in a Library* (1891), he confessed to being a 'bibliophile', who kept his books 'scattered about in cases' (fig. 2.3).⁹⁴ In 1880 he had been appointed London agent for the American publishing house, Scribner's, a role which led him to frequent many book and print stalls including those at the quays in Paris (fig. 2.4).⁹⁵ Having also been a librarian for the British Museum, Gosse praised the arrival of public libraries in the nineteenth century at the same time as he celebrated the survival of the private library, which 'still flourishe[d]' at the century's end.⁹⁶ The relationship between public and private libraries was paralleled by the alternative spaces for the art gallery. Private collections of prints and photographs flourished at the end of

⁹³ Gosse, 'The Ethics of Biography', p. 317.

⁹⁴ Gosse, 'Introductory' to *Gossip in a Library* (London: Willian Heinemann, 1891), pp. 2, 3.

⁹⁵ Charteris confirmed that, for Gosse, 'By-streets and sale-rooms, the quays in Paris and all the haunts of booklovers were scenes for excited discovery and high enjoyment.' *Life and Letters*, p. 134.

⁹⁶ Gosse, 'Introductory' to *Gossip in a Library*, pp. 1-2.

the century like never before in expansion of the public institution. When Gosse described his propensity to think ‘of all the souls imprisoned in the ancient books’ that adorned his study,⁹⁷ he could have equally been writing about the pleasurable sorrow of contemplating a collection of portrait photographs, which similarly served as commemorative objects of people passed and as vessels of souls.⁹⁸

It is therefore perhaps more accurate to equate Gosse’s biographical practice not to that of a photographer, but to that of a collector. The range of portrait prints and photographs acquired by the National Portrait Gallery from Gosse’s family, following his death in 1929, suggests that he was an avid collector during the height of his biographical career.⁹⁹ The special collections at the University of Leeds also holds fifty-six miscellaneous photographs that were in Gosse’s possession at his death.¹⁰⁰ Leading faces repeated across the collections include those of Charles Darwin, John Ruskin, George Eliot, Henry James, Thomas Hardy, Aubrey Beardsley, Hamo Thornycroft, Lawrence Alma-Tadema, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, to name only a few. The National Portrait Gallery collection also features the portraits of Robert Louis Stevenson, Edward Fitzgerald, Coventry Patmore, and Algernon Charles Swinburne, for each of whom Gosse penned commemorative sketches. Seemingly absent from the collection is a

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

⁹⁸ Photography was used for posthumous portraiture, intended to ease the pain of bereavement. On the complexities of posthumous portraiture, see Audrey Linkman, ‘Taken from Life: Post-Mortem Portraiture in Britain, 1860-1910’, *History of Photography*, 30.4 (2006), 309-47.

⁹⁹ The collection acquired by the National Portrait Gallery comprises 117 portrait prints and 47 photographs, 19 of which were portraits of artists taken by David Wilkie Wynfield. The collection, mostly dating to between 1879 and 1924, was purchased by the gallery for 10 guineas, alongside several other portraits that were accepted as gifts. The prints (and photographs of pre-existing portraits) can be seen collectively as the ‘Gosse Collection’ within the NPG’s Reference Collection: <<http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/about/reference-collection/handlist>> [accessed 24 June 2017]. The other photographs (taken from life) were distributed amongst the gallery’s photographs collection and primary collection, numbering NPG x4605 to NPG x4631, plus NPG x14372; and P70-P88. I am grateful to Paul Cox, Associate Curator of the Reference Collection at the National Portrait Gallery, London, for confirming the details of this acquisition. Information received through personal correspondence (12-13 January 2016).

¹⁰⁰ The collection includes portraits dating from 1880 to 1927. Special Collections, University of Leeds. MS. BC 19c Gosse, D PHO 4.

portrait of Pater, but it is unlikely that Gosse did not see the famous photograph taken late in Pater's life by Elliott and Fry, even if he did not own a copy (fig. 2.5). This was one of only a few portraits that Pater allowed to be taken during his life, since he 'never quite like[d] photographs of [him]self'.¹⁰¹ The format and medium of the portraits in Gosse's collection was as wide ranging as the figures who comprised it. Many follow the format of the Fitzgerald portrait: an engraving of a small head and shoulder study – notably missing the hand that defined the kit-cat (fig. 2.6). Yet the collection also included three-quarter and full-size photographs. It included engravings, etchings, lithographs, original portrait prints, and photographs taken from life.

The variety of visuality comprising Gosse's collection prevents a conclusive aesthetic comparison from being made with his literary portraiture, but the fact that such a wide-ranging collection could be formed is testament to the changing conditions of the late nineteenth-century writer's access to and encounter with art. The photograph of Aubrey Beardsley in Gosse's collection illustrates an informal, eclectic collection that was common to the artist's home or studio in the late nineteenth century (fig. 2.7). Taken by Monsieur Abel in 1897, the photograph shows Beardsley reading in his room at the Hôtel Cosmopolitan (in Menton, Southern France), the room in which he later died. In addition to the Renaissance prints of figurative drawings by Mantegna affixed to the floral wallpaper, there can be seen a row of portrait photographs populating the top shelf of the bookcase. According to the National Portrait Gallery, Beardsley's mother had decorated the room with objects dear to him, including photographs of his sister.¹⁰² One

¹⁰¹ Walter Pater to Arthur Waugh, 5 July [1893?], in *Letters of Walter Pater*, pp. 142-43 (p. 142) [244].

¹⁰² See the accompanying information for NPG x4608. <<http://www.npg.org.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017]. In a letter to his sister, Beardsley described his room in the Hôtel Cosmopolitan as 'charming'; 'Mother has made it look so pretty'. See Aubrey Beardsley to Mabel Beardsley, 24 November 1897, in *The Letters of Aubrey Beardsley*, eds. Henry Maas, J. L. Duncan, and W. G. Good (London: Cassell, 1971), pp. 396-97 (p. 396). Only a few months before his death, Beardsley later reflected on having the photograph taken: 'I had myself and my room photographed a few days ago. They tell me that they came out splendidly.' See Aubrey Beardsley to Mabel Beardsley, 3 December 1897, in *The Letters of Aubrey Beardsley*, p. 400. The

can imagine Gosse and Pater working in similar environments in which books, sketches, prints, and photographs could be experienced simultaneously, and in which historic and contemporary subjects were brought into closer proximity than would have been permitted in a formal gallery. Gosse was far from unique in his practice of collecting portrait photographs in the late nineteenth century, but his practice is revealing for being commonplace. The creative network of relations embodied in his material collection is comparable to the one he developed in life, and to the one he recreated for his readers in the form of a literary gallery.

Many of the portrait photographs in Gosse's collection are official images intended for public sale, for example Elliott and Fry's cabinet card depicting Sir John Everett Millais (1895) (fig. 2.8). In contrast, other portrait photographs appear to have been taken for private audiences. The photograph of Robert Louis Stevenson, showing him and his family on the veranda of the house he built in Samoa, was taken by the local postmaster, J. Davis, c. 1891 and was more likely given directly to Gosse from Stevenson (fig. 2.9). Within the growing democratic marketplace in which portrait photographs were exchanged in the mid- to late nineteenth century, the boundary between the public and private consumption of art was blurred. The practice of collecting portraits manufactured close relationships between celebrities and the common man. Indeed, Millais's portrait would have been visible to anyone passing by the studio shop window where it was sold, and it could have been taken home by anyone willing to pay a small fee, to then be placed in a private album alongside close friends.

Aesthetically, photography had a troubled relationship with intimate portrayal. Card portraits were often staged to serve as performances of identity. Andrew Wynter

photograph was reproduced in the *Academy* (10 December 1898), illustrating a memorial essay on the author by Henry Harland.

exposed the irony of a photograph of ‘Mr. Robinson’, picturing him ‘with a heap of books within reach’.¹⁰³ Those close to Robinson, Wynter commented, would know ‘he never looked into any book but a ledger’. Yet, shifting the focus from the aesthetics of the photograph to the practice of collecting it promoted recognises that photographs could be intensely intimate objects.¹⁰⁴ Gosse referred to the kit-cat as unobtrusive and his gallery of contemporary kit-cats as little. While the portrait photograph was arguably obtrusive in its wide circulation, and the ‘galleries’ of which it was a part were often abundant, the photographic collection was certainly modest in its materiality and, for this reason, the intimate narrative it mapped was especially powerful.

Dianne Sachko Macleod observes a change in the status and aims of art collectors as the century progressed:

In contrast to the collectors of the early Victorian period, the Aesthetic movement’s arbiters of taste viewed art in terms of what it could do for them on a more personal level: it was a source of pleasure and an outlet for their poetic or amorous fantasies.¹⁰⁵

While the purpose of middle-class collectors was largely didactic, aesthetic collectors, Macleod states, wished to create personal ‘temples of art’, for example the one created in Beardsley’s hotel room. For Gosse, the collection of contemporary portrait photographs presented a ‘fantasy’ of the everyday. Gosse’s practice of collecting portrait prints mirrored what Paul F. Mattheisen and Michael Millgate have described as his ‘psychological compulsion to know as many literary figures as possible and, in the case of those still living, to be popular among them’, a compulsion that brought together his

¹⁰³ This was especially the case for the *carte de visite*. See Andrew Wynter, ‘Photographic Portraiture’, in *Subtle Brains and Lissom Fingers: Being some of the Chisel-Marks of our Industrial and Scientific Progress. And other Papers* (London: Robert Hardwicke, 1869 [1863]), pp. 297-317 (p. 299).

¹⁰⁴ For more on the affective materiality of portrait photographs, specifically *cartes de visite*, see chapter three of this thesis.

¹⁰⁵ Dianne Sachko Macleod, ‘Art Collecting and Victorian Middle-Class Taste’, *Art History*, 10.3 (September 1987), 328-50 (pp. 342-43). See also *Art and the Victorian Middle Class: Money and the Making of Cultural Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

personal life and professional career.¹⁰⁶ The practice of collecting portraits created a sense of intimacy, but one that often functioned in terms of an illusion.¹⁰⁷

Gosse and his critics repeatedly voiced the biographer's role as one of detachment – of watching people 'unobserved' – but, by comparing the acts of writing and reading biography to the collection of portraits, this chapter gestures to a more complex relation between biographer and subject.¹⁰⁸ Woolf stated that the 'author's relation to his subject' was essential for the success of modern biography and its 'diminution of size':

He is no longer the serious and sympathetic companion, toiling even slavishly in the footsteps of his hero. [...] he sees his subject spread about him. He chooses, he synthesizes; in short, he has ceased to be the chronicler and become the artist.¹⁰⁹

For the modern biographer, being unobserved also meant being selective and creative with the observations. Gosse physically and metaphorically had his subjects 'spread about him' in the form of a collection of photographs. So, too, did his reader. Gosse explicitly based his biographical essays on the portrait object and, in the late nineteenth-century climate of circulating portrait prints, the *Speaker* took him up on the analogy to equate reading the volume to an act of looking: 'looking at the portraits of early school-friends long since vanished'.¹¹⁰ Gosse's visual analogue for his literary portrait gallery

¹⁰⁶ Paul F. Mattheisen and Michael Millgate, Introduction to *Transatlantic Dialogue*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ Gosse's exchange and collection of photographs told another narrative of intimacy when those photographs depicted nude and/or homosexual men. According to Stefano Evangelista, Gosse was part of a circle of aesthetes, along with John Addington Symonds, whose correspondence included sending photographs of male nudes, sometimes pictured in the manner of art or sculpture. Evangelista reveals that Symonds frequently 'asked his close friends and correspondents to send him portraits of themselves and seemed especially keen to collect photographs of other homosexual men, as if he sought to build, through the photographic medium, a virtual gallery of like-minded men'. Symonds, Evangelista notes, sent such photographs to Gosse. See 'Aesthetic Encounters: The Erotic Visions of John Addington Symonds and Wilhelm Von Gloeden', in *Illustrations, Optics and Objects in Nineteenth-Century Literary and Visual Cultures*, eds. Luisa Calè and Patrizia Di Bello (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 87-104 (p. 92).

¹⁰⁸ Comparing his subjects to bees, Gosse wrote: 'To analyse the honey is one thing, and to dissect the bee another; but I find a special pleasure in watching him, myself, unobserved, in the act of building up and filling the cells.' Preface to *Portraits and Sketches*, p. viii. Charteris similarly commented that Gosse 'noted everything with the detachment of a scientist and recorded it with the skill of an artist'. *Life and Letters*, p. 444.

¹⁰⁹ Woolf, 'The New Biography', pp. 151-52.

¹¹⁰ [Unsigned], 'Mr. Gosse's Portrait Gallery', *Speaker*, 13 (2 May 1896), 477-78 (p. 477).

was as much, if not more, the personal photograph collection as it was the kit-cat gallery at Barns Elms. Gosse's modest literary gallery positioned celebrated figures as friends, and the experience of turning the pages of the volume made the affective response of reading biography equal to the experience of looking at a tangible collection of portraits. Gosse's literary portrait gallery was all the more affective as it did not allow the reader to converse directly with the subject; it materialised in words the photographic portrait that was more accessible, physically and imaginatively, than the (once) living individual.

The conflation of the visual and the verbal for which Gosse sought was echoed by his contemporary critics. Reviewing the volume in the press, they frequently borrowed terminology from the art critic to identify *Critical Kit-Kats* not by its title but as a 'literary gallery' or, simply, as a 'gallery of portraits'.¹¹¹ The distinction that these portraits were drawn in words did not need to be made to the late nineteenth-century reader. Gosse's *Critical Kit-Kats* followed a tradition of literary portrait collections, which also included George Gilfillan's *Gallery of Literary Portraits* (1845); *The Maclise Portrait-Gallery of "Illustrious Literary Characters" with Memoirs* by William Bates (1883); and Helen Gray Cone's and Jeannette L. Gilder's edited collection of *Pen-Portraits of Literary Women by Themselves and Others* (1887).¹¹² Like *Critical Kit-Kats*, these volumes comprised verbal 'portraits' of literary men and women from the same or previous generation, aiming to elucidate the subjects' personal lives, careers, and literary work to varying proportions. Yet, unlike Gosse's volume, illustration played an important role in *The Maclise Portrait-Gallery*, which included eighty-five sketches

¹¹¹ See [Unsigned], 'Mr. Gosse's Portrait Gallery', *Speaker*, 13 (2 May 1896), 477-78; and [Unsigned], 'A Gallery of Literary Portraits', *Saturday Review*, 81.2111 (11 April 1896), 377-78.

¹¹² Many of Gilfillan's portraits were first published in the periodical press, before the enterprise grew to produce collected volumes. A second and third gallery was published in 1850 and 1854. A selection of Gilfillan's portraits was reprinted in *A Gallery of Literary Portraits*, by George Gilfillan, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1909).

‘tinged by caricature’.¹¹³ The memoirs were, in fact, a new addition for the 1883 edition, which developed the series of portrait sketches that originally appeared with little literary accompaniment in *Fraser’s Magazine* from 1830 to 1838.¹¹⁴ The first edition of Gilfillan’s galleries similarly included reproductions of portraits in embellishment of the text. While these portrait collections created for the reader “‘long-drawn aisles’”,¹¹⁵ Gosse’s *Critical Kit-Kats* stands apart for the direct and tangible relationship it draws between the literary volume and visual portrait collection – first, the modest gallery of kit-cats and, second, the casual photograph collection. Gosse’s portrait volume achieved this tangible connection with the visual portrait collection through words alone.

The idea for Gosse’s literary gallery was first suggested by Robert Louis Stevenson in 1879: ‘See as many people as you can and make a book of them before you die. That will be a living book upon my word.’¹¹⁶ Stevenson’s choice of verb is striking. It binds the book’s sense of intimacy with the process of immediate sight. Stevenson went on to compare Gosse’s ability as a portraitist to Carlyle’s: ‘Your portraits would be milder, sweeter, more true perhaps, and perhaps not so truth-telling – if you will take my meaning.’ His meaning is partly obscured by word play, but it can be read to suggest that Gosse’s words begin to borrow from the visual image a method of representation that places greater emphasis upon the reader’s (or viewer’s) role in interpreting the portrait.

¹¹³ William Bates, Preface to *The Maclise Portrait-Gallery of “Illustrious Literary Characters” with Memoirs Biographical, Critical, Bibliographical & Anecdotal: Illustrative of the Literature of the Former Half of the Present Century*, 2 vols (London: Chatto and Windus, 1883), i, p. vii.

¹¹⁴ *The Maclise Portrait-Gallery* was a ‘reproduction, on slightly smaller scale, but with no impairment of their effect and truth, of the EIGHTY-ONE Portraits and Groups originally published in *Fraser’s Magazine* 1830-38, under the title of “A GALLERY OF ILLUSTRIOUS LITERARY CHARACTERS.”’ Bates, Preface, i, p. v. The portraits were previously collected in 1833 and 1874 publications, but the 1883 volume included extended biographical memoirs to accompany Maclise’s sketches, which had previously taken precedence.

¹¹⁵ Bates, Preface to *The Maclise Portrait-Gallery*, p. xi.

¹¹⁶ See Robert Louis Stevenson to Edmund Gosse, 16 April 1879, in *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, eds. Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew, 8 vols (London: Yale University Press, 1994-1995), ii, 313-14. The italics are my addition. Gosse wrote a commemorative essay for Stevenson after his death. See ‘Personal memories of Robert Louis Stevenson’, *Century Illustrated Magazine* (July 1895), 447-54. The essay was later reprinted in *Critical Kit-Kats* (1896).

Gosse employed rhetorical strategies, namely physiognomic grammar, which meant visual illustration was superfluous.¹¹⁷ For example, Gosse recalled for the reader Coventry Patmore's 'eyes darkling and twinkling, the Protean lips reflecting in their curves every shade of feeling that passed over the poet's mind'.¹¹⁸

Only on rare occasions did Gosse refer to an existing visual portrait of his subject. An exception was in his portrait for Patmore, but his commentary only confirms the superiority of words. Rather than referring to the photograph of Patmore that was in his personal collection, depicting an elderly man with despondent eyes (fig. 2.10), Gosse described John Singer Sargent's portrait of the poet and critic, painted in 1894 and exhibited the following year at the Academy (fig. 2.11).¹¹⁹ Yet, for Gosse, neither portrait would have offered a sufficient illustration of Patmore's character. Although Sargent's portrait 'fixed for ever upon canvas the apocalyptical old age of Coventry Patmore', like the photograph it pictures only one stage in the writer's life.¹²⁰ In his own 'portrait' of Patmore, Gosse aimed to capture how these different and discordant aspects of a person's life interact in one 'common life' and therefore made Patmore's 'face so fascinating'.¹²¹ Gosse's exposition is typical of the critical stance positioning the temporal limits of the visual portrait in contrast to the written biography. In the words of Richard Wendorf, '[b]iographical subjects rarely stand still'.¹²² To bridge the gap, Gosse combined aspects from a range of visual portrait media to develop his own genre of portrait-biography,

¹¹⁷ Many obituaries in the nineteenth century were illustrated. A notable example is the essay commemorating George Eliot, published in the *Century Illustrated Magazine* in 1881. It was accompanied by an etching by P. Rajon of W. Burton's 1865 crayon portrait of Eliot, printed as the frontispiece for that magazine issue. The issue also included a detailed provenance of the portrait. See Frederic W. H. Myers, 'George Eliot', *Century Illustrated Magazine*, 23.1 (November 1881), 57-64; and 'The Portrait of George Eliot', 47-48.

¹¹⁸ Gosse, 'Coventry Patmore: A Portrait', p. 193.

¹¹⁹ Gosse's own portrait had been painted by Sargent in 1886.

¹²⁰ Gosse, 'Coventry Patmore: A Portrait', p. 200. Sargent went on to paint subsequent portraits of Patmore. A second was painted in the same year and Patmore sat for the figure of Prophet Ezekiel in Sargent's Boston Public Library murals.

¹²¹ Gosse, 'Coventry Patmore: A Portrait', p. 201.

¹²² Wendorf, p. 13.

which was to be read as a replacement of the visual portrait. Since his essays were not illustrated, all the reader would have had to visualise was Gosse's 'portrait'.

The Contested Terrain of Pater's Imagination

In contrast to Patmore's 'twinkling' and revelatory eyes, Gosse asked of Pater: 'who could tell what was passing behind those half-shut, dark-grey eyes, that courteous and gentle mask?' (CK, p. 266). While Gosse's portraits promised intimacy, Pater seemed in part to evade Gosse's gaze:

Not easily or surely shall we divine the workings of a brain and a conscience scarcely less complex, less fantastic, less enigmatical, than the face of Mona Lisa herself. Pater, as a human being, illustrated by no letters, by no diaries, by no impulsive unburdenings of himself to associates, will grow more and more shadowy. (CK, p. 271)

Gosse suggests that, if Pater was not prone to 'impulsive unburdenings', his unconscious unburdenings may be visible in the painted faces he described and in the historical biographies of Renaissance artists that were the products of his pen. In the late nineteenth century, the portrait provided more than a suitable metaphor for autobiography. As stated by Oscar Wilde's fictional portrait painter, Basil Hallward: 'The sitter is merely the 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.'¹²³ The impulse to read Pater's work as autobiographical,¹²⁴ and to describe it using the terminology of portraiture, can be seen to rest on his aesthetic manifesto that prioritised individual subjectivity. He suggested that '[t]o see the object as in itself it really is', one must 'know one's own impression as

¹²³ Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, ed. Robert Mighall (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 9.

¹²⁴ Max Saunders distinguishes between '[r]eading something as "autobiographical"' and 'reading it as "autobiography"', arguing that a text's 'autobiographical dimension can be covert, unconscious, or implicit'. *Self-Impression*, p. 5.

it really is': 'What is this song or picture [...] to *me*?'¹²⁵ Pater aligned the act of writing with autobiographical confession when he observed of Montaigne: 'the desire of self-portraiture is, below all more superficial tendencies, the real motive in writing at all'; 'in effect, a very delicate and expressive portrait of him does put itself together for the duly meditative reader'.¹²⁶

The idea that Pater's texts could be read to unveil a self-portrait of the author has survived into recent scholarship aiming to illuminate his sexuality and psychology alongside his literary method. Gerald Monsman identifies Pater's style as essentially autobiographical and argues that, while his writing may not present the 'middle-aged don with artistic sensibilities and a love of cats', it 'inscribe[s] in virtually every position within its portraits a psychic and hidden Pater'.¹²⁷ The result is to place Pater in an entangled position within his literary portrait gallery, which becomes a complex site of interplay between biography and autobiography, portraiture, and (covert) self-portraiture.

In his biography of Pater, Dennis Donoghue criticises autobiographical readings of the author's work. It is an ironic stance for a biographer, but Donoghue aptly summarises how it has become standard practice for scholars 'to assume that the main motifs in [Pater's] writing are there because they happened to him, not because he imagined them'.¹²⁸ 'He is rarely allowed to have imagined anything, but only to have transcribed it,' Donoghue laments, 'the writing being its trace'. Kate Hext is one such scholar. In her recent study, she claims biography as essential to her critical examination of the self in Pater's work because, she argues, 'the great dramas of Pater's life were

¹²⁵ Pater, Introduction to *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, ed. Matthew Beaumont (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 3.

¹²⁶ Pater, 'Charles Lamb', in *Appreciations: With an Essay on Style* (London: Macmillan, 1889), pp. 107-26 (pp. 119-20).

¹²⁷ Gerald Monsman, *Walter Pater's Art of Autobiography* (London: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 68.

¹²⁸ Dennis Donoghue, *Walter Pater: Lover of Strange Souls* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), p. 9.

played out only in the theatre of his imagination and it is this unrecorded emotional life that vividly informed his writings'.¹²⁹ Hext's approach is similar to Gosse's when he brought together pure criticism and pure biography. Only, where Gosse combined the two to transform the genre of biography, Hext's aim is to advance literary criticism.¹³⁰ More important than the fact that autobiographical interpretations persist in Paterian criticism, however, is that Hext's justification for her use of biography hinges upon the same aspect of Pater's writing as Donoghue's rejection of it: the role of Pater's imagination. While Donoghue considers autobiographical criticism to be a denial of the author's creative method, Hext does not cast the two as mutually exclusive. Seen through the opinions of his critics, the (auto)biographical matrix of Pater's writing presents the contested terrain of his imagination.

In their approaches, Donoghue and Hext are, in fact, navigating common ground. They begin with the critical consensus that little is known about Pater's life. '[H]e seems hardly to have lived', notes Donoghue.¹³¹ This theory stems from Pater's contemporaries. While Gosse dutifully noted that Pater left few records by which he might be known after his death, Oscar Wilde asked: 'was he ever alive?'¹³² William Sharp deemed Pater to be 'one of those whom there can never be any biography away from his writings'.¹³³ The suggestion is that Pater lived only textually, leaving his critics to compensate for his muted existence by looking for evidence of his life in his writing. Where Donoghue called for caution, Hext sees an opportunity in the shadows of Pater's life – this is where

¹²⁹ Kate Hext, *Walter Pater: Individualism and Aesthetic Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 16.

¹³⁰ In an earlier essay, Hext expressed that 'Pater has not benefited from the vogue for literary biography.' See 'Recent Scholarship on Walter Pater: "Antithetical Scholar of Understanding's End"', *Literature Compass*, 5.2 (2008), 407-23 (p. 418). In her monograph, Hext aims to rejuvenate biographical readings of Pater as part of her critical method.

¹³¹ Donoghue, p. 24.

¹³² Richard Ellmann quotes Max Beerbohm's notes on Wilde ("Berg Coll MSS Wilde", The Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature, The New York Public Library). See *Oscar Wilde* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1987), p. 50.

¹³³ Sharp, 'Some Personal Reminiscences of Walter Pater', p. 811.

their approaches part ways. Recalling Henry James's observation that Pater is 'the mask without the face',¹³⁴ she upholds that '[t]he only way to glimpse behind the mask is in a sideways glance through his literary art'.¹³⁵ From their mutual starting point, Donoghue's stance can subsequently be taken to the extreme point at which Pater is completely divorced from his text, and Hext can be seen to go as far in the other direction when she suggests that the study of Pater's manuscripts can reveal the writer's 'unguarded face'.¹³⁶

Seeking a compromise between these viewpoints, this chapter reads Pater's writing for what it reveals about his method as a literary portraitist interweaving the genres of biography, short fiction, and art criticism. Focussing on Pater's novel *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), Monsman maps the tangled interplay of subject to bring Pater's autobiographical tendency together with his historical imagination:

Marius is the face Pater exhibits when his life imaginatively reconstructs itself in the second century, no less real than the face of his cultural twin in the nineteenth century. Pater's achievement required both fundamental scholarship and historical vision, a powerful and possibly unique empathy for self-projection into the bloodless shadows of the past.¹³⁷

If *Marius* is primarily autobiographical, Pater's life is not simply transcribed, but rather imaginatively reconstructed and projected onto history. What is the nature of this portrait of Pater, since it is both 'authentic' and 'covert'? One cannot but recall James's comment about Pater's mask, with the difference that Monsman sees a face underneath. Although autobiographical readings can detrimentally curtail meaning, the way in which the ensuing debate has been discussed highlights Pater's manipulation of the traditions of

¹³⁴ Henry James to Edmund Gosse, 13 December 1894, in *Henry James: Letters*, ed. Leon Edel, 4 vols (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1974-1984), iii, 492. James wrote in response to Gosse's 'vivid pages on Pater', the portrait-essay that was later included in *Critical Kit-Kats* (1896). In the letter, James echoes the sentiment of his contemporaries, suggesting that Pater's life was lived 'exclusively, with the pen (the style, the genius) and absolutely not at all with the person'.

¹³⁵ Hext, *Walter Pater*, p. 3.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17. Hext is, however, careful not to go so far as to reduce Pater's work to fragments of autobiography only.

¹³⁷ Monsman, Introduction to *Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas* (Missouri: Valancourt Books, 2008), p. xvi.

portraiture. If Pater's projection onto the past helped to mask his own life-history, it also freed him from the obligation of presenting any portrait with historical accuracy.¹³⁸

Pater's practice of literary portraiture extended across his career to include, alongside the volume *Imaginary Portraits*, his finished novel *Marius* – which Pater referred to as a 'Literary Portrait of a peculiar type of mind'¹³⁹ – the unfinished *Gaston de Latour*,¹⁴⁰ and his earlier historical biography, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873). Laurel Brake notes that the stylistic links between the three texts are 'palpable': 'in *Studies* the "real lives" were sketched imaginatively, as characters in narrative; and in the fiction, the imaginary lives are historicized and documented'.¹⁴¹ Brake's use of apostrophes reflects the difficulty of distinguishing between what is real and what is imaginary in Pater's portraits. 'Imaginary portrait' is a problematic term that has confused many critics including Oscar Wilde, who (anonymously) offered to tweak the title to the derivative of 'Imaginative Portraits'.¹⁴² Did Pater aim to give his reader an imaginary portrait of a real person, or a portrait of an imaginary figure? How does Pater's inclusion of the word 'imaginary' affect his use of the portrait as an analogy for the biographical essay? The representative likeness tying together sitter and subject that is intact in Gosse's use of the portrait analogy is thwarted in Pater's experimentation with the imaginary. While Gosse produced, in his words, portraits 'of authors whom I have

¹³⁸ Pater's representation and manipulation of history is an important subject in itself, and has been of interest to several critics. See J. B. Bullen, 'The Historiography of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*', in *Pater in the 1990s*, eds. Laurel Brake and Ian Small (Greensboro: ELT Press, 1991), pp. 155-67. Bullen argues that Pater's mode of historical discourse was highly personal: 'the evolution of the historical Renaissance as a central topic in Pater's early essays is intimately linked to a personal renaissance, and a process of self-discovery in the context of historiography' (p. 159). See also Jules Lubbock, 'Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean*: The Imaginary Portrait as Cultural History', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 46 (1983), 166-90.

¹³⁹ Pater to Violet Paget [Vernon Lee], 22 July 1883, in *Letters of Walter Pater*, pp. 78-79 (p. 79).

¹⁴⁰ Monsman has gathered and reprinted Pater's manuscripts for the unfinished romance novel, incorporating all known fragments. See *Gaston de Latour*, ed. Gerald Monsman (Greensboro: ELT Press, 1995).

¹⁴¹ Laurel Brake, *Walter Pater* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1994), p. 45. Brake sees Pater's *Imaginary Portraits* as a displacement of the autobiographical by fiction, in which Pater took refuge in the imaginary.

¹⁴² [Oscar Wilde], [unsigned review], *Pall Mall Gazette* (11 June 1887), collected in *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 162-165 (p. 163).

known more or less intimately, and have observed with curiosity and admiration',¹⁴³ Pater created imaginary portraits picturing figures from history or myth whom he had never met, but who he observed in existing works of art and whom he subsequently shaped in his imagination.

Writing to Vernon Lee while working on *Marius*, Pater expressed his 'visions of many smaller pieces of work the composition of which would actually be pleasanter to me'.¹⁴⁴ Comparable to the modest proportions of Gosse's literary kit-cats, Pater turned to short fiction for the construction of his literary portrait gallery. In 1897, a reviewer for the *Saturday Review* similarly referred to Pater's *Imaginary Portraits* as 'specimens in little of his thought and manner of working rather than elaborately planned pieces'.¹⁴⁵ While Pater's practice of imaginary portraiture reached beyond his 1887 volume, *Imaginary Portraits* offers particular insight into Pater's experimentation with visual portraiture.

This chapter takes its cue from Lene Østermark-Johansen's observation that, while the word 'imaginary' identifies Pater's portraits as items of or for the imagination, this term should not be detached from its more material meaning: 'concerning images or pictures'.¹⁴⁶ Alongside Gosse's 'little volume', Pater's 'specimens in little' offer themselves for the examination of the sympathy between art object and text, and the tension between the material and the imaginary that it encompasses. According to Lionel Johnson, 'Pater disengaged from the past what moved him most, [...] and let his

¹⁴³ Gosse, Preface to *Portraits and Sketches*, p. vii.

¹⁴⁴ Pater to Violet Paget [Vernon Lee], 22 July 1883, in *Letters of Walter Pater*, pp. 51-52 (p. 52) [78].

¹⁴⁵ [Unsigned], 'Imaginary Portraits', *Saturday Review*, 63.1652 (25 June 1887), 920-21 (p. 920).

¹⁴⁶ Østermark-Johansen notes the varying meanings of the word 'imaginary'. The word first featured in the 1899 edition of the *New English Dictionary* (as the *Oxford English Dictionary* was then titled). See 'Pater and the Painterly: Imaginary Portraits', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 56.3 (2013), 343-54 (p. 346 and note 21).

imagination brood upon it, breathe life into it'.¹⁴⁷ 'The form into which Pater shaped the report of his imagination', Johnson suggested, was 'always beautiful, and often powerful'. This chapter attests that the form into which Pater often shaped the report of his imagination was the portrait.

Pater Walking Through the Gallery

Pater first used the title 'Imaginary Portrait' in 1878 when he submitted to *Macmillan's Magazine* the manuscript for 'The Child in the House'. His letter to the magazine's editor, Mr Grove, offers insight into his intentions for the larger project. The story, he claimed,

is not, as you may perhaps fancy, the first part of a work of fiction, but is meant to be complete in itself; though the first of a series, as I hope, with some real kind of sequence in them [...] I call the M.S. a portrait, and mean readers, as they might do on seeing a portrait, to begin speculating – what came of him?¹⁴⁸

Pater expected his verbal portraits to be read with the same biographical enquiry with which a visual portrait would be observed. The fact that his imaginary enterprise is rooted in the tangible portrait object is not as counterintuitive as it may seem. Viewing a portrait in the mid- to late nineteenth-century gallery called for imaginative speculation constructed through visual and verbal means, a conflation of seeing and reading of which Pater took advantage for his fiction. As has been mentioned, Pater's imaginary portraiture interacts with biography, short fiction, and art criticism. The ways in which Pater drew upon the conventions of each literary genre should not be considered discretely.¹⁴⁹ By acknowledging that art writing on portraiture inherently interwove

¹⁴⁷ Johnson, p. 355.

¹⁴⁸ Pater to Mr Grove, 17 April 1878, in *Letters of Walter Pater*, pp. 29-30 (p. 30) [47].

¹⁴⁹ For an overview of Pater's place within each of these literary contexts, see Elisa Bizzotto, 'The Imaginary Portrait: Pater's Contribution to a Literary Genre', in *Walter Pater: Transparencies of Desire*, eds. Laurel Brake, Lesley Higgins, and Carolyn Williams (Greensboro: ELT Press, 2002), pp. 213-23.

biographical and fictional literary techniques in the mid- to late nineteenth century, this chapter can consider all three literary contexts simultaneously.¹⁵⁰

If ‘The Child in the House’ was the first in a projected series, what came of the sequence? Like Gosse’s biographical portraits, Pater’s portrait stories were published individually in the periodical press before they were bound as a collection, though that collection would only comprise a small number of the pieces that can be classed as imaginary portraits. The history of Pater’s sequence is marked by interruption.¹⁵¹ Pater likely wrote ‘An English Poet’ alongside or shortly after ‘The Child in the House’, but it was not published until almost thirty years after his death.¹⁵² The 1887 volume, *Imaginary Portraits*, contained four stories written over the course of two years from 1885: ‘A Prince of Court Painters’, ‘Sebastian van Storck’, ‘Denys l’Auxerrois’, and ‘Duke Carl of Rosenmold’. Each had previously been published in *Macmillan’s Magazine* in the late 1880s – though ‘Duke Carl of Rosenmold’ appeared in both the magazine and volume in the same month, suggesting that the book contained the original text. Ironically, these four stories did not have the heading ‘Imaginary Portrait’ when they appeared in *Macmillan’s Magazine*, while ‘The Child in the House’, the essay to first lay claim to that title, was not included in the volume. Pater claimed it ‘would need many alterations’.¹⁵³ At the same time, however, he maintained hope that the story ‘may be included in some future similar series’. Indeed, Arthur Symonds recollected Pater’s intention to publish a second volume of *Imaginary Portraits* to include ‘Emerald Uthwart’, ‘Apollo in Picardy’, Hippolytus Veiled’, and the two unfinished manuscripts,

Bizzotti ultimately locates Pater’s *Imaginary Portraits* as a sub-genre of late Victorian short fiction that influenced modernist writers.

¹⁵⁰ For an exploration of the nineteenth-century viewer’s response to the National Portrait Gallery, how it was constructed through visual and textual means, and on how nineteenth-century commentary on portraiture interwove literary genres, see chapter one of this thesis.

¹⁵¹ For a timeline of the publication of Pater’s imaginary portraits, see Østermark-Johansen’s edition.

¹⁵² ‘Imaginary Portraits 2: An English Poet, by Walter Pater’ was edited by May Ottley and published in the *Fortnightly Review*, 129 (1 April 1931), 433-48.

¹⁵³ Pater to William Sharp, 23 May 1887, in *Letters of Walter Pater*, p. 72 [107].

‘Gaudioso the Second’ and ‘Tibalt the Albigense’.¹⁵⁴ Unfortunately, it was never published and the larger enterprise of Pater’s literary portraiture remained relatively scattered. On Pater’s method of imaginary portraiture, this chapter therefore refers broadly to his short fiction gathered in Østermark-Johansen’s recent edition, but, to illuminate how Pater’s fiction would have been read in conjunction with the visual gallery in the late nineteenth century, it subsequently focusses on the 1887 volume.

By Pater’s own account, his role as an art critic directly informed his literary portraiture. He wrote to Symons in October 1890: ‘I never got to Italy after all, this summer: instead, finished a paper of Art-Notes in North Italy, by way of a prologue to an Imaginary Portrait with Brescia for background.’¹⁵⁵ The imaginary portrait of which he writes was the unfinished story, ‘Gaudioso, the Second’. ‘Art Notes in North Italy’ represents the intermediary stage in Pater’s methodology that stretched the boundaries of conventional art criticism to meet fiction, fiction that is based on an art object or that takes art as its central subject. Pater narrates the experience of touring the ‘almost cloistral streets’ of Brescia, its galleries, and churches to discover works of art such as the high altarpiece in S. Alessandro, by Girolamo Romanino (painted c. 1524). The altarpiece’s upper left panel depicts Saint Gaudioso, the namesake of Pater’s story (fig. 2.12).¹⁵⁶ For Pater, churches are galleries and galleries became sacred spaces for the study of Italian masterpieces.

In the course of his account, Pater builds a broad reference library of art works. He compares the altarpieces that can be seen in Brescia to works by the same artist that he recalls in his mind, having seen them elsewhere, at an earlier time, and that he presents to the reader with the same clarity. Through the written word, original art works

¹⁵⁴ Arthur Symons, *A Study of Walter Pater* (London: C. J. Sawyer, 1932), pp. 104-05.

¹⁵⁵ Pater to Arthur Symons, 18 October 1890, in *Letters of Walter Pater*, p. 189 [189].

¹⁵⁶ Pater, ‘Art Notes in North Italy’, *New Review*, 3.18 (November 1890), 393-403 (p. 396).

and their ‘reproductions’, works that are immediately visible and those that are remembered, are levelled in their visual potency. Through Pater’s written word, the image built in the reader’s imagination becomes as important – if not more important – than the original art work. Pater invites his reader to be a tourist not only through the streets of North Italy, but also through their imagination. He asks them to picture a mental image of the art work he describes and, moreover, to retain that imagined picture (which they may never have accurately seen) as he transports them to the next church around the street corner. The resulting process of taking an imaginative journey through a mental gallery is reminiscent of A. C. Benson’s account of Pater’s method for imaginary portraiture. According to Benson, ‘Pater gave himself up to the luxurious pleasure of evolving fantasies arising from some biographical hint, some piece of unnamed art; some type of character that he conceived’.¹⁵⁷

If Pater’s method of imaginary portraiture developed from his art criticism, his art criticism was a certain breed of art writing that already participated in the imaginary. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the role of the art critic was changing and Pater stood apart from an observed trend:

Since 1850 the literature of art has been revolutionized; criticism has become sceptical and scientific, works of art are no longer admired with the eye of faith, but are scrutinized with the magnifying-glass of inquiry; [...] intensity of emotion is no longer accepted as a substitute for exact knowledge, or fervid eloquence as an equivalent for study.¹⁵⁸

These are the words of husband and wife E. H. and E. W. Blashfield, introducing their four-volume edition of Giorgio Vasari’s *Lives of Seventy of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, published in 1897. According to the Blashfields, emotion had

¹⁵⁷ A. C. Benson, *Walter Pater* (London: Macmillan, 1906), p. 123.

¹⁵⁸ E. H. and E. W. Blashfield, Preface to *Lives of Several of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, by Giorgio Vasari, Edited and Annotated in the Light of Recent Discoveries by E. H. and E. W. Blashfield, with A. A. Hopkins, 4 vols (London: George Bell & Sons, 1897), i, pp. vi-vii. Vasari’s *Lives* was first published in 1550.

been replaced in the practice of the art critic by a manner of detective inquiry dealing in fact alone. Minute observation became of paramount importance; the camera revealed details that had previously passed unperceived; and colour pigments could be scientifically analysed. To use their words, ‘the literary expression of a transient effect produced on the spectator by a painting or a statue’ was no longer sufficient for the appreciation and study of art; art literature had passed through the age of ‘personal inspiration’.¹⁵⁹

Yet for several art writers at the end of the century, personal feeling and imagination were essential to their criticism. While their own four volumes were laden with footnotes and an extensive bibliography, the Blashfields did also confess their sympathy for another kind of art critic:

those essayists whose charm of style and sympathy with the spirit of art give them a wider public of readers than is accorded to those who are more strictly specialists; such are Walter Pater and John Addington Symonds and Vernon Lee.¹⁶⁰

At the same time as labelling Vernon Lee as no specialist, the Blashfields celebrate her essays for being ‘steeped in the very spirit’ of the Renaissance with ‘stimulating effect on the mind of her reader’.¹⁶¹ They similarly praise John Addington Symonds for his ‘sympathetic comprehension of the loveliness of Italy’, in addition to being ‘a careful student of documents’. Surprisingly, however, no description is offered of Walter Pater, who placed personal subjectivity at the centre of his definition of aesthetic criticism in his own *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, published two decades earlier. Pater was at the forefront of a class of art writers who shaped fact through feeling.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. iii.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. xii-xiii.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. xiii.

The Blashfields also advised their reader that no catalogued collection, however academically useful it may be, could replace the experience of standing in front of the original art work in its original setting. They suggested that one visit to Italy would bring a student ‘into closer sympathy with Italian art than months spent in libraries or picture galleries’.¹⁶² At the same time as they deemed the curated art encounter inferior, however, the Blashfields’ own heavily ‘curated’ edition participated in the growth of museum culture that boomed from the mid-nineteenth century. The practice of collecting prints and photographs – available in print shops, in the periodical press, and in books – offered new physical and imaginative environments in which to think about art. For Pater, the formal and informal gallery was a space for creativity. Many of his imaginary portraits appear to take their starting points from paintings he saw in a gallery or in print. Pater’s pen consequently offered another ‘curated’ experience of the art work, transforming an art object or motif into a fictional narrative.

Pater’s critics have repeatedly attempted to identify the material starting points from which his imaginary portraits may have derived. Michael Levey has suggested that the fictional portrait described in the opening pages of ‘Sebastian van Stork’ is the National Gallery’s *Portrait of a Boy aged 11*, by Jacob van Oost the Elder (1650) (fig. 2.13).¹⁶³ According to Thomas Wright, ‘Apollo in Picardy’ draws on an engraving after Domenichino owned by the British Museum.¹⁶⁴ Wright also suggests that Pater’s familiarity with the work of Antoine Watteau, on display at Dulwich Gallery, provided inspiration for ‘The Prince of Court Painters’, a story comprising diary extracts of the

¹⁶² Ibid., p. xxiii.

¹⁶³ Michael Levey, *The Case of Walter Pater* (London: Macmillan, 1978), p. 177. Levey notes the discrepancy between Pater giving Isaac van Ostade as the painter of Sebastian’s fictional portrait, and the National Gallery attributing the painting in their collection to Van Oost. See my later discussion of this portrait in relation to Pater’s text.

¹⁶⁴ Wright, ii, 94. Wright identifies the engraving as: Domenico Cunego, After *Apollo et Hyacinthus / Schola Italica Picturae* by Domenichino, 1771, acquired by the British Museum in 1856. See: <http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online> [accessed 24 June 2017]. Wright states that ‘[i]n place of Dionysus, we are presented with a re-incarnated Apollo’.

sister of an apprentice to the Rococo painter.¹⁶⁵ While doubt hangs over Wright's claims, it does not take away from his reading of Pater's verbal 'sketch' in terms of its visual counterparts.¹⁶⁶ Wright stated that Pater's text offered 'a picture as delicate and as dreamy almost as Watteau's own beautiful work'.¹⁶⁷ The results are subjective, but the critical tendency to look for visual models is suggestive of the way in which Pater's contemporaries were thinking of his fiction in conversation with existing works of art.

In her memorial essay for Pater, Vernon Lee recalled her delight in recognising the inspiration for Pater's imaginary portrait, 'Denys l'Auxerrois', in a series of carved figures decorating Auxerre Cathedral, Burgundy. In his story, Pater describes the reliefs adorning the western portals as 'very delicately carved in a fine, firm stone from Tonnerre, of which time has only browned the surface' (*IP*, p. 172). For Lee, the stone carving remained vivid despite the years that had passed, and, for her, Pater's pen only crystallised the decaying stone she had seen in person. While the detective work relating Pater's imaginary portraits to their visual models remains, at least in part, the imaginative work of his critics, Lee's revelation that Pater 'could have got his exiled Dionysus from any visible work of art' makes the late nineteenth-century reader's desire to see such connections palpable.¹⁶⁸ Despite being 'imaginary', there was a keen sense of materiality in the way in which Pater's volume was understood by its contemporary readers. As with Gosse's *Critical Kit-Kats*, reviewers borrowed imagery and terminology from the visual arts to write about Pater's method of imaginary portraiture in terms of canvas and paint.

¹⁶⁵ Dulwich Gallery's collection included Watteau's *Les Plaisirs du Bal* (c. 1715-17) and *Fête Champêtre* (c. 1722). Both were acquired by the gallery in 1811. The latter is now believed to have been painted by Jean-Baptiste Pater, Watteau's pupil on whom Pater's story is based, after its attribution to the master was questioned in 1912. See: <<http://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/explore-the-collection>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

¹⁶⁶ Hext argues that, like other biographies of Pater, Wright's suffers from lack of documentary evidence. 'Recent Scholarship on Walter Pater: "Antithetical Scholar of Understanding's End"', p. 418.

¹⁶⁷ Wright, ii, 92.

¹⁶⁸ Vernon Lee, 'Dionysus in the Euganean Hills: W. H. Pater in Memoriam', *Contemporary Review*, 120 (1 July 1921), 346-53 (p. 346).

In his review for *Time*, Symons claimed that each of Pater's stories is '[n]ot merely [...] a portrait, in the looser sense of the term, of a single soul, but it is a portrait, in the literal sense, a picture painted with a brush'.¹⁶⁹

In her recent edition of *Imaginary Portraits*, Østermark-Johansen provides the most comprehensive account of the paintings with which Pater may have been familiar when writing his portraits, ranging from Italian Renaissance altarpieces, to the work of seventeenth-century Dutch masters, to scenes by eighteenth-century Rococo painters. For example, she identifies the two portraits in 'A Prince of Court Painters' as those Pater likely saw in the Musée des Beaux Arts, Valenciennes, during a tour to northern France.¹⁷⁰ The plot detail that Jean-Baptiste Pater's portrait of Marie-Marguerite was left unfinished is likely Pater's invention – or, rather, part of his method of re-imagining history.¹⁷¹ The portraits at Valenciennes became a part of Pater's personal and diverse 'visual reference library', which he developed and recycled throughout his career.¹⁷² Observing Pater's accessibility to art in the nineteenth century, Lesley Higgins suggests that '[h]is was not the easy task of consulting a sumptuous *catalogue raisonné* and thus consuming, at his leisure, a painter's entire *oeuvre*'.¹⁷³ His access to art was dependent on what was hanging in the galleries he visited, and on what was available as uncollated reproductions. Yet because the writer's encounter with art could be 'intermittent, incomplete', Higgins argues that it was all the more memorable. Gosse recalled that Pater's 'eye absorbed so slowly, and his memory retained what he saw so completely,

¹⁶⁹ Arthur Symons, [signed review], *Time* (August 1887), vi, 157-62. Collected in *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 175-82 (p. 178). According to Symons, Pater's brush was as 'microscopic' as 'only a Meissonnier could wield' because of its refined craftsmanship. Symons refers to the nineteenth-century French painter, Jean Louis Ernest Meissonnier.

¹⁷⁰ Østermark-Johansen, *Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture*, p. 169. Monsman also identifies the portraits in Valenciennes as those Pater likely saw when visiting France. See *Pater's Portraits: Mythic Pattern in the Fiction of Walter Pater* (Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967, p. 103).

¹⁷¹ Østermark-Johansen, ed., *Imaginary Portraits*, p. 129 (note 46).

¹⁷² Østermark-Johansen, Introduction to *Imaginary Portraits*, p. 9.

¹⁷³ Lesley Higgins, 'Walter Pater: Painting the Nineteenth Century', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 50.4 (2007), 415-53 (p. 418).

that to be shown too much was almost physical pain to him, and yet he was always inflicting it on himself' (CK, p. 257).

From the physical galleries he visited to the material collections of prints he encountered, Pater always also traversed the gallery of his imagination. Even when Pater was writing his notes on what works the Blashfields' hypothetical art student should visit while in North Italy, he did so from home. The imaginative journey, because of its diversity and idiosyncrasy, could provide an understanding of the spirit of art that was as palpable as, and even more personal than, the one constructed in the physical gallery. While the Blashfields neglected to describe Pater's art writing, a brief account of his 'personal sympathy' with art was provided by Lionel Johnson.¹⁷⁴ According to Johnson, Pater was an eminent academic with an extensive knowledge of the history of art, but that was not all that constructed his art writing: Pater had to 'clothe the dry bones with flesh'.¹⁷⁵ Just as Gosse was someone for whom 'the exact skeleton of life' was not sufficient for the art of miniature biography, Pater's art criticism combined fact with a deeper emotional understanding of the spirit of art. Like Gosse, Pater was a visual collector, and he was one with a predominantly 'backward-looking eye', turned to history.¹⁷⁶

Benson claimed that 'the one artistic fault' of Pater's *Marius* was 'the introduction of alien episodes, of actual documents into the imaginary fabric; and these give the effect, so to speak, of pictures hung upon a tapestry'.¹⁷⁷ This was not the fault, rather the value of Pater's literary portraiture. Pater's continual reference to works of art, in place of descriptions of people and scenes, turns *Imaginary Portraits* into a 'tapestry'

¹⁷⁴ Johnson, p. 354.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 355.

¹⁷⁶ Benson, p. 6.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 117-18.

of allusion to existing artists and styles. In ‘Sebastian van Storck’ alone, the number of artists that are named is abundant. Many artists visit the Storck family home ‘one summer evening’, including Gerard Dow, Albert Cuyp, and Willem van de Velde (*IP*, p. 151); paintings by Philip de Koninck hang in Sebastian’s room; he and his father fancy Sebastian as like Admiral-general of Holland painted by Van de Helst; and the ‘national and vernacular beauty’ of the setting was something, Pater attests, only Dutch masters could capture (*IP*, p. 148). Yet, compared to pictures hanging on a wall, Pater’s references to art are often less concrete and more fluidly woven into the fabric of his text. Pater’s tapestry works through allusion, pointing to art works, or rather a general style of art, without presenting a visual description of the scene. The opening pages of the story, which take the eye around a frozen lake populated with skaters, is an exception. Largely, the visuality of the story remains elliptical and part of the imagination. The Storck family mansion was, Pater states, like that which ‘still survives in one of those patient architectural pieces by Jan van der Hyde’ (*IP*, p. 147); Sebastian, we are told, cared not for the ‘eerie relics of ancient woodland which survive in Hobbema’ (*IP*, p. 148). By suggesting that his scenes pre-date Dutch masterpieces, rather than drawing from existing art work, Pater removes his text from visibility towards a kind of visual reserved for the imagination. One of his literary portraits remained truly imaginary, existing only as the germ of an idea in Pater’s mind. According to Symons and Benson, Pater intended to write a story about the National Gallery’s portrait of an anonymous tailor by Giovanni Battista Moroni (c. 1565-70), but the intention was never realised on the page (fig. 2.14).¹⁷⁸

Even though *Imaginary Portraits* is not particularly visual in its descriptive manner, Pater’s late nineteenth-century readers were willing to apply the visual in their

¹⁷⁸ Symons, *A Study of Walter Pater*, p. 105. Benson, p. 123.

reading of the volume. Benson suggested that imaginary portraiture ‘was perhaps the most congenial field for a temperament like Pater’s, that was imaginative rather than creative, that needed a definite *motif* to set his imagination at work’.¹⁷⁹ Pater is continually repositioned by his critics. He is cast both as the subject of his covert self-portraits and as the portrait painter, but he is perhaps best positioned in a third role: as a writer walking through the gallery of the late nineteenth-century imagination, in which art works became malleable.

Composite Portraiture: Blurring the Contours of the Real

When Vernon Lee recognised Auxerre Cathedral from Pater’s text, she recognised art as seen in life after first reading about it on the page (when she also would have imagined it in her mind). In so doing, she gave authority to Pater’s version, and her own vision, of the existing work of art. It led her to muse on the recycling of ideas through history, relishing the beauty and strangeness of how passing years ‘will change the colours and shapes wherein we embody our imaginative emotion; as many *Pasts* coming to be created in our mind as there are successive literary generations to recreate them each to its liking’.¹⁸⁰ The layering of multiple pasts through a process of creative recycling that leaves traces evokes the process of composite photography, which was developed in the late nineteenth century by Francis Galton as part of his research into the human mind.¹⁸¹ Galton’s composite photographs arrest a ‘gallery’ of faces in one image that appears both real and unreal. The capacity for a composite to arrest and make permanent is, however,

¹⁷⁹ Benson, p. 123.

¹⁸⁰ Vernon Lee, ‘Dionysus in the Euganean Hills’, p. 347.

¹⁸¹ My ensuing discussion of Pater’s *Imaginary Portraits* in relation to Galton’s composite portraiture has been developed in light of Lene Østermark-Johansen’s lecture on ‘Walter Pater and Portraiture’, delivered as part of the Victorian Graduate Seminar, English Faculty, University of Oxford (6 March 2017). I am grateful for her enthusiasm and generosity when discussing Pater’s *Imaginary Portraits*.

complex since the photographic method keeps the processes of creation and erasure in delicate balance. When layering multiple faces to form a composite, a 'new' face is created that is both different to, but also reminiscent of, many others; the individual portraits are partly erased, but their traces remain visible as a mass of shadows whose strength and clarity depends upon the ratio of similarity and difference between the component parts. The result is a ghostly portrait. Pater's imaginary portraits were described as 'ghosts' by Symons, who suggested that Pater was not willing to 'endow' the figures 'with flesh and blood, with the breath of life'.¹⁸²

Although Pater's interest in art favoured past ages, he did not restrict his eye to a backward-looking glance. He was also well acquainted with art of the nineteenth century.¹⁸³ Whether Pater was familiar with Galton's composite photography is unknown. Nevertheless, the idea of a composite can be applied to *Imaginary Portraits* to reveal how Pater's experiments with the imaginary subverted the specificity and autonomy of portraiture with ghostly effect. Pater presents a series of protagonists, set against the backdrop of different centuries, who share the psychology of a tormented artist figure. Paul Barolsky suggests that 'Pater's historical personages' are 'protean manifestations of a single fictionalized self who, however uneventfully, lives through history'.¹⁸⁴ Martine Lambert-Charbonnier notes that the term 'Imaginary Portrait' may refer to a 'specific tradition in painting' that combined features from different centuries. 'When the artist wished to represent a historical figure whose features had remained unknown', she writes, 'he could represent his idea of what the person must have looked

¹⁸² Symons, [signed review], *Time*, collected in *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 178-79.

¹⁸³ See J. B. Bullen, 'Pater and Contemporary Visual Art', in *Victorian Aesthetic Conditions: Pater Across the Arts*, eds. Elicia Clements and Lesley J. Higgins (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 33-46; and Østermark-Johansen, 'Pater and Aestheticist "Painting"', in *Walter Pater and the Language of Sculpture*, pp. 161-212.

¹⁸⁴ Paul Barolsky, *Walter Pater's Renaissance* (London: Pennsylvania State Press, 1987), p. 26.

like, especially by using a model of his own time'.¹⁸⁵ While this has bearing for Pater's fictional experiments, the complexity of how he distilled a series of pasts to blur the contours of individuality can be better understood through the contemporary method of composite photography. Both Galton's composites and Pater's imaginary portraits favour the ideal figure over the real.

Galton first set out his method for composite photography in May 1878 in *Nature: A Weekly Illustrated Journal of Science*.¹⁸⁶ Taking a number of photographic portraits, he would place them one top of the other so that the key features of each face were aligned, 'eye in front of eye and mouth in front of mouth':

Thus I obtained a book, each page of which contained a separate portrait, and all portraits lay exactly in front of one another. [...] I fastened the book against the wall in such a way that I could turn over the pages in succession, leaving in turn each portrait flat and fully exposed.¹⁸⁷

By re-photographing each portrait, exposing them to the same sensitive plate for a reduced length of time, Galton super-imposed multiple faces into a single layered image. When experimenting with family likeness, he created a composite of all the male members of a family, a composite of all the female members, and a composite of those composites (fig. 2.15). 'The effect of composite portraiture', Galton explains,

is to bring into evidence all the traits in which there is agreement, and to leave but a ghost of a trace of individual peculiarities. There are so many traits in common in all faces that the composite picture when made from many components is far from being a blur; it has altogether the look of an ideal composition. (*Inquiries*, p. 10)

¹⁸⁵ Martine Lambert-Charbonnier, 'Poetics of Ekphrasis in Pater's Imaginary Portraits', in *Walter Pater: Transparencies of Desire*, pp. 202-12 (p. 208).

¹⁸⁶ See Francis Galton, 'Composite Portraits: Made by Combining those of Many Different Persons into a Single Resultant Figure', *Nature: A Weekly Illustrated Journal of Science* (23 May 1878), 97-100. Following a series of lectures and exhibitions of his work, his methods were also published in the *Journal of Anthropological Institute*, 8 (1879), 132-48; and in the *Journal of the Photographic Society*, 5 (24 June 1881), 140-46. The essays were reprinted in *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1883), which this chapter quotes.

¹⁸⁷ Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development*, p. 9. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text, with the abbreviation *Inquiries*.

Galton's method recalls and adapts earlier physiognomic treatises that resurfaced with great popularity for Victorian audiences. Whereas Johann Caspar Lavater, a leader in physiognomic theory, sought to disclose a person's inner, perhaps hidden, self to make visible what made them individual,¹⁸⁸ Galton added depth to a portrait by a process of averaging, combining disclosure with concealment. In Galton's words, '[a]ll that is common remains, all that is individual tends to disappear' (*Inquiries*, p. 350). As a result, the individual is overwritten to form 'the central physiognomical type of any race or group', including family members, Jews, and criminals (*Inquiries*, p. 15) (fig. 2.16). Galton's method is therefore more in line with the work of Charles Bell, who advised artists to bring out the morally-superior traits and de-emphasise those considered unworthy.¹⁸⁹ Still, the mechanics of photographic science distinguish Galton's composite portraits. Nothing is completely erased. The original sitters are present within the composite – their likenesses form its aggregate components – but they are almost erased in the creation of a face that does not exist in person: a portrait without an original.

Although Galton presented his composite portraiture as a visual representation of statistical data, his photographs are sometimes attributed an artist's touch. The composite, Galton states, will often appear 'softly drawn' (*Inquiries*, p. 342). In the case of a large number of portraits, the irregularities almost completely disappear; the composite is 'regular and idealised, but the result is dim. It is like a pencil drawing' (*Inquiries*, p. 63). Galton's use of language to describe the process also departs from science to have resonance for Pater's literary portraiture. Galton refers to his photographs

¹⁸⁸ Lavater's physiognomic treatise took the form of *Essays on Physiognomy: Designed to Promote the Knowledge and the Love of Mankind, Illustrated by more than Eight Hundred Engravings Accurately Copied, Executed by, or under the Inspection of, Thomas Holloway, Translated from the French by Henry Hunter*, 5 vols (London: John Murray, H. Hunter, and T. Holloway, 1788-99). For a discussion of Lavater in relation to nineteenth-century portraiture, see chapter one of this thesis.

¹⁸⁹ Charles Bell, *The Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression as Connected with the Fine Arts, Seventh Edition* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1883), p. 63. For a discussion of Bell in relation to nineteenth-century portraiture, see chapter one of this thesis.

as ‘typical’, ‘generic’, and ‘blended’ (*Inquiries*, p. 350). His choice of phrase strikingly overlaps with Pater’s when he writes that the photographic process ‘enables us to obtain with mechanical precision a generalised picture; one that represents no man in particular, but portrays an *imaginary figure* possessing the average features of any given group of men’ (*Inquiries*, p. 340).¹⁹⁰ Galton’s method of averaging component parts becomes an imaginary – though, crucially, not creative – process with parallels to Benson’s account of Pater’s literary portraiture. As stated by Benson, Pater’s method was imaginative, not creative, because he always worked from a piece of actuality, transforming the real into the ideal. Galton located his photographic composite in the mind of the artist when he equated it with ‘the picture that would rise before the mind’s eye of a man who had the gift of pictorial imagination’ (*Inquiries*, p. 343). ‘Our general impressions are founded upon blended memories’, and artists, he continued, ‘are of all men the most capable of producing forms that are not copies of any individual, but represent the characteristic features of classes’ (*Inquiries*, p. 349).

Pater was one such man. While Galton blurred the contours of individuality to illuminate types in contemporary society, Pater blurred the edges of history to distil a nihilistic personality. Pater’s protagonists appear to refract the other figures in his ‘gallery’ within themselves. Pater imbues Duke Carl of Rosenmold with the feeling of having lived former lives: ‘At times the fancy came that he must really belong by descent to a southern race; that a physical cause might lie beneath this strange restlessness, like the imperfect reminiscence of something that had passed in earlier life’ (*IP*, p. 201). Extending the reach of heredity across history, Pater gives him ‘fits of the gloom of other people’. Carl inherits ‘their dull passage through, and exit from, the world: the threadbare incidents of their lives’ (*IP*, p. 202). The weight of history is internalised as a mental

¹⁹⁰ The italics are my own.

attitude shared by Pater's protagonists. Sebastian van Storck similarly has an ambiguous 'inherited satiety and fatigue in his nature' that leads him to want to be forgotten by history (*IP*, p. 163). For that reason, he repeatedly denies the production of portraits of himself (besides the one by Ostade).

Eschewing the conventions of literary portraiture common to Victorian fiction, Pater pictures the (shared) mentality of his protagonists while keeping their physical appearance almost completely withheld from view. In his rejection of the individuality of portraiture, Pater's imaginary portraits perhaps most closely compare to Galton's composite portraits not of human faces, but of sculptured figures and of the profiles on Roman coins (fig. 2.16). In these cases, Galton's starting points are already idealised forms. The subsequent formation of a composite only blends the ideal contours more smoothly. In a rare example of when Pater attempts to visually describe the outline of a protagonist, he displaces the living face with a Roman coin. The protagonist's father in 'An English Poet' is repeatedly likened to a 'golden Roman coin with a clear high profile' (*IP*, p. 102). To the protagonist's mother, his face was always the idealised 'image of immortal youth' and it remained a part of her day dreams when the living face was no longer present.

When Galton used the metaphor of a book, or rather a flip-book, to describe the intermediary stage of his composite method, he gestured towards the differences between image and word and suggested how they might be overcome. Galton's photographic composite method enabled his portraits to do what other visual portraits could not without the help of the viewer: to tell a narrative over multiple frames. By flipping through the portraits as if they were the pages of a book, Galton challenged the static nature of a picture and gave the gallery movement, which was subsequently internalised

within the ghostly composite. Yet Galton's method also enabled his portraits to do what narrative could not. While a book's narrative presents events sequentially, Galton's process collapsed multiple frames into a single image that then refused to be still, its shadows unstable. Pater's gallery of portraits must be read individually and the composite they make must be formed in the reader's imagination. Nonetheless, like Galton, Pater challenged the temporality of a single visual image by working in words. Østermark-Johansen suggests that Pater's imaginary portraits 'tell us something of Pater himself in the art gallery, reluctant to accept closure and fascinated with process and movement, challenging the finality of the visual portrait as capturing the sitter at one particular moment in his life'.¹⁹¹ She locates Pater's imaginary portraits as 'sequences to the visual portrait, taking over where the painter left off, image evolving into text, as the frozen moment of portraiture is dissolved into narrative'. By forming a collection (or 'gallery') of interwoven stories, Pater was attempting to challenge the frozen nature of portraiture as an art.

The competing temporality of visual and literary portraiture was something of which Pater's contemporaries were well aware as they sought various analogies to describe his narrative technique. While visual portraiture unsurprisingly dominated the critical language used to describe *Imaginary Portraits*, it was not the only analogy introduced by Pater's early critics. A reviewer for the *Critic* challenged the static nature of a picture by turning to music. Applying one of Pater's central aesthetic theories – that 'All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music'¹⁹² – they commented that the 'mere flow' of Pater's 'words and sentences has the enchanting power of a richly musical

¹⁹¹ Østermark-Johansen, Introduction to *Imaginary Portraits*, p. 19.

¹⁹² Pater, 'The School of Giorgione', in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, p. 124.

voice'.¹⁹³ A critic writing for the *Saturday Review* was similarly concerned with the temporality of Pater's narration, but they approached it from the opposite perspective. Pater's reader 'must not consider himself as listening to a tale-teller,' they suggested, 'but as watching an artist gradually adding stroke to stroke, and producing, not so much a successive effect, as in narration, but a combined and total impression, as in drawing'.¹⁹⁴ In these terms, Pater's method is the endeavour to make the written text approach the temporal conditions of the visual, rather than the other way around. Symons similarly emphasised the success of Pater's writing as a complete composition observed at 'a certain culminating point': "'There is the portrait," he seems to say [...] there is the portrait!'"¹⁹⁵

Locating the point from which to 'view' Pater's portraits is difficult. Pater desired his reader to ask: 'What came of him?' When is the reader meant to ask this question? Do they ask it after reading the person's name in the title, before reading the story? Do they consider the question continually during reading? Or do they ask it at the end of the story, or at the end of the volume? For many of Pater's portraits, the question cannot easily be answered. 'The Child in the House' ends when the child is travelling to a new place to make his home. 'The English Poet' similarly finishes in the midst of unfolding change, when the poet is waiting for the arrival of a friend. What will happen next is left untold – but perhaps not unknown. For Sebastian, Watteau, and Denys the end is final; the culmination of the story brings their own demise. While the figures' psychology internally refract each other, the stories are also internally refracted within the collection and within themselves. The weight of history internalised by Sebastian brings together his fate with that of the story. 'The theoretic, or imaginative, desire to urge Time's

¹⁹³ [Unsigned], 'Pater's Imaginary Portraits', *Critic*, 195 (24 September 1887), p. 149. The reviewer proceeds to later celebrate Pater's 'power of word-painting'.

¹⁹⁴ [Unsigned], 'Imaginary Portraits', *Saturday Review*, 63.1652 (25 June 1887), 920-21 (pp. 920-21).

¹⁹⁵ Symons, [signed review], *Time*, collected in *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, p. 181.

creeping footsteps', Pater states, 'was felt now as the physical fatigue which leaves the book or the letter unfinished or finishes eagerly, out of hand, for mere finishing's sake, unimportant business' (*IP*, 164). Sebastian's death, inevitable with the disease of modern life, was brought forward by his accident (or suicide) saving a child. The "equation" between himself and what was not himself, an equation that Pater places at the heart of the literary portrait, was settled with the protagonist's demise (*IP*, p. 165). In 'Duke Carl of Rosenmold', the protagonist's death takes place before the start of the story, which seeks to recount the events leading to his end from a retrospective vantage point. Even when Pater does not explicitly draw the death of a figure, it is safe to assume what came of them: darkness. Carl's 'fancies of the tomb' are shared across Pater's gallery of literary portraits (*IP*, p. 203). Indeed, Pater did not ask: 'What will become of him?' His choice of phrasing suggests that everything has already passed – yet the events can remain in shadow. In 'Duke Carl of Rosenmold', Pater's text is counterbalanced by his mention of '[c]ertain old letters' that 'hinted at a different ending' (*IP*, p. 190).

Reading Pater's short fiction with his construction, 'What came of him?', sets up a retrospective glance like that which is applied to observe a historic portrait. A portrait, particularly one painted from life, makes the figure visible: it presents them, even if they are no longer living, in the image of when they were alive, how they looked at a specific moment. It may, in fact, be an aggregate image that is meant to represent the person's general character, but the portrait stands as an authority on the there and then – and the there and now. As noted by Lesley Higgins, 'making the *experience* of reading an act of bringing the past and the present into constant, however fractious, contact' was a typical gesture for Pater.¹⁹⁶ The nature of this fractious contact is suggested by Galton's composite portraiture. In the case of his composites of criminals, the move from

¹⁹⁶ Higgins, 'Walter Pater: Painting the Nineteenth Century', p. 416.

individual to type entails a reversal of temporality: ‘The special villainous irregularities in the latter have disappeared, and the common humanity that underlies them has prevailed. They represent, not the criminal, but the man who is liable to fall into crime’ (*Inquiries*, p. 343). The figure is taken out of time. The temporal frames involved in looking at a portrait and in reading Pater’s literary portraits similarly leave you caught in time: looking forward to a time that has already happened.

Composite portraiture can be understood as a process of layering, but also of collapsing or condensing. Galton acknowledged that his composite photographs ‘do not profess to give the whole story’ (*Inquiries*, p. 17). Since they are averages, they hide aspects of the originals: they tell a crafted story, one of similarity rather than difference. What stories did Gosse and Pater tell in their literary portraiture? Gosse’s method of miniature portraiture similarly relied upon a process of condensing, but to synecdochically provide a complete picture of what made the individual unique. In contrast, drawing on Galton’s composite method, Pater can be said to have exercised a method of distillation that led portraiture away from the representation of individuality into the realm of the ideal, or what Pater may have called the imaginary.

The story they also tell is one of the fractious contact between the material and the immaterial. By comparing the acts of creating and reading Gosse’s and Pater’s literary portrait galleries with the Victorian craze of collecting photographs, this chapter highlights two different identities of photography that were simultaneously at play in the mid- to late nineteenth-century consciousness: its malleable materiality and its ghostly immateriality. In his literary portrait gallery, Gosse recreated the illusion of seeing and knowing people that was offered by the reproducible photographic print in all its materiality. In contrast, Pater’s sense of intimacy with the past relied upon a ghostly

immateriality, the likes of which Galton created through his composite photographs. Matthew Beaumont characterises Pater's literary portraiture as 'a series of séances', in which Pater 'uses the almost physical encounter that he realizes – through sympathetic engagement with the artwork in all its materiality and immateriality – as the occasion for an exploration'.¹⁹⁷ Uniting the material and immaterial, Beaumont's language points to how, for both Gosse and Pater, the tangibility of portraiture provided the foundation of its appeal, whether that took the form of Gosse's fantasy of the everyday or Pater's historic imaginary. Indeed, in spite of his awareness of the art of his own time, Pater repeatedly chose to turn to the past in his critical writing and for the ingredients of his imaginary portraiture. A comparison of Pater's literary portraiture to Galton's use of ground-breaking photographic technology informs an analysis of Pater's method, but Pater's subject remained historical. Photography had risen in popularity since the mid-nineteenth century and Pater, like Gosse, likely collected photographs of his contemporaries, but he aligned his aesthetic with the painted portrait that was steeped in history.¹⁹⁸

As the portraits of individuals are superimposed by way of Galton's method to produce the portrait of a type, what is real becomes unreal. In Galton's account of the uses of composite photography, however, the question of what is real and what is unreal becomes a paradoxical situation. Galton explains that even though a composite is 'the portrait of a type and not of an individual', '[n]obody who glanced at one of them for the first time would doubt its being the likeness of a living person' (*Inquiries*, pp. 340-41). Especially if the component faces are 'not very dissimilar', Galton states, 'the blended result will always have a curious air of individuality, and will be unexpectedly well

¹⁹⁷ Matthew Beaumont, 'Pater as Psychagogue: Psychology, Aesthetics, Rhetoric', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 12 (2011), 1-15 (p. 12). <<http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

¹⁹⁸ This is confirmed by Max Saunders, who suggests that Pater collected photographs of his friends from Elliott and Fry. See *Self-Impression*, p. 65.

defined' (*Inquiries*, p. 354). The ideal therefore begins to look real as the (relative) visual clarity of a composite photograph makes the difference between an individual and a type difficult to distinguish. His language, too, begins to blend into itself with the use of a double negative. Pater's 'Denys l'Auxerrois' – unique in the volume since its narrative seems to (retrospectively) ensue directly from an object found in a bric-à-brac store – similarly suggests that the unreal can be perceived as real. 'So the figure in the stained glass explained itself' (*IP*, p. 187). Although a figure from art, the narrator sees the imaginary figure with an air of reality:

To me, Denys seemed to have been a real resident at Auxerre. On days of a certain atmosphere, when the trace of the Middle Age comes out like old marks in the stones in rainy weather, I seemed actually to have seen the tortured figure there – to have met Denys l'Auxerrois in the streets. (*IP*, p. 187)

As the imaginary comes closer to the real, the physiognomy of the protagonist is displaced onto place. The setting becomes a composite – the '[p]erfect type of that happy mean between northern earnestness and the luxury of the south' (*IP*, p. 170) – and Pater's story becomes a portrait materially etched in the 'time-worn masonry' (*IP*, p. 184). The imaginary also became real by way of the environment in which Pater's volume was read: the nineteenth-century gallery.

Returning to the Gallery: The Imaginary Made Real

Reviewing *Imaginary Portraits* in 1894, Hugo von Hofmannsthal brought Pater's volume into close contact with the visual portrait hanging on the gallery wall:

In these imaginary portraits something is brought to completion with which we all often occupy ourselves on a lesser scale and in an almost unhealthy manner; and that is, to guess from the artworks of a past age the inner life of those figures as clearly as if one could sense their physical presence. In one way or another we are

all in love with a past that has been perceived and stylised through the medium of the arts.¹⁹⁹

Hofmannsthal's unease is counterpoint to the way portraits were typically encountered in the mid-nineteenth century gallery. As Joseph Beavington Atkinson celebrated in relation to the South Kensington Portrait exhibitions in the 1860s, it was 'salutary thus to reanimate, and in imagination live amid, past times, surrounded by the men who made those times great or disastrous'.²⁰⁰ Pater invited his reader to live, in their imagination, amid figures from the past by calling upon the tangibility of portraiture. He left the physical gallery to enter a gallery of the imagination, in which the contours of the real and unreal became malleable. Yet it did not take long for Pater's *Imaginary Portraits* to return to the gallery and be quoted in gallery guides as part of the cultural history of the paintings from which the stories may have originally evolved. This appropriation heightened the imaginative and textual experience of the gallery space, and granted Pater's fiction the authority of the real.

Through the pages of Edward T. Cook's *A Popular Handbook to the National Gallery* (1888), passages from Pater's 'Sebastian van Storck' could be read within the walls of the gallery. Levey may have been familiar with the handbook when he cited the gallery's *Portrait of a Boy aged 11* (1650) in connection to Pater's story, or, at the least, he was not alone in what was evidently a common assumption. The portrait, now attributed to Jacob van Oost the Elder, was ascribed in the *Popular Handbook* to Isaac von Ostade, as suggested in Pater's story (fig. 2.13).²⁰¹ The boy is anonymous in the painting's title, but he is identified in the handbook's entry using Pater's words:

¹⁹⁹ Hugo von Hofmannsthal, 'Walter Pater', *Die Welt*, vii (November 1894), 6-7. Collected in *Walter Pater: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 290-91.

²⁰⁰ [Joseph Beavington Atkinson], 'Historic Portraits', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 100.613 (November 1866), 571-84 (p. 571). Atkinson is identified as the author of the essay by *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*: <<http://wellesley.chadwyck.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

²⁰¹ See *The National Gallery, London: Explore the Paintings*: <<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

1137. PORTRAIT OF A BOY.

Ascribed to Isaac von Ostade (Dutch: 1621-1657).

[...]

A boy of eleven – so the inscription on the right-hand corner states – Mr. Pater's Sebastian van Storck, it might be. 'With all his appreciation of the national winter, Sebastian was not altogether a Hollander. His mother, of Spanish descent and Catholic, had given a richness of tone and form to the healthy freshness of the Dutch physiognomy, apt to preserve its youthfulness of aspect far beyond the period of life usual with other peoples. This mixed expression charmed the eyes of Isaac van Ostade, who had painted his portrait at one of those skating parties, with his plume and squirrel's tail and fur muff, in all the modest pleasantness of boyhood'.²⁰²

Although the painting pre-dates Pater's text by two centuries, the *Popular Handbook* manipulates this chronology to ironically authenticate the portrait in the National Gallery using Pater's later text. By authenticating the portrait using fiction, the handbook also actualised Pater's imaginary figure. The authenticity of the portrait is strengthened by the handbook's editing of Pater's text. There is a discrepancy between the passage quoted in the handbook and the version of Pater's story that appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* and in the 1887 volume, both of which state that Ostade painted the portrait from a sketch, rather than from life. The absence of such a sketch and the question of its whereabouts would have pointed to the fictional nature of Pater's text, but instead the portrait is presented as the immediate and only visual reference, and Pater's story is granted the authority of biographical fact.

The *Popular Handbook* also quotes Pater's story in its entry for a winter scene, picturing skaters on a frozen river, a scene which Pater states pleased Ostade's eye:

963. A SKATING SCENE.

Isaac von Ostade (Dutch: 1621-1657).

²⁰² Edward T. Cook, ed., *A Popular Handbook to the National Gallery including, by Special Permission, Notes Collected from the Works of Mr. Ruskin* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1888), pp. 231-32.

A scene such as Isaac von Ostade [...] specially loved- combining ‘all the delicate poetry with all the delicate comfort of the frosty season’ – a season expressive ‘of a perfect impassivity, or at least of a perfect repose’.²⁰³

The painting is now known by the title *An Inn by a Frozen River* and is attributed to a ‘follower of Isack van Ostade’ (c. 1640s) (fig. 2.17).²⁰⁴ Ostade and his followers produced many winter scenes of this compositional template, any of which could have influenced Pater or have been compared to his text. Yet, using Pater’s words to direct the gallery visitors’ understanding and appreciation of the art work, the handbook gives authority to this painting.

Through the handbook, Pater’s imaginary portraiture was read alongside existing works of art and the two paintings in the National Gallery were viewed in conjunction with Pater’s fiction. While the skating scene was also listed in the official catalogue to the National Gallery that was available when the *Popular Handbook* was published in 1888, *Portrait of a Boy aged 11* was not included. The portrait was a recent purchase made by the gallery in 1883 and the official catalogue was not updated to include new acquisitions until 1889.²⁰⁵ The portrait was, therefore, not long on the gallery wall before Pater wrote his story. Yet more important than the question of whether Pater saw the painting and was influenced by it, is the context in which the story was experienced in its

²⁰³ Edward T. Cook, ed., *A Popular Handbook to the National Gallery including, by Special Permission, Notes Collected from the Works of Mr. Ruskin* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1888), p. 250. The quoted material has only minor revisions from Pater’s original and 1887 versions of ‘Sebastian van Storck’.

²⁰⁴ See *The National Gallery, London: Explore the Paintings*: <<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

²⁰⁵ The official catalogue was, in fact, not updated between the years 1878 and 1889. In 1878, the National Gallery’s collection totalled 1046 paintings. Notice to *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of the Pictures in The National Gallery, with Biographical Notices of the Painters*, Seventy-Third Edition (London: Printed for Her Majesty’s Stationary Office and Sold at the Gallery, 1878), p. 6. By 1889, the collection had grown to nearly 1280, which included *Portrait of a Boy aged 11*, bought in 1883. See ‘The National Gallery’, introductory material to *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of the Pictures in The National Gallery, with Biographical Notices of the Painters*, Seventy-Fourth Edition (London: Printed for Her Majesty’s Stationary Office and Sold at the Gallery, 1889), p. xi. Prefatory material (dated December 1888) for the 1889 catalogue expresses regret that an updated edition was long overdue (see p. v). Following the re-arrangement of the gallery and the opening of new rooms in 1887, a second edition of the *Popular Handbook* was published in 1889 with the addition of new paintings. No revisions were made to the entries which quote Pater.

first years of publication. For the year 1888, the *Popular Handbook* and, by extension, Pater's story stood as the greater authorities on *Portrait of a Boy aged 11* for visitors to the gallery.

The *Popular Handbook* was compiled by Cook using the writings of John Ruskin. Providing 'notes so copious, carefully chosen, and usefully arranged', it was presented by Ruskin as a 'companion through the magnificent rooms of our own National Gallery; without question now the most important collection of paintings in Europe for the purposes of the general student'.²⁰⁶ Voicing the same devotion to viewing art in its original location as expressed by the Blashfields, Ruskin stated that 'the Florentine School must always be studied in Florence, the Dutch in Holland'. Yet for the different schools to be usefully compared, he simultaneously offered this handbook as part of the unique experience of art provided by the gallery – 'thoughtful scholars of any foreign country ought now to become pilgrims to the Dome – (such as it is) – of Trafalgar Square'. Cook described the aim of his *Popular Handbook* as being 'to point out in simple words the meaning or sentiment of the pictures',²⁰⁷ an alternative purpose to the official catalogue that sought to provide the facts of a painting's history and 'assist in the formation of a correct judgement, which is the basis of a correct taste'.²⁰⁸ The *Popular Handbook* built upon the official catalogue, popularising the experience of walking through the gallery and emphasising the imaginative reading of art. It added the flesh to the bones.

Alongside the work of Ruskin, the *Popular Handbook* drew on Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, as well as his *Imaginary Portraits*. When Pater's fiction

²⁰⁶ John Ruskin, Preface to *A Popular Handbook to the National Gallery* (April 1888), p. vii.

²⁰⁷ Cook, 'Introduction by the Compiler, with History of the National Gallery', *A Popular Handbook to the National Gallery*, p. xi.

²⁰⁸ Notice to the *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of the Pictures in The National Gallery* (1878), p. 4.

was quoted as part of the gallery guide, it was granted the same authority as art criticism. In the late nineteenth century, each of these texts featured on a collapsing scale that brought art criticism and fiction into contact. In the words of Ruskin, ‘as a collection of remarks by esteemed judges, and of clearly formed opinions by earnest lovers of art,’ the *Popular Handbook* ‘possesses a metaphysical interest quite as great as its historical one’.²⁰⁹ The handbook’s quotation of Pater’s *Imaginary Portraits* brought art criticism closer to the conventions of fiction. It also brought Pater’s imaginary enterprise back into contact with the real. Pater’s *Imaginary Portraits* developed from pieces of actuality and the vehicle of the gallery catalogue, through which they were read in the late nineteenth century, brought his portraits full circle. In the gallery, the real became imaginary and the imaginary became real.

For both Gosse and Pater, the real and the imaginary relied upon each other in the construction and readership of their literary portrait galleries: the result was a tangible imaginary. They interrogated the line between materiality and immateriality as responses to the portrait, or as verbal alternatives to or replacements of the material art object. The departure from the materiality of the art object through words performs a process of *ekphrasis*. This chapter, however, has so far avoided using this (perhaps over-used) term as both Pater and Gosse were doing something in their interaction with the portrait object that breaks from the simple definition of *ekphrasis* provided by James Heffernan: ‘*the verbal representation of visual representation*’.²¹⁰ While all performances of *ekphrasis* arguably bend this definition, Pater departed so far from the art object into the imaginary that it is left as an (albeit significant) starting point. Gosse, although working in

²⁰⁹ John Ruskin, Preface to *A Popular Handbook to the National Gallery* (April 1888), p. viii.

²¹⁰ James A. W. Heffernan, *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashberry* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 3.

interaction with portrait prints in his possession, did not translate the image into words but offered his own rival portrait.

Heffernan usefully distinguishes what he calls ‘notional *ekphrasis*’, ‘the representation of an imaginary work of art’.²¹¹ Luisa Calè similarly uses the term ‘imaginary ekphrasis’ to refer to the literary technique of bringing before the readers’ eyes ‘pictures that do not exist’.²¹² The reader, ‘well-versed in the pictorial protocols of viewing’, she suggests, can be expected to visualise ‘pictures as real by activating such pictorial expectations in their reading’. Gosse and Pater’s use of the portrait by combining its tangible and imaginary aspects can be illuminated using Heffernan’s distinction of modern *ekphrasis*, which he contextualises within the walls of the gallery. The gallery, the home of the art object, was pervaded with words regulating the experience of art:

From titles we move to the curatorial notes on the museum wall, to catalogue entries, to exhibition reviews, to the explanatory notes that invariably accompany reproductions, and to the pages of art history. Synecdochically, the museum signifies all the institutions that select, circulate, reproduce, display, and explain works of visual art, all the institutions that inform and regulate our experience of it – largely by putting it into words.²¹³

Gosse recollected the kit-cat gallery and formed a private compact gallery comprising portrait prints, while Pater immersed himself in the galleries of Old Masters and moreover worked in the gallery of his imagination. They subsequently both wrote a gallery of portraits. Being unillustrated, Gosse’s and Pater’s literary portrait galleries appear self-sufficient. While art periodicals had already attempted to provide a gallery space outside the walls of the formal institution, their narration of the portrait gallery experience depended on the curatorial story told in the physical gallery through the

²¹¹ Ibid., p. 7.

²¹² Luisa Calè, ‘Belinda and Exhibition Culture: Fiction, Pictures and Imaginary Ekphrasis’, in *Strange Sisters: Literature and Aesthetics in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Francesca Orestano and Francesca Grigerio (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009), pp. 13-26 (p. 16).

²¹³ Heffernan., p. 139.

official catalogues, labels, and, of course, through the visual portraits themselves. In contrast, Gosse and Pater constructed their own gallery space. Yet it was one that still relied upon the diverse gallery imaginary that existed as part of the cultural consciousness of the late nineteenth-century viewing and reading public.



Figure 2.1 *Sir John Vanbrugh*, by Sir Godfrey Kneller, c. 1705. Oil on Canvas. 36 x 28 in. (914 x 711 mm). © National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG 3231. Given by The Art Fund, 1945.



Figure 2.2 After Sir Godfrey Kneller, *John Smith*. Mezzotint engraving by John Smith. From: *British Portrait Painters and Engravers of the Eighteenth Century: Kneller to Reynolds*, ed. Edmund Gosse, 2 vols (London: Goupil & Co., 1906 [1905]), i, 87. © British Library Board. L.R.25.b.11.

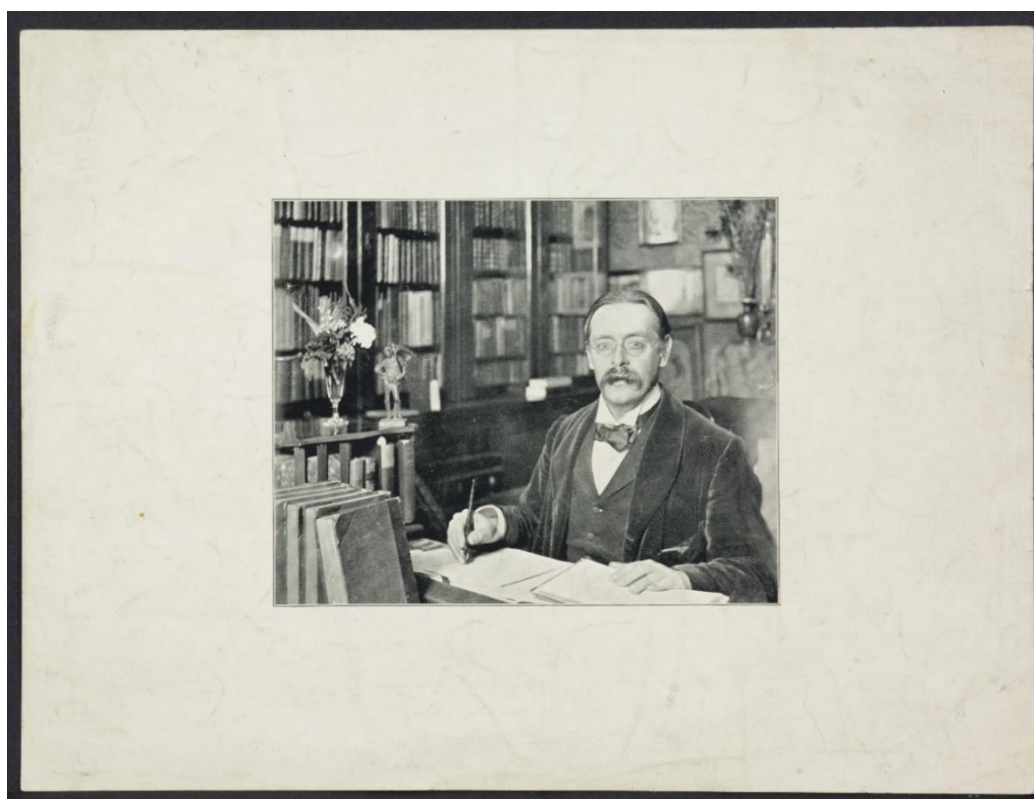


Figure 2.3 Portrait of E. W. Gosse in his library. Paper print of a photograph (photographer unknown). Reproduced with the permission of Special Collections, Leeds University Library. Bc 19c Gosse, D PHO 3 (p).



Figure 2.4 E. W. Gosse at 'Quai Voltaire, Paris'. From: 'Alsace 1921' Photograph Album. Reproduced with the permission of Special Collections, Leeds University Library. Bc 19c Gosse, D PHO 2.

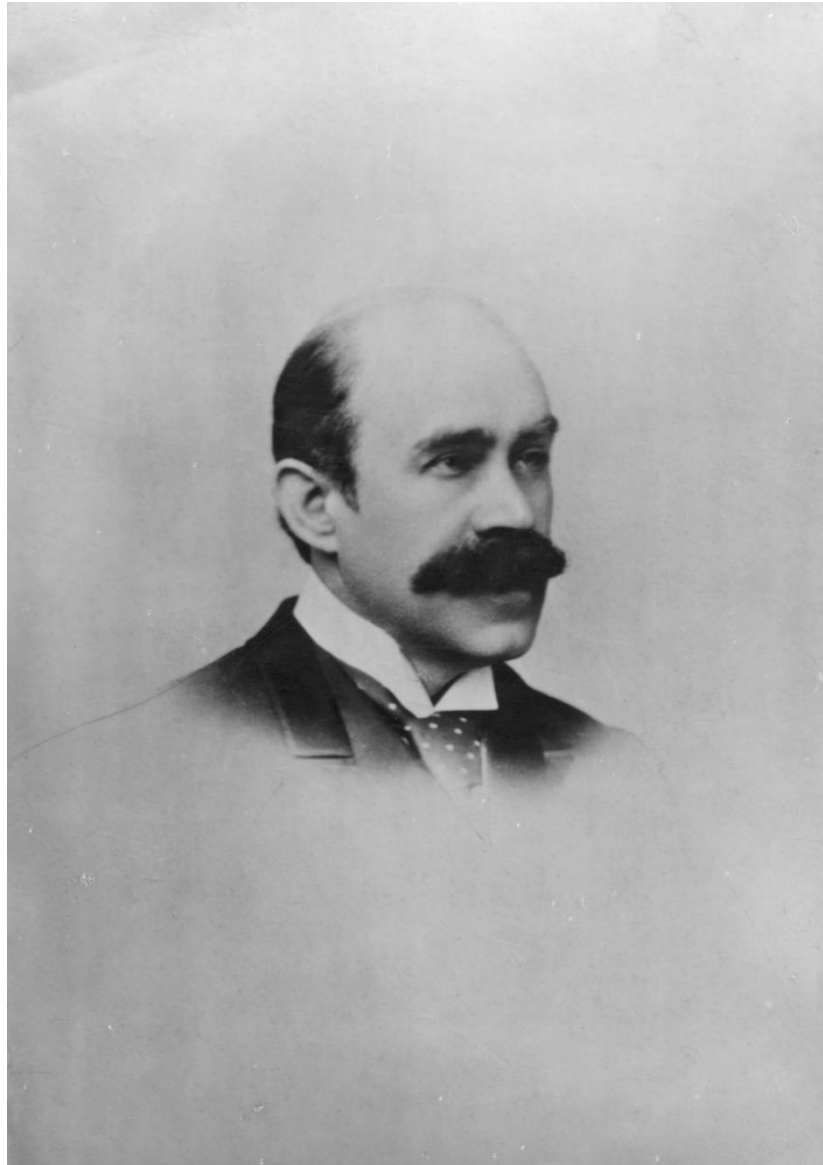


Figure 2.5 *Walter Horatio Pater*, by Elliott & Fry, 1890s. Half-plate glass copy negative.
© National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG x81864. Purchased, 1996.

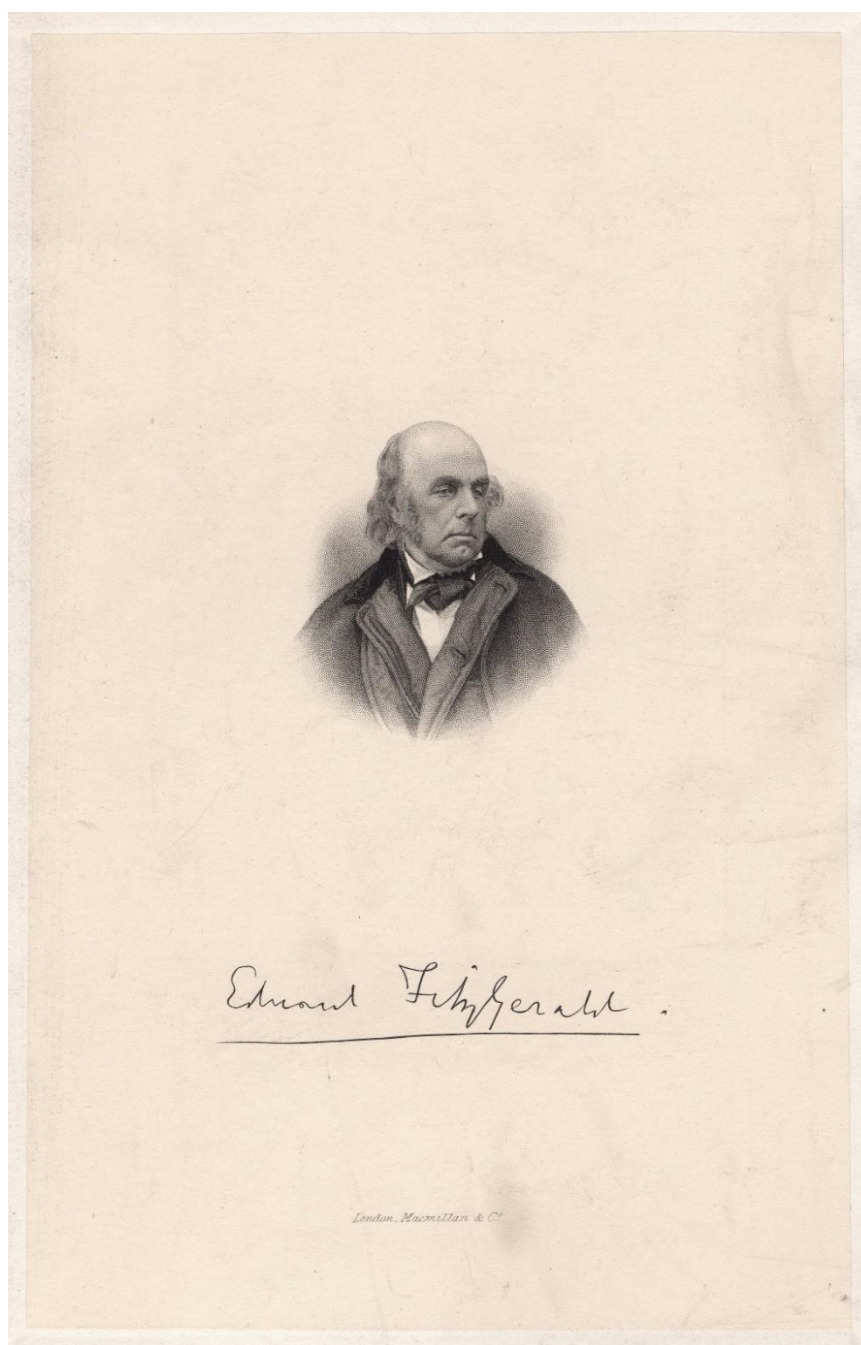


Figure 2.6 *Edward Fitzgerald*, published by Macmillan & Co., (1873). Engraving after photograph. Plate: 9 x 6 in. (228 x 153 mm). Paper: 13 ³/₈ x 11 ³/₄ in. (440 x 299 mm). © National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG D9739. Purchased, 1929.



Figure 2.7 *Aubrey Vincent Beardsley*, by Monsieur Abel, 1898. Collodion printing-out paper print. 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (231 x 288 mm). © National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG x4608. Purchased, 1929.



Figure 2.8 *John Everett Millais*, by Alfred James Philpott, for Elliott & Fry, 1894. Albumen cabinet card. 5 ³/₄ x 4 ¹/₈ in. (147 x 104 mm). © National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG x4620. Purchased, 1929.



Figure 2.9 *Robert Louis Stevenson and family*, by J. Davis, c. 1891. Albumen print. 7 1/2 x 9 1/2 in. (192 x 234 mm). © National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG x4630. Purchased, 1929.



Figure 2.10 *Coventry Kersey Deighton Patmore*, by Herbert Rose Barraud, published by Eglington & Co., published 1891. Carbon print. 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 7 in. (247 x 179 mm). © National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG x4621. Purchased, 1929.

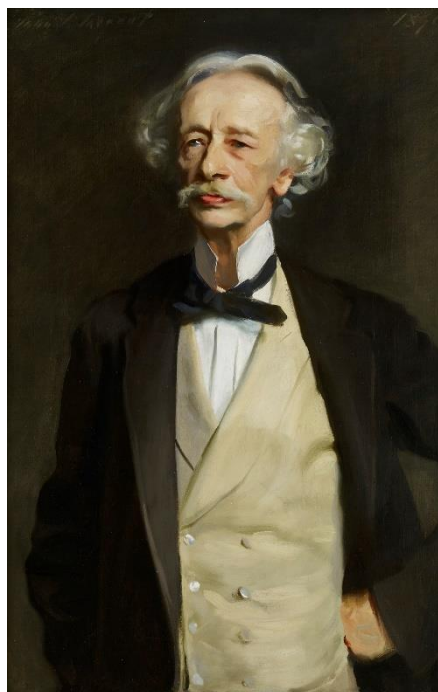


Figure 2.11 *Coventry Kersey Deighton Patmore*, by John Singer Sargent, 1894. Oil on canvas. 36 x 24 in. (914 x 610 mm). © National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG 1079. Given by the sitter's widow, Mrs Harriet G. Patmore, 1897.



Figure 2.12 Girolamo Romanino, *Saint Gaudioso*. Upper left panel of the High Altarpiece, S. Alessandro, Brescia, c. 1524. Oil on wood. 74.2 x 65.2 cm. © The National Gallery, London. NG 297.4. Bought, 1857. This image is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution [4.0 International Licence]. To view a copy of this licence, visit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>



Figure 2.13 Jacob van Oost the Elder, *Portrait of a Boy aged 11*, 1650. Oil on canvas. 80.5 x 63 cm. © The National Gallery, London. NG 1137. Bought, 1884. This image is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution [4.0 International Licence]. To view a copy of this licence, visit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>



Figure 2.14 Giovanni Battista Moroni, *The Tailor* ('Il Tagliapanni'), 1565-1570. Oil on Canvas. 99.5 x 77 cm. © The National Gallery, London. NG 697. Bought, 1862. This image is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution [4.0 International Licence]. To view a copy of this licence, visit: <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>>



Figure 2.15 Francis Galton, from a photograph album of *Composite Photographs: Family Likenesses*, 1880s-1890s. Wellcome Library, London / UCL Special Collections. Galton Papers: GALTON/2/8/1/7. This image is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution [4.0 International Licence]. To view a copy of this licence, visit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

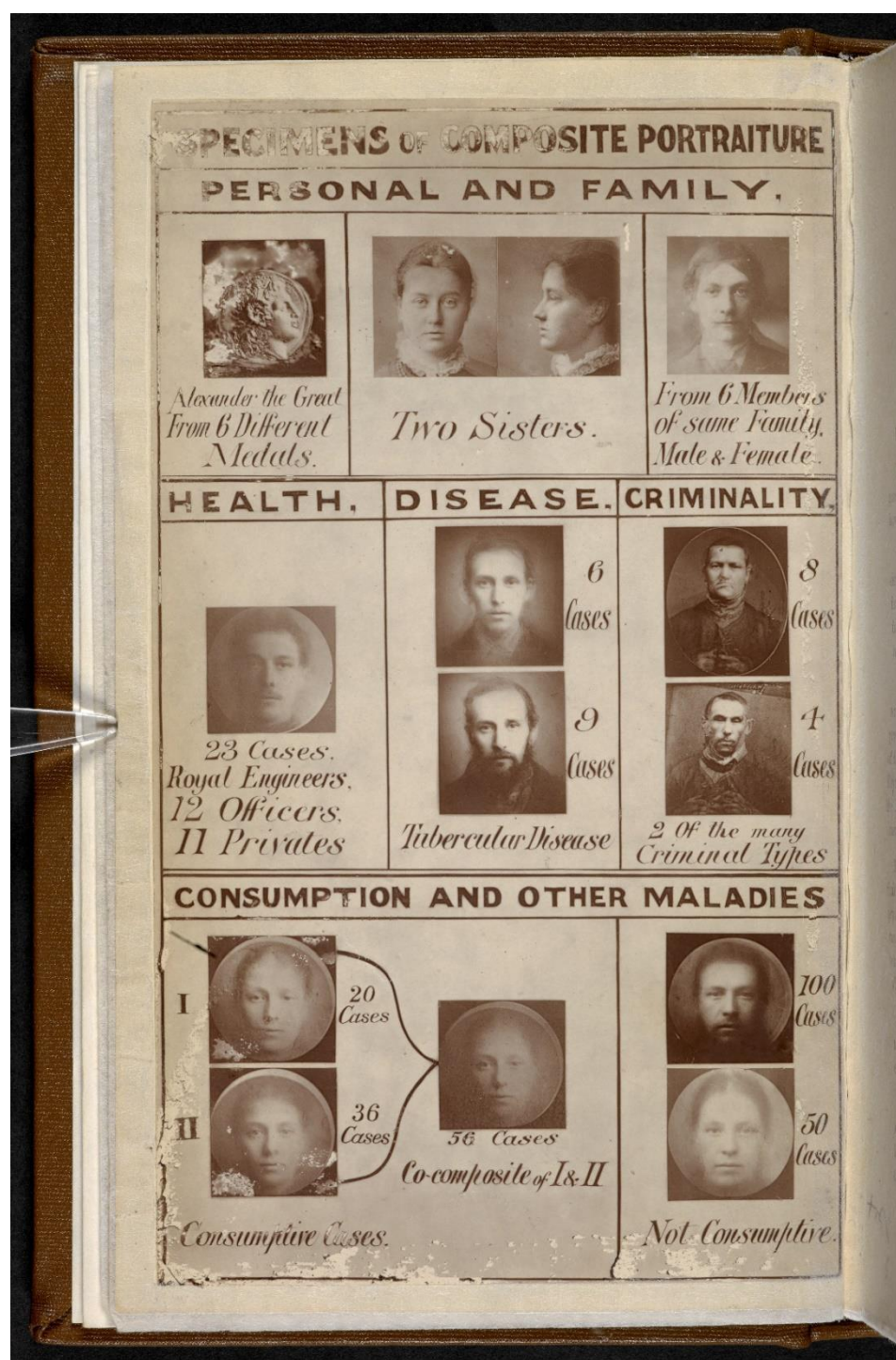


Figure 2.16 Francis Galton, *Specimens of Composite Portraiture*. Frontispiece to *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1883).

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Figure 2.17 Follower of Isack van Ostade, *An Inn by a Frozen River*, c. 1640s. Oil on oak. 41.6 x 55.7 cm. © The National Gallery, London. NG 963. Wynn Ellis Bequest, 1876. This image is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution [4.0 International Licence]. To view a copy of this licence, visit: <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>>

CHAPTER THREE

‘Item, a Photograph’: Reading the Portrait Photograph as an Object in the Work of Thomas Hardy

In an unsettling episode in Thomas Hardy’s novel *Jude the Obscure* (1895), Jude enters a ‘dingy broker’s shop’ and discovers, ‘amid a heterogeneous collection of saucepans, a clotheshorse, rolling pin, brass candlestick, swing looking-glass, and other things at the back of the shop’, ‘a framed photograph, which turned out to be his own portrait’.¹ The photograph had been taken as a gift for Jude’s wife on their wedding day. Despite its precious provenance, Jude now purchases his portrait for the price of the frame at one shilling. The broker, unaware that the original of the portrait is standing in front of him, determines that “‘the frame is a very useful one, if you take out the likeness”” (*JO*, p. 67). Perhaps the likeness always bore a poor resemblance to Jude. Perhaps Jude looks fundamentally different to when the photograph was taken. Perhaps the broker, urgent to make a sale, is simply blind to the similarity. Whatever the reason, it gives rise to a moment of tragic irony that is echoed in Hardy’s poem ‘The Son’s Portrait’ (1928), in which a mother purchases from a ‘lumber-shop’ the ‘fly-flecked portrait’ of her deceased son for the cost of the frame at eighteen pence.² The photograph enables her to forever preserve her son’s image, but, according to the seller, ‘[t]he picture’s nothing’. Jude’s photograph, framed in ‘bird’s eye maple’ and inscribed with the dedication “‘*Jude to Arabella*”” as a sign of its former significance, is similarly reduced to its very materiality,

¹ Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, ed. Patricia Ingham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 67. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text, with the abbreviation *JO*.

² Hardy, ‘The Son’s Portrait’, in *Winter Words in Various Moods and Metres* (1928). See *Thomas Hardy: The Complete Poems*, ed. James Gibson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 843. This reference denotes the poem number given by Gibson.

to become valueless compared to the frame and sold alongside a second-hand clotheshorse.

What does it mean when a portrait is less valuable than its frame? In the context of a second-hand sale, a portrait photograph might be deemed to be worth little or nothing as it has no universal function, while the frame can be recycled to house a different face. Since Jude's frame is inscribed, it has little value as a reusable item, but the reader's knowledge of this mark of personalisation nevertheless places more value in the frame than in the face, of which Hardy provides no description. Walter Benjamin reflected, in 1831, on the early years of photography, suggesting that '[t]he human face came wrapped in silence; it was a reposeful object for the eye', because 'no connection between actuality and photo had yet been drawn'.³ Photography created a new culture of portraiture for the working classes and, out of the silence, faces became exchangeable – from one owner to another, and one portrait for another. As likenesses were exchanged with increasing frequency, the transaction was often troubled with deceit. The investigative journalist, Henry Mayhew, recorded in 1861 that photographic studios duped their customers into purchasing another's portrait as their own. The fact is, Mayhew reports, 'people don't know their own faces. Half of 'em have never looked in a glass half a dozen times in their life, and directly they see a pair of eyes and a nose, they fancy they are their own'.⁴ In an extreme case, Mayhew tells of a photograph depicting a woman wearing a widow's cap being sold to someone un-married.

With the portrait photograph as a common and dishonest article of street commerce, the very idea of a likeness and its meaning when exchanged was undermined.

³ Walter Benjamin, 'Brief History of Photography' [1931], in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. J. A. Underwood, introduction by Amit Chaudhuri (London: Penguin Books, 2009), pp. 172-92 (p. 177).

⁴ Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor: A Selection Edition*, ed. Robert Douglas-Fairhurst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 290

The American journalist, Fanny Fern, lamented the implications for lovers, in a narrative reminiscent of Hardy's Jude:

There was a time when the presentation of one's 'likeness' meant something. It was a sacred thing, exchanged only between lovers or married people, kept carefully from unsympathizing eyes, gazed at in private as a treasure apart. But we have changed all that now. People like their faces to hang at street doors, and in galleries, to lie on everybody's and anybody's table in albums, and to be hawked about promiscuously and vulgarly like a fashion print, or a specimen of seaweed, or a stick insect, for the gaze of the curious. Anybody now who acknowledges to any sentiment, on the subject, or has an old-fashioned fastidiousness about being made as common as a street lamp-post, is gazed at with round-eyed wonder.⁵

Although not a bargain for someone on a stonemason's salary like Jude, a shilling was a reasonable price for a portrait. A shilling was also a small price for Jude to pay to remove himself from the public market place, since Jude did know his face and he recognised it staring back at him in the broker's shop. It stared back at him mockingly.

What does it mean when a portrait is not only less valuable than its frame, but, in Fern's estimation, also comparable to eclectic items such as a 'specimen of seaweed' or a 'common street lamp'? For the reader, as for the broker, Jude's photograph means nothing as an image. Hardy's act of withholding the portrait's visual content reflects the problematic nature of a likeness and calls for a new way of reading the nineteenth-century portrait photograph. The reader knows nothing of Jude's appearance in the image and is prevented from undertaking the typical practice, when reading a Victorian novel, of interpreting his character from his portrait. What the reader does know is that the photograph has changed hands several times. After being held in Jude's loving hands, it was discarded by Arabella, bought at auction for a discounted bulk price, and relegated to the back of a broker's shop, only to return to its original owner in a mundane and poignant transaction. The photograph has undertaken a journey of social and economic

⁵ Fanny Fern, 'Then and Now', *The New York Ledger*, 18.5 (5 April 1862), p. 8. The article was reprinted in the *American Scrap Book and Magazine of United States Literature*, 2.27 (26 April 1862), p. 12. Fern's given name was Sara Payson Willis.

transaction that challenges its value and function as a portrait, troublingly reducing it to an anonymous item in a heterogeneous collection of banal objects. The portrait photograph's significance lies not in its status as an image, rather in its condition as an object: an object that is framed, inscribed, sold, and later destroyed.

David Trotter observes that scenes of household clearance appear frequently in Victorian novels. According to Trotter, they 'imagine the object's double reduction: from household god to commodity; from commodity to matter, or stuff'.⁶ It is difficult to consider a photograph as 'stuff' since its meaning is articulated primarily in visual terms, and this is especially the case for the portrait. One would expect its function as a token of a loved one (or memorial to the deceased) to preclude its categorisation alongside a rolling pin. Becoming unwanted detritus at an auction is the first stage in erasing the portrait photograph's function, and Hardy's withholding of its visual contents enacts a second that is perhaps even more troubling. Indeed, in the novel's final pages, Jude is himself reduced to the few books that are in his possession at the time of his death. Hardy directs the reader's eye from Jude's 'marble features' to 'the old, superseded, Delphin editions of Virgil and Horace and the dog-eared Greek Testament on the neighbouring shelf, and the few other volumes of the sort that he had not parted with' (*JO*, p. 396). They too will become material for an auction.

Yet materiality also inscribes meaning. Trotter notes that auction scenes have a potential 'twist' since the items are 'objects in limbo'; awaiting the hammer, they have the possibility of a second life with a new owner.⁷ This potential may hold true for a picture frame, but in Hardy's novel and poem the portrait items only return to their former owners. Unlike the catalogues of unwanted objects that Trotter highlights in the

⁶ David Trotter, 'Household Clearances in Victorian Fiction', in *The Uses of Phobia: Essays on Literature and Film* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 17-28 (p. 26).

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

novels of Trollope and Thackeray, Hardy includes a portrait photograph amongst the ‘small lot of stuff’ (*JO*, p. 67). The nature of the particular object of a portrait photograph complicates the understanding of household clearances in Victorian fiction more than Trotter allows. The portrait photograph’s former life is not as easily forgotten because it portrays a face. Hardy may not disclose the face to the reader, but it is there and it is recognised by Jude. This gap between narrative and description reveals the portrait photograph’s heightened meaning as an item that is both an object and an image. The fluctuating dialectic of economic, functional, and emotive value for Jude’s portrait photograph vitally hinges upon this duality. In Jude’s eyes, the photograph is worth nothing, but signifies everything. After purchasing his portrait, he immediately burns it and the frame together. It is an act of self-destruction by proxy that also signals his resolve to commence a new chapter in his life; no longer ‘diverted from his purposes by an unsuitable woman’, he follows a sign ‘THITHER’ to Christminster (*JO*, p. 68). While Jude’s chance discovery of his portrait in the broker shop is the ‘mute and undesigned evidence’ of ‘the death of every tender sentiment’ in Arabella, the photograph itself is far from ‘mute’ (*JO*, p. 67). As an image the photograph remains silent, but as an object it is ‘the conclusive little stroke required to demolish all sentiment’ in Jude, before he reduces it to ashes in an act that emphasises its affective materiality.

Scholars looking at the significance of photography for nineteenth-century fiction have typically focussed not on the photograph as an object, but on the photographic image-making process as a metaphor for ways of seeing and writing in the age of realism.⁸ Nancy Armstrong insists that establishing a relationship between nineteenth-

⁸ Comparative scholarship on literature and photography includes Jennifer Green-Lewis, *Framing the Victorians: Photography and the Culture of Realism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1996); Nancy Armstrong, *Fiction in the Age of Photography: The Legacy of British Realism* (London: Harvard University Press, 1999); Daniel Novak in *Realism, Photography, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*

century fiction and photography requires one to look not at ‘things’, but at ‘visual representations of things’.⁹ This critical tendency holds true for Hardy’s place within the comparative study of literature and photography. Rebecca Warburton Boylan has coined the term ‘photographic ekphrasis’ to describe Hardy’s style as the ‘verbal creation of photographs’.¹⁰ Several critics have successfully identified the photograph as a symbol of Hardy’s uneasy negotiation with nineteenth-century realism, articulating the disparity between illusion and reality in his novels that so often observe people observing, and frequently observe people looking at photographs.¹¹ The notion of Hardy’s photographic vision is an important part of his identity as an intensely visual writer, but he was also interested in the materiality of things.¹²

For this chapter, the narrative of interest is not the portrait photograph’s production, but its subsequent treatment and circulation within nineteenth-century society and literature. Taking its cue from visual anthropologists Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, this chapter seeks to address and reverse the prevailing tendency to apprehend photographs ‘in one visual act, absorbing image and object together, yet privileging the

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); and Owen Clayton, *Literature and Photography in Transition, 1850-1915* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 5.

⁹ Armstrong, p. 3. Jennifer Green-Lewis similarly moves away from the photograph in and of itself when she argues that literary texts featuring photographs ‘reveal less their author’s attitudes towards photography than they do their anxieties about their own status as writers of romance in an age of realism’. See *Framing the Victorians*, p. 67. Green-Lewis’s recent study does, however, acknowledge photographs’ materiality – how ‘photographs were physically folded into the lives of their owners as furnishings, decorations, and ornaments’, and how they evidenced and helped to shape people’s personal histories in the nineteenth century. Yet her emphasis remains focussed on, what she calls, a ‘photographic prose style’. See *Victorian Photography, Literature, and the Invention of Modern Memory: Already the Past* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), pp. 67, 16.

¹⁰ Rebecca Warburton Boylan, ‘Phantom Photographs: The Camera’s Pursuit and Disruption of Consciousness in *Jude the Obscure*’, *Thomas Hardy Journal*, xxii (Autumn 2006), 72-84 (p. 73).

¹¹ See Arlene M. Jackson, ‘Photography as Style and Metaphor in the Art of Thomas Hardy’, *Thomas Hardy Annual*, No. 2, ed. Norman Page (London: Macmillan Press, 1984), pp. 91-109; Mark Durden, ‘Ritual and Deception: Photography and Hardy’, *Journal of European Studies*, 30.117 (2000), 57-69; and Green-Lewis, *Framing the Victorians*, pp. 77-88. Green-Lewis identifies photography as ‘an unstable signifier for Hardy’ (p. 78).

¹² On Hardy’s relationship to nineteenth-century visual art more generally, see J. B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Work of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

former'.¹³ It examines how the material conditions specific to the nineteenth-century portrait photograph challenged and interacted with its visuality, and in so doing recasts the role played by the photograph in Hardy's writing. Drawing on the history of photography, material studies, and literary 'thing' theories, this chapter identifies the portrait photograph as an affective item that is frequently exchanged, hidden, found, burnt, sent in the post, and falling out of pockets in Hardy's novels and poems. Despite the varying demands of narrative and description inherent to the novel or poem, for Hardy the portrait photograph always has a story to tell about those with whom it comes into contact. It also increasingly seems to have a life of its own. Using the terms of photographic materiality, this chapter presents an alternative narrative of nineteenth-century portraiture and offers a new way of reading Hardy's ties to the visual.

Inside Tabitha's Pocket: The Portrait Photograph as Literary Bric-à-Brac

Hardy's broker-shop scene is an extreme case that deals not merely with objects, but specifically with the category of unwanted 'stuff' or waste. A photograph, particularly a portrait, resists the label of 'stuff' because it has an inherent specificity as an index to something or someone existing outside of itself. Yet in Hardy's novels, the portrait photograph continually comes close to holding this status when presented amid a mass of mundane things. It is never more an everyday object in Hardy's novels than when it is in Tabitha Lark's possession in *Two on a Tower* (1882). In a brief episode, Hardy lists another catalogue of objects, this time for a collection found in Tabitha's pocket. During a sermon, Tabitha pulls out a handkerchief to 'flap' the organ blower awake from his slumber, but 'with the handkerchief tumbled out a whole family of unexpected articles: a

¹³ Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, Introduction to *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 2.

silver thimble; item, a photograph; item, a little purse; item, a scent-bottle; item, some loose halfpence; item, nine green gooseberries; item, a key'.¹⁴ Hardy pauses the narrative to present an inventory of her pocket, but the passage is arresting for his selective lack of elucidation. While we are told that the thimble is silver and that the purse is small, no adjective is attached to the photograph, the object that the reader would expect to warrant the most attention in the descriptive fabric of a Victorian novel. Since Tabitha is a minor character in the novel's romance plot, it is perhaps unsurprising that Hardy leaves the reader unaware of what the photograph depicts and how Tabitha acquired it, besides other details of its social history. When Swithin helps to gather the items from the floor, the episode has the potential to become the flirtatious 'little adventure' between future lovers imagined by one of the observers.¹⁵ The portrait photograph could have been part of a love story similar to Jude's. Yet Hardy's repetition of the word 'item' restrains the romantically eclectic family of objects into a (strikingly) mundane inventory.

For the same reason that it is unsurprising Hardy leaves information about the photograph undisclosed, it is salient that he permits the reader to see the intimate contents of Tabitha's pocket at all, and thereby invite us to participate in 'the smiles of the neighbours' in church.¹⁶ The photograph might easily go unnoticed as the second object in a common collection, and as an item that serves simply to express Tabitha's endearing clumsiness. Yet, while it may appear incidental to the novel's trajectory of events, the episode illuminates Hardy as a novelist with an eye for the small details of human life, extending to the miscellaneous items in someone's pocket. It also illustrates something about the nineteenth-century photograph when compared to literary *bric-à-brac*. The

¹⁴ Hardy, *Two on a Tower: A Romance*, ed. Sally Shuttleworth (London: Penguin Books, 1996), p. 146. I quote from the novel's first volume publication (October 1882), since the repetition of the word 'item' was curiously omitted in the revised editions with Osgood in 1895 and Macmillan in 1912. *Two on a Tower* was first published serially in the American magazine *Atlantic Monthly* from May to December 1882.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

heterogeneous collection of objects in the dingy broker's shop and the casual family of items in Tabitha's pocket fall into the category of literary *bric-à-brac*, defined by Victoria Mills as "'messes" of objects that evade categorisation'.¹⁷

According to Mills, *bric-à-brac* collections function as oxymorons since the only thing the objects have in common is 'the trait of heterogeneity'.¹⁸ Hardy's collections are similarly formed through the accidents of everyday life; the objects are connected by a shared randomness. For Tabitha's pocket, this randomness provides a familial quality: they are a 'family' of items. The significance of *bric-à-brac* therefore lies not simply in the objects themselves, but in the relation between the objects of a collection, however accidental. For this reason, Jonathan Shears and Jen Harrison suggest that *bric-à-brac* is better defined as 'an interim condition through which commodities may pass but in which they never permanently reside'.¹⁹ Portrait photographs take on varied significance depending upon the material context in which they are found. The simultaneous contexts set up by Tabitha's pocket point to some of the different 'identities' adopted by the portrait photograph in the nineteenth century. Like the scent-bottle, it was a precious, luxury item. In the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, it became a piece of 'social currency' in line with the halfpence.²⁰ It was also a functional item like the key or thimble. The nine gooseberries stand out as a particularly obscure item within an obscure collection, but their presence reflects how, in Hardy's novels, rusticity and modern technology often come into contact.

¹⁷ Victoria Mills, 'Bricabracomania! Collecting, Corporeality and the Problem of Things in Victorian Fiction', in *Literary Bric-à-Brac and the Victorians: From Commodities to Oddities*, eds. Jonathan Shears and Jen Harrison (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 33-47 (p. 35).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁹ Jonathan Shears and Jen Harrison, 'Literary *Bric-à-Brac*: Introducing Things', in *Literary Bric-à-Brac and the Victorians*, p. 8.

²⁰ In 1863, Oliver Wendell Holmes declared that card portraits 'have become the social currency, the sentimental "Green-backs" of civilization'. See 'Doings of the Sunbeam', in *Soundings from the Atlantic* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1864), pp. 228-81 (p. 255).

Since little is explained about Tabitha's photograph, the notion that it is a portrait is an assumption by the reader – though it is a safe assumption to make. In her study of the meaning of things in the Victorian novel, Elaine Freedgood notes how the genre

describes, catalogues, quantifies, and in general showers us with things: post chaises, handkerchiefs, moonstones, wills, riding crops, ships' instruments of all kinds, dresses of muslin, merino, and silk, coffee, claret, cutlets – cavalcades of objects threaten to crowd the narrative right off the page.²¹

Although not listed here, the portrait photograph is another crucial example given its prevalence in the mid- to late nineteenth century. While it is overlooked as part of Tabitha's family of items, the portrait photograph has a lot to tell: about the motivation behind its production, the feelings of its owners, and the relations between the people with which it comes into contact. Applying Freedgood's historical approach to reading things that might go unnoticed in Hardy's fiction highlights the portrait photograph as a distinctly Victorian object, whose social history was based precisely upon its identity as one in a mass.²²

In 1899, Hardy wrote to his friend, the photographer Hermann Lea, stating that he was 'now rich in photographs'.²³ Hardy thanked Lea for the portraits of himself, which he subsequently sent to his publishers, presumably for use as a frontispiece, and promised to send one of his novels as a 'slight gift' in return – one object in exchange for another, a novel for a portrait. The fact that Hardy had many photographs taken throughout his life is indicative of how the second half of the nineteenth century was rich in photographs. Since its invention mid-century, the science of photography developed quickly and, by the century's end, the Kodak camera had made the process of taking a

²¹ Elaine Freedgood, *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 1.

²² In his study of the Victorians through their things, Asa Briggs suggests that the portrait photograph was a distinctly Victorian object. See *Victorian Things* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1988), p. 12.

²³ Hardy to Hermann Lea, 10 October 1899, in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, 8 vols, eds. Richard Little Purdy, Michael Millgate, and Keith Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980-2012), ii, 232.

photograph easier than ever before.²⁴ With the camera now a portable, hand-held object, the possibility of being unknowingly ‘Kodaked’ also became a possible cause for annoyance. Hardy repeatedly protested to Lea of literary tourists: ‘trippers with Kodaks looking over hedges’ near his home at Max Gate.²⁵ While the appearance of the contents of Tabitha’s pocket, when all she required was a handkerchief, was ‘unexpected’, in light of the prevalence of the portrait photograph in nineteenth-century society, it would have been far from unexpected for Tabitha’s family of articles to include a portrait that she carried on her person.

The argument that the portrait photograph should be considered amongst the many objects that clutter Victorian novels is supported by art historical studies that have begun to establish photographs’ materiality. At the forefront of this scholarship, Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart have promoted a methodological shift ‘away from content alone’, to reveal that

it is not merely the image *qua* image that is the site of meaning, but that its material and presentational forms and the uses to which they are put are central to the function of a photograph as a socially salient object.²⁶

This approach can be historicised within the discourse surrounding photography in the nineteenth century by turning to Sadakichi Hartmann’s account reflecting on his encounter with a daguerreotype, an early form of photography (fig. 3.1). ‘There it lies in its case among old papers, letters and curios’, he wrote:

²⁴ The Kodak camera, which contained a film of multiple sensitive plates, was developed by the American manufacturer, George Eastman, and marketed from 1888. For a history of nineteenth-century portrait photography as fine art, see Audrey Linkman, *The Victorians: Photographic Portraits* (London: Tauris Parke, 1993). On the Kodak see Patricia Holland, ‘The Kodak and the Mass Market’, in *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Liz Wells (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 141–46.

²⁵ Hardy to Lea, 9 November 1904, and 12 November 1904, in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, iii, 145, 146. At this time Lea was preparing a guidebook of photographs picturing the real-life places of Hardy’s Wessex, published with Macmillan in 1913. After his initial unease with the idea, Hardy offered Lea detailed advice about how his fictional world should be represented in photographs, including the placement of a chimney pot. See the letter of 12 November (146). Lea’s handbook marked the popularity of Wessex for tourists with Kodaks.

²⁶ Edwards and Hart, Introduction to *Photographs Objects Histories*, p. 2.

A frail encasement of wood covered with black embossed paper. We cannot resist the temptation to open it and glance at it. The clasp is loose; the old case almost falls apart. A weird tapestry-effect on the inside of the lid greets our eye, and opposite it is a gray blurred image set in a gilded frame with an oval or circular opening.²⁷

Hartmann writes of the photograph, likely a portrait, as a historic relic found amongst a collection of everyday objects. His attention is directed towards the photograph's casing and the context in which it is discovered. These material environments are lavished upon in the detail missing from the episode in Hardy's *Two on a Tower*, but which is demanded by the nature of the photograph as an evocative object. Hartmann describes the process of manoeuvring the casing and gazing upon the image and its reflected 'tapestry'. A daguerreotype image, cast directly onto a polished copper-plate, flickers between its negative and positive image as it is manoeuvred and light hits its surface.²⁸ With the daguerreotype's mirrored surface, this tapestry *would* have included the image of the onlooker – as with the photographs involving Jude and Tabitha, the face is not revealed to the reader. Instead, Hartmann emphasises the surface texture of the image as part of a narrative emphasising the photograph's tactility. His narrative involves both eyes and hands, which would have been required in unison to make the image visible. Using Edwards's words, 'a perpetual movement between touching to see and seeing to touch' was needed for the photograph to fully reveal itself, 'to the extent that touch enables seeing'.²⁹ Recalling Hartmann's language of a blurred tapestry, Edwards

²⁷ Sadakichi Hartmann, 'The Daguerreotype' (1912), in *The Valiant Knights of Daguerre: Selected Critical Essays on Photography and Profiles of Photographic Pioneers*, eds. Harry W. Lawton and George Knox (London: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 142-48 (p. 142).

²⁸ On the unique qualities of the daguerreotype, which was often regarded by the Victorians as magical, see Alan Trachtenberg, 'Likeness as Identity: Reflections on the Daguerrean Mystique', in *The Portrait in Photography*, ed. Graham Clarke (London: Reaktion Books, 1992), pp. 173-92. Trachtenberg notes that the daguerreotype 'has weight, and yet behaves like a ghost' (p. 173). See also Sarah L. Thwaites, 'Daguerreotype, Democratizing and the Fall of Light', *Journal of Design History*, 26.3 (2013), 241-56.

²⁹ Elizabeth Edwards, 'Thinking Photography Beyond the Visual?', in *Photography: Theoretical Snapshots*, eds. J. J. Long, Andrea Noble, and Edward Welch (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 31-48 (p. 43). Margaret Olin similarly recognises that a photograph evokes and requires 'tactile looking', its meaning 'determined not only by what it looks like but also by the relationship we are invited to have with it'. See *Touching Photographs* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 3.

suggests that the result of this conflation of sight and touch is ‘a blurring of the iconic, indexical and material aspects of the photograph’.³⁰

One can also look to Hardy’s novels for evidence of the evocative materiality of the portrait photograph and find it in a similar narrated description of seeing and touching. In *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved* (1892), about a sculptor’s anguished search for the ideal model, Jocelyn Pierston unearths the photograph of a lost lover:

At one side of the room stood an escritoire, and presently going to a lower drawer of the same he took out a small box tightly nailed down. He forced the cover with the poker. The box contained a multifarious variety of odds and ends, which Pierston had thrown into it from time to time in years gone by for future sorting – an intention that he had never carried out. From the melancholy mass of papers, faded photographs, seals, diaries, withered flowers, and such like, Jocelyn drew a little portrait, one taken on glass in the primitive days of photography, and framed with tinsel in the commonest way.³¹

Here, a framed calotype is revealed following the descriptive negotiation of furniture, nailed boxes, papers, and dried flowers. Like the objects in Tabitha’s pocket, the items in Pierston’s box have been collected by Chance, which often takes an active role in Hardy’s work.³² As a result, Pierston, who fails to organise the items as he had intended, loses to happenstance his agency as collector. The randomness of the objects aligns them with *bric-à-brac*, but it is difficult to consider Pierston’s collection under this label (however broad it may be) because of the additional contributor of passing years. Although, like Tabitha’s photograph, Pierston’s calotype is anonymous in its visual contents and is part of a miscellaneous assembly of things, it is an assembly that, unlike Tabitha’s inventory, has been built up alongside the accumulation of years and is thereby

³⁰ Edwards, ‘Thinking Photography Beyond the Visual?’, p. 43.

³¹ Hardy, *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved and The Well-Beloved*, ed. Patricia Ingham (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 57. I quote from *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved* (1892). As part of larger revisions to the plot for the 1897 edition, the word ‘multifarious’ was omitted from this passage.

³² In his novel *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, Hardy likens chance to a force more like fate: ‘Strange conjunctions of phenomena, particularly those of a trivial kind, are so frequent in an ordinary life that we grow used to their unaccountableness, and forget the question whether the very long odds against such juxtaposition is not almost a disproof of it being a matter of chance at all.’ See *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, ed. Alan Manford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 65.

given additional nostalgic significance. Fulfilling the descriptive capacity of the portrait photograph, Hardy personifies the collection of which Pierston's calotype is a part as a reflection of its owner's psychology, and thereby provides the object with a narrative that remains undisclosed to the reader observing Tabitha's pocket. In *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved*, the bare list of items in Tabitha's pocket is embellished to form a narrative about a 'melancholy mass'.

A turn towards the tactile is increasingly evident in studies of Victorian fiction. In response to the critical emphasis on the visual in nineteenth-century literature, Hilary Fraser recently asked: 'what of the equivalently novel conceptualisation of touch in the visual field that might also be said to have begun to emerge in the nineteenth century?'³³ The union of the visual and the tactile comes to the fore in the study of the portrait photograph, which pervaded nineteenth-century society and fascinated the Victorian literary imagination. Hardy, who in *The Woodlanders* (1887) observes banal playing cards as 'thumbed' in testament to a lifetime's use, certainly had a vivid tactile imagination.³⁴ Hardy had an eye for the social history of objects and exploited their capacity to hold human memories and emotions. Indeed, in this sense, the portrait photograph is less different from a rolling pin, playing card, or 'battered tankard' than it might be in another novelist's hands. Hardy ranks 'a beloved relative's old battered tankard' the equal to 'the finest Greek vase' because of the meaning that can be imbued into 'the baldest external objects either by the presence of a human figure among them, or by mark of some human connection with them'.³⁵ Nevertheless, the representational

³³ Hilary Fraser, Foreword to *Illustrations, Optics and Objects in Nineteenth-Century Literary and Visual Cultures*, eds. Luisa Calè and Patrizia Di Bello (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. ix. On this turn towards the tactile, see also Heather Tilley's introduction to *19's* special issue published following Birkbeck's July 2013 conference on the subject: 'The Victorian Tactile Imagination', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2014), 1-17. <<http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

³⁴ Hardy, *The Woodlanders*, ed. Dale Kramer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 69.

³⁵ Hardy, *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Michael Millgate (London: Macmillan Press, 1984), p. 124.

function of the portrait photograph, tied both to its subject and its observer (or handler), made it a particularly evocative everyday item and sacred relic.

The ubiquity of portrait photographs in Victorian fiction reflects their prevalence in society, but they should not merely be read as historical details in the descriptive fabric of the realist text. The multiplicity of descriptive passages dedicated to the portrait photograph, and structured as narratives of tactile discovery, suggests that there is a story inherent to this mysterious and evocative object, a story waiting to be told. While the collection in Tabitha's pocket is (intriguingly) left unexplored, the reader can look elsewhere in Hardy's work to imagine the story that could be told about her and the photograph in her pocket. Portrait photographs appear repeatedly in Hardy's melancholy and fantastical plots about troubled relationships and hopeless lovers, including Jude Fawley and Jocelyn Pierston. Across Hardy's novels, photographs are inconsistently presented as sacred and problematic, but rarely mundane.

A problem persists that must be negotiated in the telling of these stories: the portrait photograph is a distinct kind of object, as well as a distinctly Victorian item. On the one hand, it is a common Victorian object and piece of literary *bric-à-brac*. On the other, it remains distinguished from the mass of 'stuff' that pervades Victorian novels because of the inescapable fact that it is both an object and an image. The growing body of critical scholarship on the meaning of objects in Victorian literature and culture will be called upon throughout this chapter in its attempt to categorise the portrait photograph's complex object status in the mid- to late nineteenth century and, specifically, in Hardy's writing.³⁶ Mills notes how *bric-à-brac* collections 'tread a line between "chaotic

³⁶ Besides Mills, Freedgood, and Calè and Di Bello, see Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (London: Duke University Press, 1993); Andrew H. Miller, *Novels Behind Glass: Commodity Culture and Victorian Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Bill Brown, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature*

enumeration” and the ordered list, highlighting a dialectic between order and disorder which poses a problem for writers and critics interested in the representation of things’.³⁷ If nineteenth-century literary *bric-à-brac* causes a problem for readers and critics, the portrait photograph is especially troublesome.

‘A New Little Photograph’: *Cartes de Visite* as Portable Property

Geoffrey Batchen has observed that ‘[p]hotography has never been any one technology’.³⁸ In the second half of the nineteenth century alone, several photographic forms were developed, each with distinct production methods and material properties that determined the diverse ways in which they were understood and consumed. To understand the portrait as an object in the nineteenth century is to turn to the photograph, but specifically to look at the *carte de visite*: a nine-by-six-centimetre photograph mounted upon card that placed the portrait in the hand of its observer. While the earlier forms of photographic portraiture offered a tactile experience – the portrait as a single, unique item with qualities of a relic – the banality of the *carte*’s materiality, and the fact that it could be almost endlessly reproduced, lent to it an imaginative power of its own that was rooted in its portability.

The *carte* experienced a short life. Its dominance in the 1860s began to wane by 1864 with the arrival of the larger cabinet photograph and, subsequently, the instantaneous Kodak snapshot. Yet the discourse surrounding the *carte*’s immense

(London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003); Jonathan Lamb, *The Things Things Say* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011); and Katharina Boehm, ed., *Bodies and Things in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

³⁷ Mills, p. 35.

³⁸ Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography* (London: MIT Press, 1997), p. 213. For the same reason, Owen Clayton uses the term ‘photographies’ to encompass the range of reproduction technologies that developed over the long nineteenth century. See *Literature and Photography in Transition, 1850-1915* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 2.

popularity as a pervasive and democratic mode of portraiture persisted until the century's end, reflecting its greater dominance as an item of portable property in the Victorian imagination. I borrow the term 'portable property' from the title of John Plotz's study about how the Victorians 'loved their things'.³⁹ He argues that 'when possessions fill Victorian novels – so copiously that later readers describe themselves as swaddled by, drowning in, or suffocating under their weight – they generally serve not as static deadweights, but as moving messengers'. To Freedgood's list of common items of choice for the Victorian novelist, Plotz adds 'mourning rings' and 'precious letters'. For him, their meaning lies specifically in their portability, use, and affective association. Still, the *carte de visite* remains conspicuously absent from his inventory, despite the fact that the development of photography served to transform the nineteenth-century portrait into portable property. Portrait photographs are constantly on the move in Hardy's novels, travelling in pockets or auctioned off to new owners. Just as Hardy's characters seem to lead a nomadic existence in *Jude the Obscure* (travelling by the revolutionary invention of the railway), photographs are also relentlessly journeying in their affective allegiance. Sue Bridehead gives to Jude 'a new little photograph' of herself at the train station, one which Hardy states she 'would have given to any man' (*JO*, pp. 133, 155).

Cartes de visite typically followed a set format: a full or three-quarter length figure stands before a domestic background adorned with everyday props (figs. 3.2, 3.3). In this card portrait of an unknown woman, she rests her hands upon a piece of sculpted furniture. The scene's illusion of domesticity is broken by its obvious staging. The addition of a draped curtain, adding a sense of grandeur to the scene, is borrowed from the conventions of painted portraiture, specifically the work of Anthony van Dyck. The photograph's curved edges also recall the traditional manner of framing paintings. The

³⁹ John Plotz, *Portable Property: Victorian Culture on the Move* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 1.

carte brings together the grand and the domestic, juxtaposing the conventions of portrait painting with its banal mount. Rather than be admired on the wall of a grand house or gallery, the *carte* was designed to be held and gazed upon in the hand.⁴⁰ As a result, the portrait could easily be scratched or stained. The format itself could also be troublingly reductive. John Plunkett notes that ‘[b]y the very literal handiness of their use, *cartes* imbued their subjects with the quotidian qualities of their format’.⁴¹ The reverse of the *carte* of the unknown woman advertises that copies could be ‘had at any time by sending the Name, Number & Postage Stamps’, reducing the sitter to a stock inventory number in the same manner as Jude was anonymised and auctioned for sale by way of his portrait. Yet the material properties that exposed the *carte* as an object as well as a work of art also defined it as an intensely intimate and affective item, which could quite literally be held close to the heart.

Of course, the eighteenth century had already experienced the portrait as a small, ‘handy’ object.⁴² Painted miniatures were frequently exchanged between loved ones. While they were small enough to be kept hidden as a symbol of affection, they could also be incorporated into jewellery, enabling the wearer to openly display their emotional attachment.⁴³ In Hardy’s novel *Desperate Remedies* (1871), Miss Aldclyffe keeps the portrait of a past beloved inside a locket that preserved the secret of her affair: she

⁴⁰ While *cartes de visite* were novel for removing the portrait from the wall, the photographic studio Benedetti & Co. advertised the option of having the photographic card portrait enlarged and painted in oil or water colors (see figs. 3.4, 3.5). The desire to own painted portraits was not erased by the ‘handiness’ of the *carte*, though the latter significantly transformed the artistic conventions and social function of portraiture.

⁴¹ John Plunkett, ‘Celebrity and Community: The Poetics of the *Carte-de-Visite*’, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 8.1 (2003), 55-79 (pp. 68-69).

⁴² Andrew Wynter referred to the *carte* as ‘handy’. See ‘Photographic Portraiture’, in *Subtle Brains and Lissom Fingers: Being some of the Chisel-Marks of our Industrial and Scientific Progress. And other Papers* (London: Robert Hardwicke, 1869 [1863]), pp. 297-317 (p. 303).

⁴³ On the function and significance of the painted miniature in the eighteenth century, see Marcia Pointon, ‘“Surrounded with Brilliants”: Miniature Portraits in Eighteenth-Century England’, *Art Bulletin*, 83.1 (March 2001), 48-71. In her discussion, Pointon uses the term ‘portrait-objects’ to encompass the variety of ‘small jeweled artifacts that incorporate[d] portrait miniatures’, and thereby emphasises their materiality (p. 48). See also Hanneke Grootenboer, *Treasuring the Gaze: Intimate Vision in Late Eighteenth-Century Eye Miniatures* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

‘touched the spring and disclosed a miniature’.⁴⁴ While the practice of setting small portraits into jewellery continued into the nineteenth century, the painted miniature was widely replaced by the photograph that became the quintessential portrait in miniature.⁴⁵ *The Journal of the Photographic Society* reported in 1858 that photography had ‘swept away very many third- or fourth-class miniature-painters’ and thereby ‘changed the art world’; no longer would one see ‘the private entrances of shops as formerly we did’, displaying miniatures that could ‘be done for a guinea on the first floor in the true Miss La Creevy style’.⁴⁶ Miss La Creevy was Charles Dickens’s fictional miniature painter, who displayed ‘old ladies and gentlemen smirking at each other out of blue and brown skies’ on her street door.⁴⁷ She transcended Dickens’s novel to become a cultural reference for the profession that was soon overwhelmed by the new technology of photography.

Due to its reproducibility, the *carte* is often neglected in the history of portraiture, but its significance lies precisely in its multiplicity and its place as part of a collection.⁴⁸ In 1862 Andrew Wynter, a frequent commentator on *cartes de visite*, celebrated ‘the hundred portrait galleries of great and noted Englishmen to be found in – our shop windows’:

Whenever in our fashionable streets we see a crowd congregated before a shop window, there for certain a like number of notabilities are staring back at the crowd in the shape of *cartes de visite*. Certainly our street portrait galleries are a great success: no solemn flights of stairs lead to pompous rooms in which pompous attendants preside with a severe air over pompous portraits, no committee of selection decide on the property of hanging certain portraits. Here,

⁴⁴ Hardy, *Desperate Remedies*, ed. Patricia Ingham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 71.

⁴⁵ On the nineteenth-century tradition of setting photographs and hair into jewellery, see Geoffrey Batchen, ‘Ere the Substance Fade: Photography and Hair Jewellery’, in *Photographs Objects Histories*, pp. 32–47.

⁴⁶ [Unsigned], [Untitled], *Journal of the Photographic Society*, 5 (21 September 1858), p. 20.

⁴⁷ Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*, ed. Mark Ford (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 33.

⁴⁸ Lara Perry notes: ‘The likeness inscribed in the *carte* was not derived only from the relation between the sitter and the photographic image, but from the relation between the *carte* and other *cartes*’. See ‘The *Carte de Visite* in the 1860s and the Serial Dynamic of Photographic Likeness’, *Art History*, 35.4 (2012), 728–49 (p. 731).

on the contrary, social equality is carried to its utmost limit, and Tom Sayers is to be found cheek-by-jowl with Lord Derby.⁴⁹

Miss La Creevy's front door of smirking faces was replaced by a scene perhaps little different: the sensation of a photography studio shop window. Compared to Miss La Creevy's shop door, however, the classes of people that were being brought together had widened radically.⁵⁰ Seeing Tom Sayers, a bare-knuckle prize fighter, beside Lord Derby, the man who proposed the series of South Kensington portrait exhibitions in the 1860s, became not only possible, but a common occurrence. As a result, Wynter succinctly declared *cartes* to embody 'the democracy of portraiture'.⁵¹ A critic for *All the Year Round* similarly noted that 'there is always plenty to look at' in a photographer's shop window: 'Men and women of all classes, of all ranks, and of all sort of characters may be studied from the pavement.'⁵² The National Portrait Gallery strictly excluded photographs from its collection as part of its aim to maintain the 'true dignity of portrait painting as an art'.⁵³ Yet the portrait photograph's reputation as an inferior mode of portraiture was soon compensated by its popularity and commercial success as a democratic form in the creation of alternative portrait galleries.

The development of photography transformed the idea of a portrait gallery – the figures who comprised it, the spaces it occupied, and the people who had access to it. Nevertheless, Wynter's language to describe these alternative portrait galleries often echoed the essential aim of the formal institution: the preservation of the nation's greats.

⁴⁹ Andrew Wynter, 'Cartes-de-Visites', *Once a Week*, 6.135 (January 1862), 134-37 (p. 135). An anonymous critic similarly declared that the popular sale and circulation of *cartes* had the effect of 'multiply[ing] national portrait galleries *ad infinitum*'. [Unsigned], 'Cartes-de-Visites', *Art-Journal*, 82 (October 1861), 306-07 (p. 306).

⁵⁰ On the sensational quality of photography collections and its relationship with sensation fiction, see Rachel Teukolsky, 'Cartomania: Sensation, Celebrity, and the Democratized Portrait', *Victorian Studies*, 57.3 (Spring 2015), 462-75.

⁵¹ Wynter, 'Cartes de Visite', in *Curiosities of Toil and Other Papers*, 2 vols (London: Chapman and Hall, 1870), ii, 112-34 (p. 112).

⁵² [Unsigned], 'Looking in at Shop Windows', *All the Year Round*, 2.28 (12 June 1869), 37-43 (p. 42).

⁵³ Earl of Stanhope speaking to the House of Commons. See 'Lords Sitting of 4 March 1856: Gallery of National Portraits', *Hansard: The Official Reports of Debates in Parliament, 1803-2005*, series 3, vol. 140: <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

He imagines a box of photographs from the photographic ‘House of Marion & Co. of Regent Street’:

What a collection of British faces! If a box or two of them were to be sealed up and buried deep in the ground, to be dug up two or three centuries hence, what a prize they would be to the fortunate finder!⁵⁴

The National Portrait Gallery’s selection criteria demanded that its subjects be ‘valuable as illustrating the civil, ecclesiastical, or literary history of the country’,⁵⁵ and the photography studio similarly built its collection according to ‘the notability of the person depicted’.⁵⁶ The nation still desired a gallery of ‘greats’, but the difference between the galleries lay in how this notability was measured. Photography studio shop windows were not concerned with illustrating history in the same manner as the formal institution; relying upon a more ephemeral form of celebrity, it was, in the words of the critic for *All the Year Round*, ‘sufficient’ that the figures be ‘talked about at the moment’.⁵⁷

As the portrait gallery shifted from a wallpapered institution to a casual box, the idea of the gallery became a mobile phenomenon that not only moved physically, but was also constantly being re-shaped by fluctuating popular taste. Hardy’s Paula Power represents the growing pleasure of collecting portraits. Displayed on her mantelpiece, beside ‘knickknacks of various descriptions’, are ‘photographic portraits of the artistic, scientific, and literary celebrities of the day’.⁵⁸ Even George Scharf, the director of the National Portrait Gallery, was not immune from the desire to collect portraits. He regularly appeared on *cartes* and he gathered the portraits of leading figures in

⁵⁴ Wynter, ‘Cartes-de-Visites’, *Once a Week*, 6.135 (January 1862), 134-37 (p. 135).

⁵⁵ ‘Rules: Which the Trustees Have Adopted for their Guidance [...] By Order, George Scharf, Secretary and Keeper’ (1872). Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG 7/1/1/3/2: Specimens of Gallery Forms (1859-1872), form no. 14. The rules were later published as part of the gallery’s official catalogue.

⁵⁶ Wynter, ‘Cartes-de-Visites’, *Once a Week*, 6.135 (January 1862), 134-37 (p. 135).

⁵⁷ [Unsigned], ‘Looking in at Shop Windows’, p. 42.

⁵⁸ Hardy, *A Laodicean*, ed. John Schad (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 31.

nineteenth-century culture to form a private collection at home.⁵⁹ Unable to escape his role as a gallery director, however, he catalogued the collection in his diary, recording the name, date, and price of each face he acquired.⁶⁰

The alternative portrait galleries of the shop window and private collection borrowed conventions from the formal institution, only to radically alter the way in which people and portraits interacted. Through the illusion of bridging physical and class distances, they blurred the boundaries of the public and private encounter. On and through the album's pages, private encounters could be had with celebrities one had never met (and probably would never meet),⁶¹ including Queen Victoria, whose portrait was sold in the hundreds of thousands in the early 1860s.⁶² The resulting gallery – as one critic stated in words that express how far the gallery had moved from the formal institution – was a collection of ‘the family portraits of the entire community’ or nation.⁶³ As expressed in a *Punch* cartoon of 1888, this bridging of the public and private spheres could, however, also entail an unwanted violation of privacy, visually disclosing ‘Things one would rather have left unsaid’ (fig. 3.6). Indeed, for Jude, the chance discovery of his portrait in a broker's shop forced the private encounter onto the public stage of the marketplace.

⁵⁹ George Scharf was photographed by Maull & Polyblank in 1861, Southwell Brothers in 1864, Ernest Edwards in 1866, and Nadar in 1867. See the *cartes* in the National Portrait Gallery online catalogue: <<http://www.npg.org.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

⁶⁰ Malcolm Rogers, *Camera Portraits: Photographs from the National Portrait Gallery, London, 1839-1989* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1989), p. 10.

⁶¹ Much critical attention has recently been paid to Victorian photograph albums as artefacts of social interaction. The arrangement of *cartes* is read as a construction of the identity of the album's owner, and as a map of their (virtual) acquaintances. On family albums, see Philip Stokes, ‘The Family Photograph Album: So Great a Cloud of Witnesses’, *The Portrait in Photography*, ed. Graham Clarke (London: Reaktion Books, 1992), pp. 193-205. See also Patrizia Di Bello, *Women's Albums and Photography in Victorian England: Ladies, Mothers, and Flirts* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Elizabeth Siegel, *Galleries of Friendship and Fame: A History of Nineteenth-Century American Photograph Albums* (London: Yale University Press, 2010); and Perry.

⁶² Wynter, ‘Cartes-de-Visites’, *Once a Week*, 6.135 (January 1862), 134-37 (p. 135).

⁶³ [Unsigned], ‘Cartes-de-Visites’, *Art-Journal*, 82 (October 1861), 306-07 (p. 306).

Whether for disadvantage or advantage, the *carte*'s portability had imaginative potential for social movement, which led *Punch* to draw a comparison with the official travel document of the passport:

we would suggest that photographs be used henceforth as passports. Every traveller should have his *carte de visite* taken and attested as his likeness before he starts from home: and the production of this portrait should be an open sesame at any frontier gate.⁶⁴

The analogy is striking since, in 1864, when the *Punch* article was printed, passports did not include portraits. Instead, they relied upon basic '[p]en and ink descriptions' of the face by way of a verbal portrait.⁶⁵ The use of the term 'passport' to mean an official document authorising a person to travel to, from, or through a foreign country was by this time well established.⁶⁶ So too was portrait photography, but it was not until 1915 that the United Kingdom introduced a passport design that incorporated a photograph.⁶⁷ For example, Edmund Gosse's passport, issued in 1928, includes his portrait alongside the verbal inventory detailing his blue eyes and light hair, serving as support for the black and white image (figs. 3.7, 3.8).⁶⁸ Photography was democratising in the range of people

⁶⁴ [Unsigned], 'Photographic Passports', *Punch*, 44 (18 April 1863), p. 144.

⁶⁵ In his travel writing, Charles Dickens similarly provided a verbal portrait of his reader 'passport wise', granting them access into his text and inviting them to journey with him as they read:

Complexion....Fair.
Eyes....Very cheerful.
Nose....Not supercilious.
Mouth....Smiling.
Visage....Beaming.
General Expression....Extremely Agreeable.

See *Pictures from Italy* [1846], ed. Kate Flint (London: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 7.

⁶⁶ Its first use dates to 1498. See "passport, n.1", *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, June 2017): <<http://www.oed.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

⁶⁷ For a history of the passport, see Martin Lloyd, *The Passport: The History of Man's Most Travelled Document* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2003) (p. 104).

⁶⁸ British Passport of E. W. Gosse, issued 14 April 1928. Special Collections, Leeds University Library. Bc 19c Gosse, D PER 4. This inventory of the defining colours in Gosse's appearance recalls the effort by the National Portrait Gallery to make detailed *Notes on the Colours of Features of Hair and Complexion of Portraits Lent to the South Kensington Exhibition of 1866 and of 1867*. Heinz Archive and Library, National Portrait Gallery, London. MS. NPG 7/2/4/8. For more on this unpublished document, see chapter one of this thesis. Whereas the gallery recorded these colours as compensation for not having a visual record of the painting, the passport does so to compliment the visual portrait. Nonetheless, colour is highlighted as an expressive and informative aspect of the face in the nineteenth century.

it pictured and through the new proximity it fostered between people and the people depicted in portraits, but it could also transform the relationship between a person and their own portrait. Any such transformation was, more often than not, troubling.

In his history of the passport, Martin Lloyd notes that after photographs were introduced, regulation of the image still did not exist. The photograph was simply meant to show the person as they appeared in life – ‘if you wore a hat, then you were photographed in a hat’.⁶⁹ Indeed, *Punch* mocked the accuracy and authenticity that was often associated with photographic portraiture in the second half of the nineteenth century. The magazine placed the ability to recognise someone from their passport photograph at the whim of fashion. ‘[M]en changing their appearance by wearing cut-throat collars in place of ancient stick-ups, or by suddenly indulging in the growth of long cat’s whiskers or a beard or a moustache,’ *Punch* states, ‘of course would have to sit for a new portrait when they did so, as the old one would no longer bear the least likeness to life’.⁷⁰ The sitter must resemble their portrait, rather the other way around. As a result, the authority of the portrait overrides the agency of the subject from which it was taken. This shift of agency echoes the critic for *All the Year Round*, who suggested that the sale of portraits not only reflected celebrity, but also created it:

Get somebody to draw any sort of portrait of him, and have it photographed. The public will buy it. If it be unlike him, the public will resent his being unlike his photograph; not his photograph’s being unlike him.⁷¹

Punch highlights the problem of a person’s identity being tied to their portrait, but fails to capture the full imaginative potential of the *carte* as a moving object. The *carte* was more than just a passport that could be carried in a person’s pocket to grant them access to near or far-off locations; the individual could also be transported and transformed virtually by

⁶⁹ Lloyd, *The Passport*, p. 104.

⁷⁰ [Unsigned], ‘Photographic Passports’, p. 144.

⁷¹ [Unsigned], ‘Looking in at Shop Windows’, p. 42.

way of the *carte* itself. Indeed, Walter Benjamin has theorised that, by way of its inherent reproducibility, the photograph could ‘place the copy of the original in situations beyond the reach of the original itself’.⁷²

In Hardy’s fiction, the *carte* is repeatedly aligned with another item of moving paper: the letter, which from 1840 (only one year after the introduction of photography) could easily and cheaply be sent through the penny post.⁷³ The introduction of the penny post established a uniform price for sending a letter and thereby democratised the postal system. By way of sending a letter, geographical distance was collapsed in a manner similar to the passport. Through the exchanging of letters, the resulting physical networks also created affective networks. In her study of Victorian letter-writing, Catherine Golden writes that ‘[f]or a penny, people could send letters to far-flung friends and relations and leave home knowing it was possible to remain connected to family, friends, and communities near and dear to their hearts’.⁷⁴ When Hardy repeatedly presents the *carte* in the letter’s typical ‘frame’, an envelope, he brings into play this analogy between distance and intimacy. In *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy narrates how Phillotson went to his desk ‘and found therein an envelope, from which he drew a photograph’ (*JO*, p. 154). In *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1875), Neigh draws from his pocket-book ‘an envelope embossed with the name of a fashionable photographer, and out of this pulled a portrait of the lady who had, in fact, enslaved his secret self’.⁷⁵

Similar language of network and proximity was employed by the *Art-Journal* to describe the *carte* in 1861:

⁷² Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, trans. J. A. Underwood (London: Penguin Books, 2008 [1936]), p. 6.

⁷³ On the influence of the penny post on Hardy’s fiction and poetry, see Karin Koehler, *Thomas Hardy and Victorian Communication: Letters, Telegrams and Postal Systems* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2016).

⁷⁴ Catherine J. Golden, *Posting It: The Victorian Revolution in Letter Writing* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2009), p. 4.

⁷⁵ Hardy, *The Hand of Ethelberta*, ed. Tim Dolin (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 150.

When our friends leave us, they leave us with these precious images which we can always and everywhere carry about with us, to feast our bodily eyes with their graphic representations, as memory is able to treasure up and to pass in mental review incidents that the past has taken with it, and words whose echoes have long ago died away. And when fresh connections are formed, or when new links are added to old chains, the ever-available *carte-de-visite* is ready to make known to us here at home, *in propriâ personâ*, a far-away new daughter-in-law, or the one (or the number whatever-you-please) of another generation.⁷⁶

Bearing a penny stamp (another example of the Victorian portrait miniature), the letter serves as a useful analogue for the *carte*'s capacity to collapse geographical, temporal, and affective distance. With the aid of an imaginative gaze, the *carte*'s portability and 'handy' materiality could preserve lost relations and materialise those whom the observer had never met. In the above passage, the *carte* is something that is carried, like the passport. Even then, however, it can assume agency over the person carrying it. The metaphor of a network of accumulative chains soon begins to feel claustrophobic. As well as facilitating movement – providing access to any 'frontier gate' – and creating the illusion of proximity, the *carte* could also enchain its owner. Indeed, the *carte* of a lover enslaves the emotions of Hardy's Neigh. The diversity of metaphors applied to *cartes de visite* in the second half of the nineteenth century is essential to how they function in Hardy's novels and poems, which continually counterpoint the *carte*'s capacity to create intimacy with its ability to emotionally imprison – though, for Hardy, the promise of its intimacy may only be an illusion.

Material Manipulation: The Carte in the Detective Plot

The *carte*'s ease of circulation and the banality of its materiality meant that it had a contradictory identity in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Its problematic nature was often brought to the fore in fiction and a particular kind of narrative served as a means of

⁷⁶ [Unsigned], 'Cartes-de-Visites', *Art-Journal*, 82 (October 1861), 306-07 (p. 306).

disclosing card portraits' sensational potential: the detective plot. It was not long after its invention that the photograph was, to use the words of Elizabeth Eastlake, in 'the pocket of the detective'.⁷⁷ As early as the 1840s, photography was used for the identification and documentation of criminals in mug-shots, and it was subsequently used in courtrooms as visual testimony.⁷⁸ The *Photographic Times* reported in 1871: 'as a witness in the courts of justice, photography is constantly employed in detecting forgery, revealing perjury, and in telling the truth'.⁷⁹ Nineteenth-century detective fiction therefore frequently employed the photograph as a plot device and *cartes* appeared in Hardy's fiction as early as his first novel, a detective plot, *Desperate Remedies* (1871).⁸⁰

Hardy, however, placed the photograph not in the hands of the detective, but in those of the criminal. In *Desperate Remedies*, Aeneas Manston exploits the authority of a photographic likeness to exchange and fabricate people's identities. He does so by interchanging the likeness and mount of two *cartes*, one of his late wife and the other depicting an anonymous woman that he takes from a *carte* album. He subsequently burns his wife's photograph. Subverting the truth-telling function of photography, Hardy exposes how the material manipulation of mounts could enable photographs to lie. Not only are photographs misused by Hardy's characters, but the photographic process itself is criminally manipulated in *A Laodicean* (1881). When William Dare forges a photograph of George Somerset, picturing him with the 'distorted features and wild attitude of a man advanced in intoxication', he (at least initially) succeeds in falsely

⁷⁷ [Elizabeth Eastlake], 'Photography', *Quarterly Review*, 101.202 (April 1857), 442-65 (p. 443).

⁷⁸ On the use of photographs as legal evidence, see John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (London: Macmillan, 1987).

⁷⁹ [Unsigned], 'Some of the Modern Appliances of Photography', *Photographic Times*, 1.3 (1871), p. 34.

⁸⁰ On the use of photography in nineteenth-century detective fiction, see Ronald R. Thomas, 'Making Darkness Visible: Capturing the Criminal and Observing the Law in Victorian Photography and Detective Fiction', in *Victorian Literature and the Victorian Visual Imagination*, eds. Carol T. Christ and John O. Jordan (London: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 134-68. Observing the relationship between photography and theatre, Daniel Novak also surveys numerous neglected Victorian plays that featured photographers and included scenes set in photography studios. See 'Caught in the Act: Photography on the Victorian Stage', *Victorian Studies*, 59.1 (Autumn 2016), 35-64.

incriminating him amongst his companions.⁸¹ They view the photograph as if it were a mug-shot: ‘To them the picture of Somerset had all the cogency of direct vision’, in the same manner as a photograph of Dare is previously perceived as a ‘transcript’ of his features, verifying his identity and criminal tendency.⁸² Yet chemicals, too, could be stage-managed to present biased information.

By placing doubt on the veracity of photographic images and locating the material format of the *carte* at the centre of its significance, Hardy prompts the reader to question the extent to which photographs hold meaning apart from their mount, often with printed name attached. As much as the portrait photograph was believed to be a document of authenticity in the nineteenth century, Hardy suggests that its ability to tell the truth did not rely solely on the image. Its truth-telling capacity was also greatly dependent upon its material framing and textual accompaniment.

The acts of manipulating photograph albums and exploiting a photograph’s textual support also informed a narrative that was printed (unsigned) in Dickens’s magazine *All the Year Round*, in two parts, the same year that Hardy’s *Desperate Remedies* was published. Just as Manston was ‘impregnated with a bright idea’ while meditating upon a *carte* album, a ‘New Idea’ is sparked in the mind of the article’s fictional narrator ‘through the immediate agency of a photograph book’.⁸³ At a dinner party, the protagonist, a struggling inventor, encounters ‘a large square photographic album, richly bound in crimson morocco, with gilt clasps’, and ‘full of portraits of City men; business associates, and private friends’ of the magnate who had invited him that evening. Beside each *carte* in the album is the hand-written signature of the sitter, a fact

⁸¹ Hardy, *A Laodicean*, pp. 280-81.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 283, 137.

⁸³ Hardy, *Desperate Remedies*, p. 306. [Unsigned], ‘My New Idea: Dedicated to MM. Les Chevaliers d’Industrie. In Two Parts. Part I’, *All the Year Round*, 5.121 (25 March 1871), 403-08 (p. 406). The second part was published shortly after on 1 April 1871.

which inspires his criminal idea based on forming his own album with the guests' portraits. To avoid suspicion, he feigns a plan to travel abroad, relying on it being the norm to want to carry photographs of friends with you when going away. Before his new wealthy acquaintances autograph their likeness in his album, however, he artfully inserts unsigned cheques between the pages. When writing their name beneath the portrait, they unknowingly sign a series of cheques made out to himself.

Whether Hardy knew of this article is unknown, but the motif of manipulating photograph albums had clearly become an entertaining and useful device for storytelling. The narrative is also reminiscent of cases that brought together photography and criminal forgery before the Victorian courts. In the early 1870s, a forged photograph played a starring role in the trial of a man's attempt to claim the identity and inheritance of the heir-presumed-missing, Roger Tichborne. He was ruled as an imposter and prosecuted, but he was nonetheless raised to fame with the sale of souvenir copies of the photograph and through the extensive coverage of the trial that featured in the press. David Wayne Thomas suggests that press accounts of the trial rivalled detective fiction.⁸⁴

As noted in chapter one, *All the Year Round* often transgressed the boundaries of journalism to borrow techniques from fiction. Yet, as the article about an inventor's 'new idea' progresses, it becomes evident that the protagonist lacks the keen criminal mind belonging to a character that would be found in a detective plot by, the master of detective plots, Arthur Conan Doyle. Doyle was a keen photographer and published several essays in the *British Journal of Photography* between 1881 and 1885.⁸⁵ Portrait

⁸⁴ David Wayne Thomas, 'The Work of Imposture: The Victorian Public and the Tichborne Case', in *Cultivating Victorians: Liberal Culture and the Aesthetic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 81-117 (pp. 88-89). I am also grateful to Jennifer Tucker for sharing her research into the significance of photography for the Tichborne Trial by email and in person. Her book on the Tichborne Trial in the Victorian visual imagination is forthcoming.

⁸⁵ The essays are reprinted in Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Unknown Conan Doyle: Essays on Photography*, eds. John Michael Gibson and Richard Lancelyn Green (London: Secker & Warburg, 1982).

photographs subsequently became stock props in his fiction, serving as evidence for Doyle's detective hero, Sherlock Holmes, who also employs an enquiring photographic vision to interpret the world as a series of clues. The plot of 'A Scandal in Bohemia' (1891) hinges upon his perception that a photograph is 'cabinet size' and therefore '[t]oo large for easy concealment about a woman's dress' – it cannot be carried in a pocket.⁸⁶ For Doyle, photographs could also be problematic items. In *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1891-92), a photograph only serves as evidence because it is 'endorsed' with the printed names of the individuals it pictures.⁸⁷ Approaching a parody of such detective fiction, the article in *All the Year Round* follows an inventor who falsifies cheques, of only small monetary amounts, to support an application for a bank loan that he intends to repay. The narrative fails to supply the sensation promised by its initial introduction of the *carte* album, but reflects the dual role played by the photograph album in nineteenth-century society. The *carte* album's imaginative possibilities were built upon, and restrained by, its status as both a sacred and common item. Writing for *All the Year Round* in 1862, Charles Allston Collins acknowledged the popularity of 'those wonderful books which everybody possesses'.⁸⁸ Often embossed and decorated, the *carte-de-visite* album became a secular bible.⁸⁹ Yet these albums were not unanimously celebrated. Walter Benjamin lamented their ubiquity; 'leather-bound tomes with

⁸⁶ Doyle, 'A Scandal in Bohemia', in *Sherlock Holmes: Selected Stories*, ed. Barry McCrea (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 102-23 (p. 116). The story was originally published in the *Strand* in July 1891.

⁸⁷ Doyle, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, ed. W. W. Robson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 144.

⁸⁸ [Charles Allston Collins], 'The Carte de Visite', *All the Year Round*, 7.157 (26 April 1862), 165-68. *Dickens Journals Online*: <<http://www.djo.org.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017]. Collins is identified as the author by Jeremy Parrott. Information received through personal correspondence (31 July 2016). As noted by DJO, the article was evidently very popular from the frequency with which it was reprinted or quoted in other periodicals: *Photographic News* (May 1862); *Mercury* (July 1862); *Sydney Morning Herald* (October 1862).

⁸⁹ Edwards and Hart, Introduction to *Photographs Objects Histories*, p. 11.

repulsive metal clasps and pages with gold edges as wide as your finger', he reflected, could always be found 'on console or pedestal tables in the parlour'.⁹⁰

Whether treated sensationally or satirically, the photograph album was a compelling object for nineteenth-century narratives. 'Socially speaking', writes *All the Year Round*'s inventor-narrator, 'a man may generally be considered as being in a bad way when he spends an evening, or indeed any portion of an evening, in examining a collection of photographic portraits', since it suggests 'a dearth of conversational resources'.⁹¹ In its ability to compensate for loneliness by substituting living acquaintances, the photograph album constructs a social fantasy. The inventor recalls his first encounter with the album:

a sort of hot shooting sensation seemed to pass through my body; the portraits of the capitalists began to revolve and swim before my eyes, and I was hardly able to support the weight of the book as it lay open upon my knees. My great idea was just beginning to suggest itself.⁹²

The photograph album's creative, as well as imaginative, capacity is reflected in its rivalry for the role of protagonist in the article. The album is not simply at the centre of the narrative; it brings the story into being.

It is unfortunate and curious that, besides the calotype in Pierston's escritoire and the *cartes* manipulated by Manston, Hardy leaves the specific format of the photographs in his novels unidentified. By the end of the century when Hardy was writing *Jude the Obscure*, which features the largest number of photographs of all his novels, the Kodak snapshot was prevalent. François Brunet identifies the Kodak print revolution as the deciding moment when the nineteenth-century fascination with photography in social and

⁹⁰ Benjamin, 'Brief History of Photography', p. 180.

⁹¹ [Unsigned], 'My New Idea', p. 406.

⁹² Ibid., p. 407.

critical discourse became the subject of the novelist.⁹³ Brunet argues that before 1880, authors of ‘serious’ fiction were hesitant to include photographers and photographs in their work. Whether detective fiction would be labelled as ‘unserious’ is irrelevant. The *carte* remained the key player in narratives about the materiality of photographic portraits that can be found across nineteenth-century fiction, and that can be found to have especially vivid effect in Hardy’s fiction. Hardy’s general omission as to the type of photographs he featured in his writing was not due to a lack of technological knowledge of the art,⁹⁴ but can be read as affirmation of his stronger interest in the photograph’s life following its production. For Hardy, the life led by a portrait photograph was more unconventional than it was ordinary, and the story of this life often came out of the photograph’s material properties.

Hardy on a Cigarette Card: An Unconventional Portrait Narrative

This chapter is concerned with what happens to photographs *after* their intended purpose, what Jennifer Green-Lewis refers to as “‘found’” photographs: those that ‘might be discovered in a drawer, or an estate sale, or among other odds and ends in a thrift store’.⁹⁵ She defines a ‘found’ photograph as any ‘that has become untethered from the original circumstances of its production; [...] attached to no particular biography or history’.⁹⁶ Still, the fact that the photographs exist, she writes, ‘attests to their hidden personal significance; they have mattered in ways in which they do not matter now’. Hardy was interested in such ‘found’ photographs. Yet, for him, new meaning could also be

⁹³ François Brunet, *Photography and Literature* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009), pp. 77-79.

⁹⁴ Hardy’s astute knowledge of the aesthetics and technology of photography is evident in Hardy’s correspondence with Lea. Hardy requested that the chimney pot he took a disliking to in one of Lea’s photographs be removed from the negative. See Hardy to Lea, 12 November 1904, in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, iii, 146.

⁹⁵ Green-Lewis, *Victorian Photography, Literature, and the Invention of Modern Memory*, p. 141.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 141-42.

acquired through the *unintended* circumstances in which a photograph might belatedly find itself, and by way of the multiple biographies of which it subsequently becomes a part. He was fascinated by the accidents of life; ‘the FAILURE of THINGS to be what they are meant to be’ because it ‘lends them in place of the intended interest a new and greater interest of an unintended kind’.⁹⁷ When a photograph is no longer tied to its original circumstances – when it is re-sold at auction or, in a more extreme removal from its original state, when it is manipulated or forged – it matters in ways in which it did not matter before. It acquires new significance, refracted through its past life, of which traces may remain. While Green-Lewis refers to the significance of finding a Victorian photograph today, the multiple findings of a photograph and the multiple biographies in which it subsequently participates could, because of the card portrait’s portability and mutable materiality, accumulate swiftly within the shorter time frame of the second half of the nineteenth century.

The unconventional afterlife of a portrait photograph can be observed in conjunction with Bill Brown’s enquiry into ‘the thingness of objects when they stop working for us’, when they no longer work in their typical or common function.⁹⁸ ‘Object’ and ‘thing’ have so far been used interchangeably in this chapter to identify the photograph as something material as well as visual, but these terms come with implications by way of ‘thing theories’ that have developed in art history, visual anthropology, and literary studies. ‘Thing theory’, as originally put forward by Bill Brown, is defined by Plotz as a method for providing meaning when ‘strict rules for classifying and comprehending phenomena seem suddenly no longer to apply’.⁹⁹ So-called ‘thingness’ is applied to ‘an object that is troubling because it is perched on the

⁹⁷ A note headed: ‘1879. January 1. New Year’s thought.’ Hardy, *Life and Work*, p. 127.

⁹⁸ Bill Brown, ‘Thing Theory’, *Critical Enquiry*, 28.1 (Autumn 2001), 1-22 (p. 4).

⁹⁹ Plotz, ‘Can the Sofa Speak? A Look at Thing Theory’, *Criticism*, 41.1 (Winter 2005), 109-18 (p. 118).

boundary between sign and substance'.¹⁰⁰ This was certainly the case with the portrait photograph in the mid- to late nineteenth-century. Yet, with its shifting significance as object and image, what was the card portrait's typical function? When did it no longer 'work'? To interrogate the point at which the Victorian *carte* ceased to be conventional and began to function unconventionally, one can look to a particular series of celebrity card portraits that could be found in an unusual place in the closing decades of the century: inside cigarette packets. While the authority of a likeness was challenged through the street sale and in the detective plot, the material context of the cigarette packet stretched the intended function of portraiture to its limits.

In the late nineteenth century, Hardy's portrait would have been seen amongst the crowd of notables staring back from photography studio shop windows.¹⁰¹ Yet his photographic likeness, taken by Francis Henry Hart for Elliott and Fry in 1894, could also have been seen as part of a 'gallery' further removed from the walls housing Scharf's national collection, a 'gallery' which was therefore even more idiosyncratic in its circulation. Hardy's portrait was reproduced on cigarette cards published by the leading nineteenth-century tobacco company, Ogden's, and distributed inside their cigarette packets between the years 1895 and 1907 (fig. 3.9).¹⁰² Pictured with his recognisable moustache, Hardy is identified as the man who 'wrote "Tess of the d'Urbervilles", "Jude the Obscure", and other famous novels'. He featured on card number eighty-three alongside other novelists, artists, actors, sportsmen, and royalty as

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 112.

¹⁰¹ Hardy lamented the wide circulation of his photographic portraits: they were 'sold by several photographers, & exposed in their windows, & editors publish them in papers whenever they choose'. See Hardy to Lea, 14 October 1904, in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, iii, 140.

¹⁰² The National Portrait Gallery, London, holds a collection of 178 Ogden's 'Guinea Gold' cigarette cards, published c. 1895-1907. A digitised catalogue of the collection can be found online: <<http://www.npg.org.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

part of Ogden's far-ranging parade.¹⁰³ Wilkie Collins, Rudyard Kipling, Edward Burne-Jones, G. F. Watts, Sarah Bernhardt, and Queen Alexandra all appeared on cards; so too did, Charles Dickens, Robert Browning, and Thomas Carlyle (figs. 3.11 - 3.13). The cards grew so popular as collectors' items that, as expressed by Gordon Howsden, it was almost inconceivable in these decades for someone to open a packet of cigarettes and not find a card inside;

maybe they looked at it and tossed it away, perhaps it was given to one of the band of small boys who used cards for a variety of ingenious playground games, but often it was kept, treasured and mounted in one of the special albums sold by the tobacco manufacturers.¹⁰⁴

Ogden's use of photography transformed the trading card into an item of portraiture comparable to the *carte de visite*, but the portraits in this pantheon are distinguished for their secondary life and function beyond the portrait's primary role as a likeness. The choice to include Hardy recognises his celebrity status, but the card was not designed to promote the author and his novels. It was first and foremost an advert for Ogden's Guinea Gold Cigarettes. Furthermore, the card's initial purpose was distinctly practical: to stiffen the otherwise delicate cigarette packaging and to protect the product inside.¹⁰⁵ Applying photography to the card was a later addition, successfully exploiting the popularity of portrait collecting to help tobacco brands compete with one another. Hardy's photograph, like that of his hero Jude, became a piece of portable property for sale. Like the photograph that tumbles from Tabitha's pocket, Hardy might have tumbled from the pockets of many Victorians.

¹⁰³ A variation of card number 83 appeared with a portrait of Hardy seated, holding a book (fig. 3.10). Gordon Howsden estimates that 'counting all the lettering, caption and portrait variations, it would be possible to collect 20,000 different pictures'. See *Collecting Cigarette and Trade Cards* (London: New Cavendish Books, 1995), p. 55. For an overview of the cigarette cards distributed in the nineteenth century (and since), see *The (New) World Tobacco Issues Index*, 2 vols (Boston, Lincolnshire: Cartophilic Society of Great Britain Ltd., 2000). For a catalogue of all the cigarette cards distributed by Ogden's, including the Guinea Gold series, see *The Cigarette Card Issues of Ogden's Ltd.* (Boston, Lincolnshire: Cartophilic Society of Great Britain Ltd., 2005).

¹⁰⁴ Howsden, p. 7. Complete albums containing the full collection could also be purchased.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

While the cigarette card's appropriation of portraiture shows the breadth of the popularity and use of card portraits in the late nineteenth century, a comparison is also troubling for what it highlights about the materiality inherent to the *carte*. Mills suggests that '[t]he misuse of objects leads to the magnification of their physical properties': 'It is not until a thing is misused (for example, a picture turned upside down) that we see it clearly and in ways that we are not habituated to see it.'¹⁰⁶ Placing the card portrait upside down, back to front, whichever way inside a cigarette packet identifies it as another piece of Victorian ephemera.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, Lara Perry observes that *cartes* were 'distinctive in their surplus ordinariness': 'small in scale and printed on flimsy paper'.¹⁰⁸ The *carte*'s format and size was determined not by the photographic likeness, but by the mount upon which it was pasted for support. The mounts were manufactured to a standard size of approximately two and a half by four inches; whatever type of camera was used, the photograph would be trimmed to fit the card, rather than the other way around.¹⁰⁹ Through the format of the *carte*, the portrait was democratised in a second sense as an object to the point that it was taken so far from the institution of the gallery that it was 'framed' by a cigarette packet. In the mid- to late nineteenth century, *cartes* could be purchased not only from photographic studios, but also from print shops, stationers, booksellers, and novelty emporia – sold not only amongst a crowd of other portraits, but also amongst a miscellany of other objects.¹¹⁰ According to a piece of

¹⁰⁶ Mills, p. 46. Mills draws directly upon Bill Brown's 'Thing Theory' as presented in his study *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 74.

¹⁰⁷ See the entries for 'cigarette card' and 'photographic ephemera' in Maurice Rickards, *The Encyclopedia of Ephemera: A Guide to the Fragmentary Documents of Everyday Life for the Collector, Curator, and Historian*, ed. Michael Twyman (London: The British Library, 2000), pp. 96-97, p. 233.

¹⁰⁸ Perry, p. 729.

¹⁰⁹ Linkman, p. 61; and Elizabeth Siegel, p. 20.

¹¹⁰ Linkman, p. 66; Peter Hamilton and Roger Hargreaves, *The Beautiful and the Damned: The Creation of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Photography* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2001), pp. 44-45; and Elizabeth Siegel, p. 63.

‘Fine-Art Gossip’ in the *Athenæum*, competition between photography studios led to one advertisement strikingly offering ‘your likeness and a cigar for sixpence’.¹¹¹

The harder one looks for occasions on which the *carte* functioned unconventionally in the nineteenth century, the more its multiple uses appear conventional. What was typical of the nineteenth-century card portrait proves difficult to pin down. A *carte*’s misuse, or unintended use, can be charted from its inception. Translated from its French name, *carte de visite* means ‘visiting card’, an item that requested access to other people’s homes and served as a reminder that you had been there. Yet it was rarely ever used for that purpose.¹¹² An anonymous critic sympathised with the cards early in their life because they ‘must be content to be known by an inapplicable and indeed unmeaning French name’.¹¹³

Considering the portrait photograph as one item amongst many things reveals its inherent materiality, but also emphasises that it remains distinct as a particular kind of thing that is never *only* an object, never only a piece of card (though it may masquerade as such). As noted by Elizabeth Ann McCauley, the *carte* was ‘created as a social and historical document for the family and individual consumers, but it could also be passed from hand to hand as a source of amusement, entertainment, and titillation’.¹¹⁴ These kinds of unconventional narratives can be followed in Hardy’s late novel, *Jude the Obscure*. The promiscuous exchange of card portraits in the background of the novel’s plot challenges the ethics of relationships and troubles the fundamental idea of the portrait as an analogue for the person.

¹¹¹ ‘Fine-Art Gossip’, *Athenæum*, 1963 (10 June 1863), 787-88 (p. 788).

¹¹² Plunkett, p. 55.

¹¹³ [Unsigned], ‘Cartes-de-Visites’, *Art-Journal*, 82 (October 1861), 306-07 (p. 306).

¹¹⁴ Elizabeth Ann McCauley, *A. A. E. Disdéri and the Carte-de-Visite Portrait Photograph* (London: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 100.

Plotting the Afterlives of Card Portraits in Jude the Obscure

Photographic card portraits were encountered in various spaces in the mid- to late nineteenth century – in shop windows, in photograph albums, and even in cigarette cases – and they were also found in the literary text. While ‘thing theories’ usefully navigate the human-object encounter as part of the different functions to which a card portrait was put in late nineteenth century, they fail to always acknowledge that, in the ‘frame’ of the novel, the portrait object is out of reach of the reader’s hand. Emphasising the materiality of the photograph may now seem futile since, as part of a text, its materiality is approached through the immateriality of words. When a physical, three-dimensional object is reproduced in the imagination, it becomes a picture. How, therefore, are material objects read in the novel? It becomes a matter of examining which objects demand the reader’s attention and why, questions which direct attention towards the collection. Mieke Bal theorises that the practice of collecting objects is analogous to the rhetorical strategies of narrative: ‘Collecting is an essential human feature that originates in the need to tell stories, but for which there are neither words nor other conventional narrative modes. Hence, collecting is a story, and everyone needs to tell it.’¹¹⁵ This comparison has not gone unnoticed by scholars of literary things. As noted by Shearer and Harrison, for a Victorian novel that is full of things the reader is forced to take on the role of a collector:

reading becomes an act of sifting through details and selecting those that fit larger symbolic patterns. Consequently, objects are ‘scattered everywhere’ – not always *signifying* in anything but a basic material sense – can never be left ‘symbolically unattended without an element of readerly anxiety’.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Mieke Bal, ‘Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting’, in *The Cultures of Collecting*, eds. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), pp. 97-115 (p. 103).

¹¹⁶ Jonathan Shearer and Jen Harrison, ‘Literary *Bric-à-Brac*: Introducing Things’, in *Literary Bric-à-Brac and the Victorians*, p. 13. See also Freedgood, p. 6.

Novels function by descriptively prioritising certain moments to shape a narrative that tells a story about its characters and places. Photographs similarly preserve certain moments – the act of photographing something enacts the process of remembering – and a collection of photographs constructs a narrative that can retrospectively tell a story about the people pictured.

Approaching Hardy's novels in terms of evolutionary causality and accident, Gillian Beer observes that Hardy's plot and writing often pull against each other. 'Plot in Hardy is almost always tragic or malign', she states, 'it involves the overthrow of the individual', but these '[d]eterministic systems', she also suggests, 'are placed under great stress: a succession of ghost plots is present'.¹¹⁷ As an object prone to unintended use and accidents, the portrait photograph provided Hardy with a vehicle by which to explore alternative, ghostly plots. Through its treatment by the many people with which it may come into contact, a *carte* acts as a stage for the performance of what might have been – juxtaposed with what is. Hardy's novel *Jude* poses a difficult task for the reader trying to 'catalogue' and organise the many *cartes* (and their duplicates) circulating within the novel's narrative. There are more photographs in *Jude* than in any other of his novels, and they rarely determine the trajectory of events in the way that they can lead to the solution of a mystery in a detective plot. For that reason, the card portraits in *Jude* can be read as, in Batchen's words, 'a tribute to the small dreams and anxieties of ordinary life': the ghostly (im)possibilities in the character's hearts.¹¹⁸ In *Jude*, those looking at photographs enact the stories they wish would be told, but that remain fantasies between

¹¹⁷ Gillian Beer, 'Finding a Scale for the Human: Plot and Writing in Hardy's Novels', in *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Third Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009 [1983]), pp. 220-42 (p. 223).

¹¹⁸ Geoffrey Batchen, 'Dreams of Everyday Life: *Cartes de Visite* and the Bourgeois Imagination', in *Photography: Theoretical Snapshots*, pp. 80-97 (p. 94).

them and the photograph. These fantasies are detectable in Hardy's shaping of the scene, but are ghosts the central plot.

Photographs of Sue Bridehead proliferate in particularly high numbers; exchanged between herself and her suitors, they reflect how the portrait photograph established itself as a courting prop in the nineteenth century.¹¹⁹ Sue owns photographs of Phillotson and an anonymous Oxford graduate – the 'two men in the filigree and velvet frames standing together beside her looking-glass' (*JO*, p. 135) – and in turn distributes her portrait to Phillotson and Jude. Sue's collection is, however, a moderate show compared to the other dressing tables at her teaching school that are lavished with 'various girlish trifles, framed photographs being not the least conspicuous among them' (*JO*, p. 135). The distribution of card portraits as a courting ritual is performed with such frequency in the novel that it becomes an ironic display of affective exchange. The act loses its romantic significance when Sue gives to both Jude and Phillotson duplicates of the same photograph, a portrait, Hardy states, she 'would have given to any man' (*JO*, p. 155). Writing for the *New York Ledger* in 1862, Fanny Fern had presented a similar scenario of multiple portrait exchanges in illustration of the belittling of portraiture as a symbol of affection: 'Fancy an old-fashioned lover endorsing such desecration of his Laura's sacred picture! Fancy him carrying round his own picture in his pocket, to be offered to Tom, Dick and Harry, like a business card or a concert ticket!'¹²⁰ Replace Laura with Sue, and replace Tom, Dick, and Harry with Jude, Phillotson, and the Oxford graduate, and the result is the same: an intricate network of illusory promise.

¹¹⁹ Evidence suggests that Hardy himself might have participated in such practices. Portrait photographs depicting Hardy as a young man have been found in a photograph album belong to Tryphena Sparks, to whom Hardy was once engaged. See *Monographs on the Life, Times and Works of Thomas Hardy*, No. 33: *Tryphena's Portrait Album, and Other Photographs of Hardy Interest*, ed. J. Stevens Cox, with notes by Lois Deacon (Guernsey: Toucan Press, 1967). In his biography of Hardy, Michael Millgate reproduces a photograph of Hardy that he states was given as a gift to Eliza Nicholls. See *Thomas Hardy: A Biography Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), fig. 14.

¹²⁰ Fern, p. 8.

According to Walter Benjamin, the freedom of circulation that came with the reproducibility of card portraits also brought with it a reduction in the ‘aura’ of the original photograph, and, by extension, the aura of the image’s original: the living person.¹²¹ Hardy presents Jude as anxious to create an aura around Sue’s person – an aura that is based on her photograph, but shaped through Jude’s imagination – at the expense of whatever might be her authentic identity. Against the backdrop of moving *cartes* in the novel, Hardy selects several photographs deserving of prolonged descriptive accounts for what they can say – but less for what they say about the subject pictured and more for what they tell about the people with whom they come into contact. Jude first encounters a photograph of Sue in his Aunt’s home. It is seen on the mantelpiece, sitting amongst other domestic props that must be descriptively negotiated: ‘between the brass candlesticks’ was the photograph of ‘a pretty girlish face in a broad hat with radiating folds under the brim like the rays of a halo’ (*JO*, p. 72). While Hardy withholds the visual contents of other photographs, he invites the reader to share Jude’s gaze and visualise the idealised image that dominates his attention. Jude’s romanticising gaze distinguishes the portrait photograph from the surrounding inanimate objects to distinctly animate the image. Jude falls in love with Sue before he meets her in person: he falls in love with the photograph. From then on, he prioritises *his* idealised image over the reality.

This scenario also provides the central action of Hardy’s short story, ‘An Imaginative Woman’ (1894). The imaginative woman of the title is Ella Marchmill, a married woman who falls in love with the poet, Robert Trewe, after finding his photograph hidden in the lodgings where her family are staying over the summer. Unlike Jude, Ella never meets Trewe in person and her love remains directed at the photograph as a substitute for his person. Her act of placing the photograph beneath her pillow is

¹²¹ Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, p. 7.

conjectured to cause her impregnation – or, at least, the transference of resemblance from the poet to her unborn child. Here, the photograph directly informs the narrative's plot. The material significance of the photograph and its proximity to the body of its observer is taken to unusually sensational, even supernatural, ends.¹²²

Photographs in *Jude* lack the same sensational treatment, but in both the novel and the short story Hardy shifts the reader's attention from the subject of the photograph to its observer. Writing of photography in its early years, Elizabeth Eastlake suggested that portrait photographs picture little 'but accurate landmarks and measurements for loving eyes and memories to deck with beauty and animate with expression, in perfect certainty, that the ground-plan is founded on fact'.¹²³ With no memories on which to draw, Ella and Jude are working less from the past and more from the creative impulses of their imagination. This imaginative co-operation by the viewer of a portrait photograph in the formation of its narrative is precisely what Hardy desiderated of the ideal reader of the novel. In 'The Profitable Reading of Fiction' (1888), Hardy states that the aim of reading

should be the exercise of generous imaginativeness, which shall find in a tale not only all that was put there by the author, but he it never so awkwardly, but which shall find there what was never inserted by him, never foreseen, never contemplated. Sometimes these additions which are woven around a work of fiction by the intensive power of the reader's own imagination are the finest parts of the scenery.¹²⁴

For Hardy, the photograph's claim to authenticity and truth provided the opportunity for the observing eye to *re-write* its story.

¹²² For a more detailed analysis of Hardy's use of photography in this story, see my article "'An Imaginative Woman': A Photograph without an Original", *Thomas Hardy Society Journal*, 8.2 (Summer 2012), 38-50.

¹²³ [Eastlake], p. 465.

¹²⁴ Hardy, 'The Profitable Reading of Fiction', in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, ed. Harold Orel (London: Macmillan, 1966), pp. 110-25 (p. 112). The essay was originally published in *Forum*, 5 (New York: March 1888), 57-70.

Jude is initially not permitted to own the photograph of Sue, causing him to long to possess its subject's affection with greater intensity. In a sense, from the moment he first saw it, it was with him: it 'haunted him' (*JO*, p. 72). When his aunt sends him the photograph by post, its power over him does not diminish. He places it on his own mantelpiece, where it joins the many framed photographs of rectories and deaneries that also furnish his lodgings. In Jude's eyes, the *carte* takes on the function of a devotional relic, with Sue cast as the Virgin Mary. The mantelpiece is transformed into a domestic altar: 'she seemed to look down and preside over his tea' (*JO*, p. 79). Jude's devotional treatment of the photograph does not, however, preclude him from an intensely physical act. Jude 'put the photograph on the mantelpiece and kissed it – he did not know why' (*JO*, p. 79). The inherent seriality of the *carte* is denied by Jude's loving gaze, which distinguishes this one copy of many as the definitive and genuine portrait. The aura he attributes to the photograph enables it not only to deny its duplicates, but also to ontologically rival Sue herself. The reader is tragically aware that the many photographs of Sue that are in circulation present different versions of her character. In a photograph owned by Phillotson, she is pictured as a child 'standing under trellis-work with a little basket in her hand' (*JO*, p. 154). Hardy does not disclose how Phillotson acquired the childhood photograph, but, as of all the photographs of Sue, she has lost control of it. Its significance is determined by the observing gaze.

Throughout the novel, the *cartes'* materiality provides structural support to their owners' unreciprocated and illusory attachment. Taking another photograph in his collection, Phillotson performs an act of loving devotion that mirrors Jude's. He 'brought it half-way to his lips, but withdrew it in doubt at her perplexing phases: ultimately kissing the dead pasteboard with all the passionateness, and more than all the devotion, of a man of eighteen' (*JO*, p. 155). This is a duplicate of the 'new little photograph' that

Sue gave to Jude at the railway station. While it was previously reserved for Jude's eyes, Hardy belatedly reveals the face to the reader through Phillotson's gaze. Unlike the silent portrait of Jude at the broker shop, Hardy provides a nuanced and compelling description of its visual contents. Sue is pictured as 'a young woman, her dark eyes and hair making a very distinct and attractive picture of her which just disclosed, too, the thoughtfulness that lay behind her lighter moods' (*JO*, pp. 154-55). Hardy uses the delay of narrative to distinguish between the photograph as an object and as an image, and to direct the reader to its significance through the biased views of his characters. What was a relatively unremarkable moment at the railway station becomes a scene of intense emotion. Reworking the words of John Plotz, it can be said that portrait photographs were truly *moving* messengers.

Yet a sense of irony remains. The photograph is belatedly revealed through Phillotson's eyes, hands, and lips. The 'dead pasteboard' becomes the *carte's* most emotionally charged part. Through Hardy's use of the card portrait, Beer's ghost plots are given material support, but, despite the portrait's materiality, the gesture of kissing it remains a performance of unrequited fantasy. The act is repeated by Hardy's 'imaginative woman': 'As she gazed long at the portrait she fell into thought, till her eyes filled with tears, and she touched the card-board with her lips'.¹²⁵

'The Ashen Ghost of the Card'

Hardy's depiction of card portraits in his novels brings together a series of juxtapositions: the portrait photograph is presented as common and collectible, as something to be looked at and something to be held, and as something that might go unnoticed in the plot

¹²⁵ Hardy, 'An Imaginative Woman', in *Life's Little Ironies*, ed. Alan Manford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 8-32 (pp. 18-19).

and something that rivals characters for authority in the story. It always has a story-to-be-told in terms of its social history: the people with whom it comes into contact, physically and imaginatively. That story is told through its image and material framing. Yet, for Hardy, portrait photographs not only provide 'material' for stories; they are also story-tellers. In this manner, the photograph is reminiscent of Dr Watson's watch that, under Sherlock Holmes's enquiring gaze (and with the aid of a magnifying glass), is revealed to have been passed down multiple generations and exchanged at multiple pawn shops. According to Holmes's detective science, 'it is difficult for a man to have any object in daily use without leaving the impress of his individuality upon it in such a way that a trained observer might read it'.¹²⁶ It has already been mentioned that Hardy was a writer particularly attentive to the traces of human life left on surfaces, including photographs, and that he was aware of how those traces could be imaginatively re-written by the observing gaze. Yet to understand the photograph's full narrative potential, one must turn to Hardy's verse.

While the geographical and temporal spaces in which a portrait photograph is encountered continually re-write its meaning, photography itself internalises geographical and temporal displacement. For this reason, photographs provided Hardy with a powerful story-telling medium as a poet – a poet fascinated with time, its collapses and coincidences, which offer momentary compensation for, but that cannot permanently still, the relentless passing of years. A poem refracts a chronological narrative within its condensed 'frame'. Through the medium of verse, the photograph's lexicon of affective and temporal portability are brought together.

¹²⁶ Doyle, 'The Sign of Four', in *Sherlock Holmes: Selected Stories*, pp. 3-101 (p. 7). The story was originally published in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* in 1890.

Julia Breitbach applies Brown's thing theory in conjunction with Edwards's and Hart's account of the photograph's materiality to establish what she calls a 'photo-as-thing-theory'.¹²⁷ For her, a photograph is 'a site where objecthood and thingness complement each other' to become landmarks in a personal narrative:¹²⁸

For the individual and a close circle of friends and family, [photographs] seldom represent *objects* of tepid concern, but very often *things* of burning significance. They mark the hot spots, so to speak, of a person's life and identity, as constructed retrospectively through personal narrative. [...] By way of their sheer materiality on the one hand, and their seeming transparency of a bygone reality on the other, photos seem to lend a vicarious stability and substantiality to fickle memories, providing structural support, factual evidence, and narrative coherence to human biographies. They are convenient biographical props to be (re)appropriated by human subjects and put into the context of their lives in the present tense.

The situation is paradoxical, of course, for while the photo-as-object – the photo in the service of objectification – operates to streamline memories and memorabilia into a sequence of, allegedly, hard biographical facts, it cannot do so without conjuring its stark opposite, namely the photo's unruly thingness.¹²⁹

Breitbach writes about the photograph generally, neglecting what happens when the photograph is specifically a portrait. She also approaches photography from the perspective of the modern age, as a theoretical rather than historical phenomenon. Consequently, her account of the thingness of the photograph does not seem that unruly in light of the specific material conditions of the card portrait, and the uses to which it was put, in the nineteenth-century. Yet Breitbach's description of a photograph's 'burning significance' offers coincidental and striking allusion to Jude's literal burning of his portrait. It is therefore useful for what it can illuminate about how the affective materiality of portrait photographs constructs and, at the same time, disrupts narrative across Hardy's writing, especially in his verse.

¹²⁷ See Julia Breitbach, 'The Photo-As-Thing: Photography and Thing Theory', *European Journal of English Studies*, 15.1 (2001), 31-43.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

Breitbach successfully applies language of materiality – identifying the photograph as ‘structural support’ and ‘biographic prop’ – in conjunction with the idea of a photograph’s temporal transparency. While categorising the photograph as an object distinctly places it in the present, and therefore in tension with its ontological tie to the past, Breitbach shows how photography’s representational semiotics of collapsing multiple moments into a static image can be strengthened by the photograph’s materiality. Photographs present a single moment, but in the eyes of an observer they can also gesture towards the ongoing chronology either side of that moment. A series of photographs therefore construct a narrative or personal history – but gaps remain because what is remembered is dependent upon what has been photographed. Hardy’s poems are similarly haunted moments: a construct of multiple temporal planes pulling against each other, of internal memory set against external reality, with the past repeatedly resurfacing in the present. Much of his poetry is concerned precisely with the perception of the past *in the present* taking the form of a memory-trace: a moment visually etched in the mind, exhumed and projected onto actuality in later years. Indeed, Hardy wrote in 1917 of his ‘faculty’ for ‘burying an emotion’, ‘exhuming’ it after forty years ‘as fresh as when interred’.¹³⁰

Hardy’s poetic memory-traces are perceived as vividly as looking at a photograph. In the poem ‘At Castle Boterel’, the speaker looks behind him down the ‘fading byway’ to figuratively look into his past: ‘And see on its slope, now glistening wet, / Distinctly yet // Myself and a girlish form’ (*CP*, 292).¹³¹ At the geographical ‘junction of lane and highway’, Hardy stages a fantastical meeting of the past and present versions of the scene. While time has banished from sight the ‘substance’ of the loved-

¹³⁰ Hardy, *Life and Work*, p. 408.

¹³¹ Hardy, ‘At Castle Boterel’ (March 1913), *Satires of Circumstance*, in Gibson, 292. The poem is part of the series ‘Poems 1912-13’, which Hardy wrote shortly after his wife’s death.

one's presence, her image has lived on in the speaker's mind to be seen again as a 'phantom-figure' where she once stood. The ghostliness of the poem may suggest that it has little to do with the material photograph, but the notion of seeing the past in the present cannot fail to bring to mind a photograph, the nineteenth-century phenomenon that materially arrests time. Indeed, in the arrested moment pictured by the poem, the past becomes more vivid than the present. The only narrative element of the poem set in the present is the act of a man looking down a road. The speaker's retrospective view parallels the temporal frame of the photograph that opens a gap between the image and its referent, between present and past, and between reality and illusion, all of which can be bridged by memory and imagination. As the memory of the scene overrides the reality, Hardy's use of the present tense lingers, as if he were describing a photograph, which always appears to be in the here and now: 'We climb the road'. As the speaker moves away in space and time, even as the couple are remembered climbing the hill behind, his own image is removed from the poetical scene and a single phantom figure is left – the one still living, rather than the one who has passed away, is cancelled from sight.

With such temporal portability in the construction of the scene, does the impossibility of alternative narratives become more real? Or is their impossibility felt even more intensely? The woman's ghostly outline is seen where she once stood as if the road were imprinted with her presence in the manner of a photographic trace, just as the bordering 'primaeval rocks' chart 'Earth's long order'. Susan Sontag defines the photograph as 'not only an image', but also as 'something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint'.¹³² Yet because the photograph is an image created directly from the tangible presence of an object that is from then on absent, it is also paradoxically the

¹³² Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), p. 154.

material evocation of absence. The intervening years are omitted from the poem, just as they are unseen in a photograph, raising the question of Hardy's shaping of time and, more importantly, the mark of human life upon it. For Hardy, human memory (coupled with wishful-seeing) has the capacity to reshape the natural movement of a geological and universal chronology and construct its own curvilinear time scale. Time is no longer strictly progressing. The memory-trace interrupts the transitory nature of human action, making a seemingly trivial moment of a couple climbing a road, only destined to last for a minute, visually preserved. Yet the phantom figure is 'shrinking, shrinking' as the sand of time falls. Hardy charts the progression of Time according to the memory of the speaker. The hourglass is personalised: 'my sand is sinking', the speaker laments. The photographic image offers only momentary comfort from time's inevitable progression. Any sense of comfort is offset with the anticipation of its loss because for Hardy the passing of time is only seen when it has already taken place.

Time haunts Hardy's poems. James Richardson has characterised Hardy's tendency 'to define things in terms of their disappearance, in terms of their ending'. 'They touch him in their vanishing', Richardson suggests.¹³³ This tendency is modelled by the specific 'thing' of the portrait photograph, which is haunted by a temporal paradox. Hardy's poems are themselves suspended in a moment when the memory-trace is visible. The fact is that even photographic images can fade; but Hardy takes advantage of the caesura of temporal visibility offered by a poem and writes to illuminate the moment just before it disappears.

For Hardy, the story that the card portrait tells is often one of its own fragility. Throughout this chapter, we have encountered scratched *cartes*, frail encasements, and

¹³³ James Richardson, *Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Necessity* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 132. See also Patricia Ingham, 'Hardy and "The Cell of Time"', in *The Poetry of Thomas Hardy*, eds. Patricia Clements and Juliet Grindle (London: Vision Press, 1980), pp. 119-36.

faded photographs. Ironically, the card portrait becomes recognised as an object through the fragility of its materiality. In evoking the contingency of photographs, Hardy was picking up on the growing awareness that, although a photograph was created to halt the ravages of time and make scenes permanent, it was not immune to the passing of years or to material accidents. Charles Allston Collins, writing for *All the Year Round* in 1867, recognised the portrait photograph's risk of damage when he suggested that their negatives be removed from circulation and be preserved as part of a gallery collection 'before it is too late'.¹³⁴ Collins repeatedly promoted the worth of photographs as national portraits alongside historic paintings – even though he was aware that 'it be in their very nature to fade away and perish'.¹³⁵

Collins highlights that any collection of photographs will inevitably include 'not a few specimens which are but the ghosts of what they once were; and year by year we see portraits to which we attach the greatest value becoming more and more indistinct'.¹³⁶ The possibility of 'Dissolving Portraits' was the subject of amusement in *Punch* in 1847:

The motto for the Photographic Portraits should be 'Light come, light go,' for as they are taken by the means of light, so they disappear, *similia similibus*, by the same agency. A correspondent assures us, that of his portrait, which was only taken 'a little month' ago, there is not a single feature left, excepting half a whisker, and that is gradually melting away into thin hair.¹³⁷

While the play on words is amusing, and the notion of a portrait of a beard comical, the fragility of the photographic medium, doomed to be destroyed by the force that created it, is ominous. The scientific accuracy of what might cause photographs to fade was under

¹³⁴ [Charles Allston Collins], 'A New Portrait-Gallery', *All the Year Round*, 18.436 (31 August 1867), 229-32 (p. 231). *Dickens Journals Online*: <<http://www.djo.org.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017]. Collins is identified as the author by Jeremy Parrott. Information received through personal correspondence (31 July 2016).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 231. Collins also earlier proposed that the National Portrait Gallery have 'a supplementary room in which there should be a chosen collection of photographic portraits, representing such distinguished living persons'. See [Charles Allston Collins], 'National Portraits', *All the Year Round*, 10.237 (7 November 1863), 252-56 (p. 255). *Dickens Journals Online*: <<http://www.djo.org.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017]. Collins is identified as the author by Jeremy Parrott. Information received through personal correspondence (31 July 2016).

¹³⁶ [Charles Allston Collins], 'A New Portrait-Gallery', p. 231.

¹³⁷ [Unsigned], 'Dissolving Portraits', *Punch*, 12 (1847), p. 264.

debate. Collins acknowledged that the ‘general opinion of “practical men”’ had confirmed that ““there is nothing inherently perishable in the thing itself””.¹³⁸ Yet the fact that photographs and their negatives were materially ““liable to accidental injuries”” was irrelevant to the idea that photographic portraits were doomed to become portraits of ghosts or, rather, to become ghosts of themselves. The idea that photographs were inherently prone to fade away is what, for Hardy, made them such valuable and affective items for verse. Hardy also makes clear that human memory, which enables an observer to understand the significance of a photograph, has its own mortality. It is not difficult to find numerous poems by Hardy, such as ‘His Immortality’ (*CP*, 109), that speak to the fragility of human memory, in addition to its powers of preservation and resurrection. Does a photograph have the same meaning when the memory of what it depicts has faded away?

In her study of Victorian photographs, McCauley recognises that the *carte* was ‘a prime candidate for the dustbin after the spring cleaning or the reading of the will’.¹³⁹ It is therefore fitting that Dennis Taylor compares Hardy’s memory-traces to what are more like ‘photographic frames’ and, as noted by Linda Shires, presumably less like a photograph.¹⁴⁰ The photograph no longer exists, perhaps faded or simply lost, leaving merely the framing of what was. As Paul Duro suggests, the frame surrounding an art work not merely houses the image, but also participates in its meaning.¹⁴¹ This holds true for the *carte* mount, however unofficial a frame it offers, which ironically becomes for Hardy the portrait’s most affective, and therefore most telling, part. The motif of ‘dead pasteboard’, passionately kissed by Phillotson, is given hauntingly literal meaning in

¹³⁸ [Charles Allston Collins], ‘A New Portrait-Gallery’, p. 231.

¹³⁹ McCauley, p.3.

¹⁴⁰ Dennis Taylor, *Hardy’s Poetry, 1860-1928*, Second Edition (London: Macmillan Press, 1989), p. 34. Linda Shires, ‘Hardy and Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Poetics’, in *Palgrave Advances in Thomas Hardy Studies*, ed. Phillip Mallett (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 255-78 (p. 264).

¹⁴¹ Paul Duro, Introduction to *The Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 1.

Hardy's poem, 'The Photograph' (1917). An unnamed speaker fears that the act of destroying the photograph of a past lover will simultaneously put its subject to death. The flames creep up the portrait 'line by line / As it lay on the coals in the silence of night's profound' (CP, 405).¹⁴² While *Punch* exposed the irony of a photograph being the victim of light, the card portrait in Hardy's poem is the victim of fire in a situation feared to be analogous to murder: 'the flame had eaten her breasts, and mouth, and hair.' Although burning a document can simply be part of the 'casual clearance of life's arrears', the fact that it is a portrait provides the moment with additional significance. 'Did she feel a smart, and with vague strange anguish strive?'

Hardy's poem takes as its central action the brief, though vivid, episode about burning a portrait photograph in his novel, *Jude*. The photograph had been auctioned as part of Arabella's 'clearance of life's arrears' and is reduced to ashes in Jude's. Hardy uses the compact form of verse to implicate the reader in the act of burning a photograph. As the poem is read 'line by line', the lines of the photograph are being destroyed. Fulfilling the haunting potential of Jude's self-deprecating act, Hardy leaves the reader with the material paradox of 'the ashen ghost of the card' that is left once the image is gone from sight. A ghost, by its very nature, cannot have ashes. Tim Armstrong has named Hardy 'a poet of ashes'.¹⁴³ Burning photographs was common practice for Hardy, in his life as well as in his work. Despite his richness in photographs, Hardy was wary of having lasting memorials of himself available to the public. He provided Lea with a strict condition when being photographed: 'You may take as many [photographs] as you like if you will destroy the negatives of those I don't approve of'.¹⁴⁴ In an act with strong resonance to several of his fictional characters, the negatives and prints of a series of

¹⁴² Hardy, 'The Photograph', in *Moments of Vision and Miscellaneous Verse* (1917), in Gibson, 405.

¹⁴³ Tim Armstrong, *Haunted Hardy: Poetry, History, Memory* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 135.

¹⁴⁴ Hardy to Lea, 11 March 1905, in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, iii, 160.

twelve portraits of Hardy taken by Lea in 1904 were destroyed.¹⁴⁵ Hardy's answer to the unruliness of the photograph's 'thingness' was the photograph's own (near) destruction.

When Hardy was writing at the end of his career, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *cartes de visite* were out of fashion. In McCauley's words, they were 'a fad, a commercial product that was the rage for less than ten years and then disappeared into attics and desk drawers'.¹⁴⁶ If, by the time Hardy was writing, *cartes* were relegated to drawers, he restored them from the dust and darkness by way of his imagination to give their material ordinariness affective possibility. For Hardy, the materiality of a photograph lent to the portrait both the promise of immortality (its ability to preserve a single moment) and the threat of its own dissolution. Before it faded, however, he repeatedly called for his readers to look at portrait photographs, touch portrait photographs, *and* feel portrait photographs.

¹⁴⁵ Hardy wrote with some unease about the set of photographs: they 'have rather a new expression, which I have not quite grown accustomed to, but no doubt it is there'. Hardy to Lea, 12 April 1904, in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, iii, 120. In Lea's 'Notes for a Biography of Thomas Hardy', Lea recalls the set of twelve photographs being taken and Hardy's discomfort with them. He notes that 'the negatives and prints were destroyed'. Quoted in *Monographs On The Life Of Thomas Hardy*, No. 20: *Thomas Hardy Through The Camera's Eye*, ed. J. Stevens Cox (Beaminster: Toucan Press, 1964), p. 26.

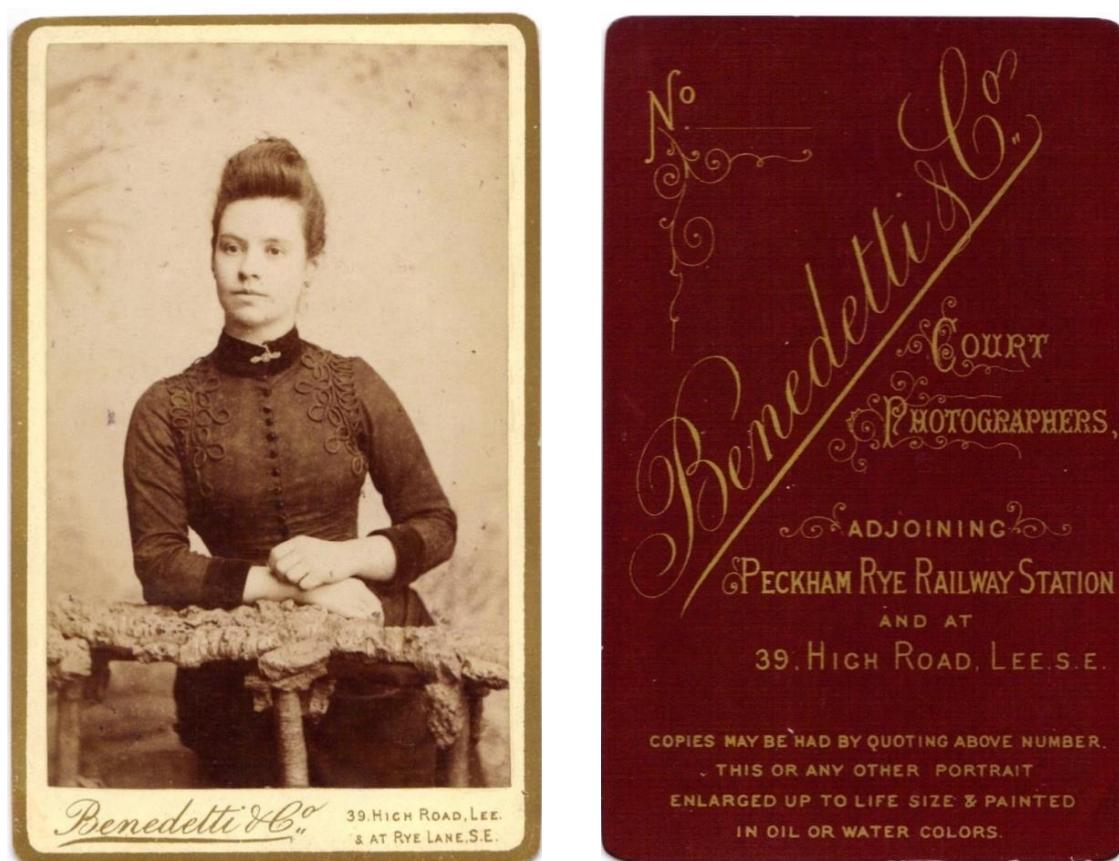
¹⁴⁶ McCauley, p. 222.



Figure 3.1 Daguerreotype of an unknown couple (photographer unknown). Framed in a decorated leather case. 3 ½ x 3 in. (92 x 80 mm). The object is owned by the author, and this image is the author's own.



Figures 3.2 & 3.3 *Carte de visite* of an unknown woman (front and back). 4 x 2 1/2 in. (104 x 63 mm). The object is owned by the author, and this image is the author's own.



Figures 3.4 & 3.5 *Carte de visite* of an unknown woman (front and back). 4 x 2 ½ in. (104 x 63 mm). The object is owned by the author, and this image is the author's own.



Figure 3.6 George du Maurier, 'Things One Would Rather Have Left Unsaid', *Punch*, 94 (May 1888), p. 214. Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. N. 2706 d. 10.

2

DESCRIPTION
SIGNALEMENT

Wife - Femme

Profession } *Author*
Profession }

Place and date
of birth } *London*
Lieu et date
de naissance } *21 September 1849*
Domicile } *England*
Domicile }

Height } *5* ft *9* in. fl. in.
Taille }

Colour of eyes } *Blue*
Couleur des yeux }

Colour of hair } *Light*
Couleur de cheveux }

Special peculiarities }
Signes particuliers }

CHILDREN - ENFANTS

Name	Date of birth	Sex
Nom	Date de naissance	Sexe

3

PHOTOGRAPH OF BEARER

WIFE FEMME

(photo)

SIGNATURE OF WIFE. ET DE SA FEMME.

(Sir) Edmund Gosse

Figures 3.7 & 3.8 British Passport of E. W. Gosse, issued 14 April 1928. Reproduced with the permission of Special Collections, Leeds University Library. Bc 19c Gosse, D PER 4.

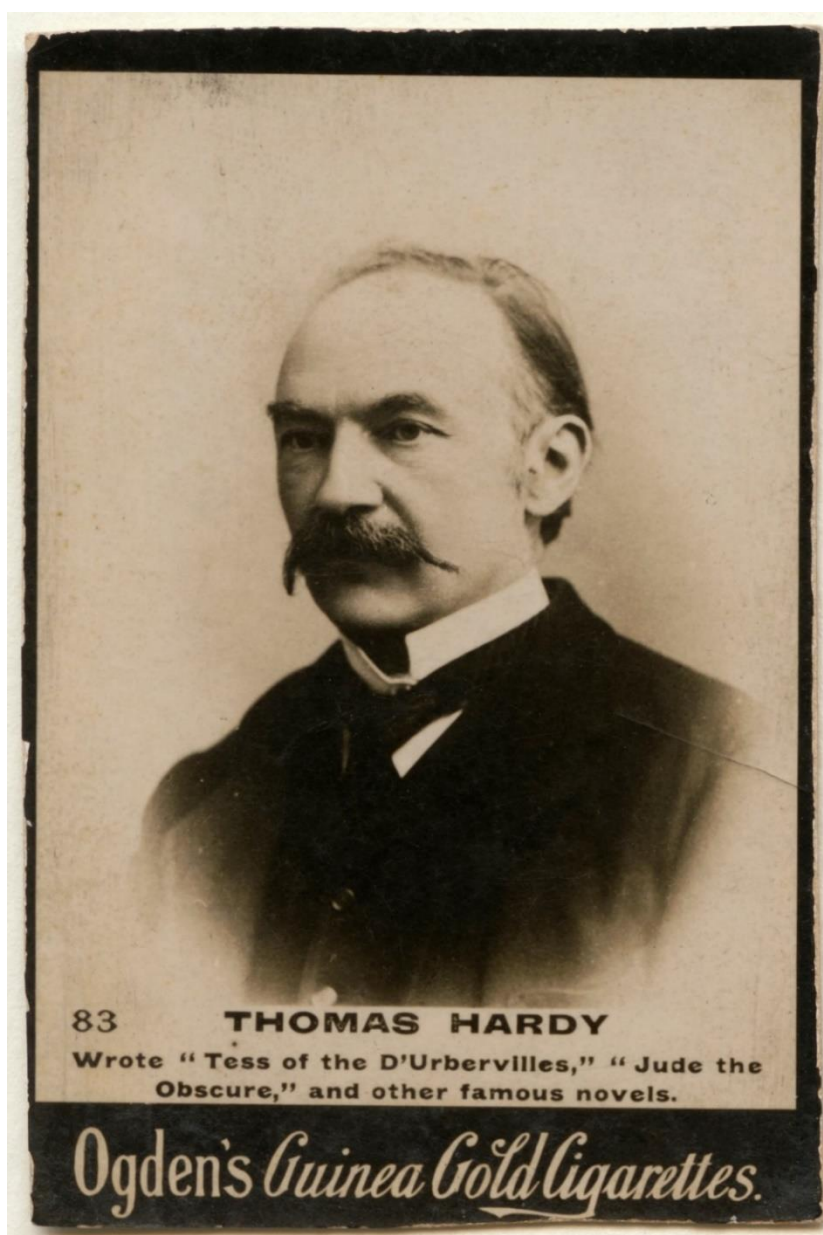


Figure 3.9 *Thomas Hardy*, by Francis Henry Hart, for Elliott & Fry, published by Ogden's, (1894), published c. 1895-1907. Cigarette card. 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (53 x 35 mm). © National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG x136531.

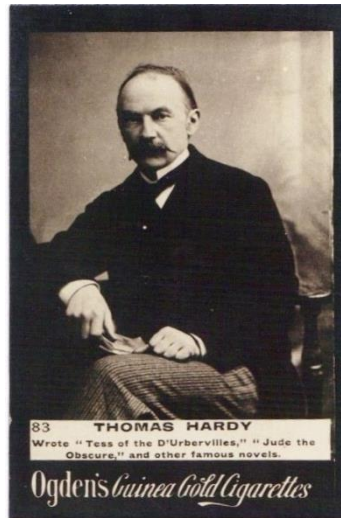


Figure 3.10 Thomas Hardy on a cigarette card, published by Ogden's, c. 1895-1907. $2\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$ in. (53 x 35 mm). The object is owned by the author, and this image is the author's own.

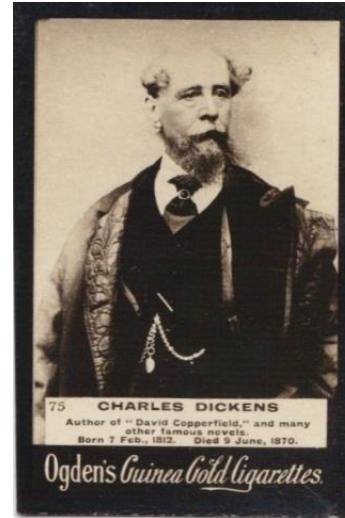


Figure 3.11 Charles Dickens on a cigarette card, published by Ogden's, c. 1895-1907. $2\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$ in. (53 x 35 mm). The object is owned by the author, and this image is the author's own.

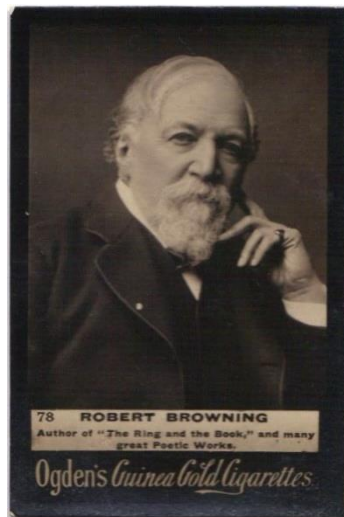


Figure 3.12 Robert Browning on a cigarette card, published by Ogden's, c. 1895-1907. $2\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$ in. (53 x 35 mm). The object is owned by the author, and this image is the author's own.

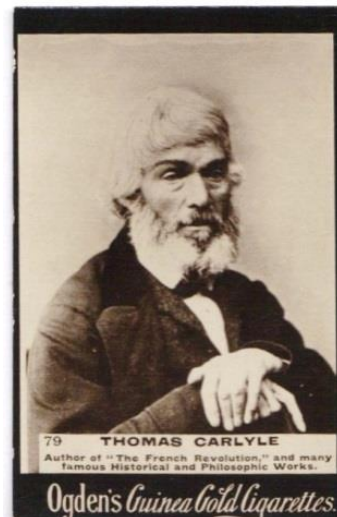


Figure 3.13 Thomas Carlyle on a cigarette card, published by Ogden's, c. 1895-1907. $2\frac{1}{8} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$ in. (53 x 35 mm). The object is owned by the author, and this image is the author's own.

CHAPTER FOUR

‘A Story Requires to Appear & Reappear & Disappear’: The Link
between Allusive Portraiture and Supernatural Writing in Vernon
Lee’s *Hauntings*

On 31 August 1893, Vernon Lee wrote to her brother Eugene Lee Hamilton in defence of her apparently ‘bewildering’ writing, which he had suggested was the reason for her lack of popularity.¹ ‘[I]n your method of telling through allusion you are often bewildering and half your readers won’t half understand you’, he had warned. Eugene focussed his criticism on Lee’s fantastical story ‘Dionea’, about a mesmerisingly beautiful young girl who is washed up on a beach. He admired the closing ‘vision of Dionea sailing away’, which ‘haunts one like a wizard-show glimpse of antique loveliness and terror’, but took issue with Lee’s style. Henry James was another baffled reader of Lee’s ““style””.² For him, it was ‘insupportable’. Virginia Woolf, too, lamented Lee’s manner of turning ‘all good writing to vapour with her fluency and insipidity’.³

For Lee, style was of great importance. In 1923, she fulfilled this career-long interest when she published her investigations into *The Handling of Words*. While she psychologically analysed the styles of other writers, Lee disliked people talking about her

¹ Eugene Lee Hamilton to Vernon Lee, 27 August 1893. MS. The Collection of Vernon Lee Materials, Colby College Special Collections, Waterville, Maine.

² Henry James to William James, 20 January 1893, in *Henry James: Letters*, ed. Leon Edel, 4 vols (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1974-1984), i, 401-03 (p. 402). James protests that Lee ‘breaks down in her books’, but his main dislike of her, the ‘tiger-cat’, appears to be that she included a ‘satire of a flagrant and markedly “saucy” kind’ of himself in *Vanitas* (1892) (p. 402).

³ Virginia Woolf to Violet Dickinson, December 1907, in *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Nigel Nicolson, ass. ed. Joanne Trautmann Banks, 6 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1993-1994), i, 319-20 (p. 320) [397]. Woolf was referring specifically to Lee’s *The Sentimental Traveller: Notes on Places* (1908), which Woolf reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement* (9 January 1908). Woolf reviewed Lee in the TLS again in 1909, when she was similarly despondent of Lee’s ‘watery mind’ in *Laurus Nobilis* (1909): ‘I suppose she has a sense of beauty, in a vague way’. See Woolf to Violet Dickinson, early July 1909, in *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, i, 400 [495].

own writing and rejected the idea of being popular.⁴ She also defended the supposedly perplexing nature of her style as essential to her supernatural short fiction, particularly her stories collectively known as *Hauntings* (1890), of which 'Dionea' was a part. In response to her brother's critique, Lee outlined her approach to story-telling as the preservation of uncertainty:

As regards obscurity in the narrative, I think that if you read it three months hence that would not strike you; for you will regain a habit of twiggling suggestions and of easily following tortuosities of narrative which is the result of the habit of consecutive reading. You will then, I think, agree with me that such a story requires to appear & reappear & disappear, to be baffling, in order to acquire its supernatural quality. You see there is not real story [sic]; once assert the identity of Dionea with Venus, once show her clearly, & no charm remains. [...] stories in which adventure preponderates, like Stevenson's, cannot be too clear in narrative, or stories of the supernatural too allusive.⁵

Lee was at pains to emphasise how allusive her stories are, while her brother – and many others – simply found them elusive.

Allusion is defined as 'an implied, indirect, or passing reference to a person or thing; (in later use more widely) any reference to someone or something'.⁶ As a literary device, its meaning remains somewhat obscure, but for Lee allusion became synonymous with a sense of vagueness, which demanded that her reader make connections between

⁴ 'I happen to be absolutely unambitious, I dislike people talking to me about my writings, & popularity does not attract, but rather repels me.' Vernon Lee to Eugene Lee Hamilton, 31 August 1893, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Irene Cooper Willis (privately printed, 1937), pp. 363-65 (p. 364). Although Lee rejected the idea of being popular, she acknowledged the need to make sufficient income through writing. As will become clear, however, she was also not unambitious as a writer.

For clarity, throughout this chapter I have identified Lee in her letters by her literary name, 'Vernon Lee'. It must be noted, however, that her early letters were signed 'Violet Paget'. In 1883, Lee used the initials 'VP', before simply using the multi-purpose single letter 'V' to sign her letters later in life.

This edition of Lee's letters is printed from Irene Cooper Willis's original MS and is limited to 50 copies made for private circulation. The copy consulted is held by Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. An edition of Lee's letters written from 1865 to 1884 is now available as *Selected Letters of Vernon Lee, 1856-1935, Volume I: 1865-1884*, ed. Amanda Gagel (London: Routledge, 2017), which corrects some errors in Cooper Willis's edition. Where possible, I provide citations to both editions; where there are discrepancies in the transcriptions, I quote the Gagel edition.

⁵ Lee to Eugene Lee Hamilton, 31 August 1893, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 363-64.

⁶ "allusion, n.", *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, June 2017): <<http://www.oed.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

ideas, internal and external to the text, during the reading process.⁷ This reading process, Lee suggested, might take place over an extended period of time or over multiple readings. Indeed, in 1904 Lee declared that ‘the greatest pleasures of reading consist in re-reading’.⁸ If Lee hoped to promote ‘the habit of consecutive reading’, what does this constitute beyond the temporal progression inherent to narrative? The nature of consecutive reading is, in fact, disrupted in many of Lee’s stories, which are constructed from fragments of letters, diary extracts, and recalled conversations. The result is a tortuous and haunted narrative encased by multiple frames. Even after a re-reading, Lee might have been happy for uncertainty to prevail, for the story to ‘appear & reappear & disappear’.

In what way can something reappear without having disappeared? In sum, it is a process of re-vision. In her memorial essay for Walter Pater, Lee wrote in similar terms about the exile of gods, ‘*revenants* as they are from other ages, and with the wistful eeriness of all ghosts’.⁹ The gods’ exile, Lee explains, implies ‘an in-and-out existence of alternate mysterious appearance and disappearance’, which is ‘a kind of *haunting*’. Yet, for the same sense of haunting to be achieved within the structure of the text, the process of appearing and disappearing is made decidedly uncanny with the addition of an intermediate stage of reappearance. Allusion, vagueness, and half-appearances provided a problem that informed Lee’s writing career. ‘What are the relations between art and the

⁷ Compared to other literary devices, allusion has received little critical attention and is difficult to define conclusively. See William Irwin, ‘What is an Allusion?’, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 59.3 (September 2001), 287-97. On allusion and modernism, see Angela Frattarola, ‘Modernism and the Irresponsible Allusion: Joyce, Eliot, and Pound’, in *Literature and Ethics: Questions of Responsibility in Literary Studies*, eds. Daniel Jernigan, Neil Murphy, Brendan Quigley, and Tamara S. Wagner (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2009), pp. 173-200.

⁸ Lee, *Hortus Vitae: Essays on the Gardening of Life* (London: John Lane, 1904), p. 41.

⁹ Lee, ‘Dionysus in the Euganean Hills. W. H. Pater in Memoriam’, *Contemporary Review* (July 1921), 346-53 (p. 348). Pater had died nearly three decades earlier, in 1894.

supernatural?', she asked in 1880.¹⁰ In her essay, Lee acknowledges that '[a]t first sight the two appear closely aligned: like the supernatural, art is born of imagination; the supernatural, like art, conjures up unreal visions'.¹¹ Yet 'in reality', she argues, the 'hostility' between them is palpable: 'The supernatural is necessarily vague, and art is necessarily essentially distinct: give shape to the vague and it ceases to exist'.¹² The difficulty of preserving vagueness was, for Lee, the defining challenge of supernatural writing.¹³ Throughout her career, she was trying to solve the problem of capturing the supernatural and embodying a sense of haunting in art, including in her own work.

To observe Lee's handling of this problem, this chapter examines the relation between Lee's writing and the art of portraiture, both of which she presented as haunted. Portraits figured for Lee as 'puzzles of the past'.¹⁴ 'There they hang', she gestured in her *Essays on the Gardening of Life*, 'our great-grandfathers and mothers and uncles and aunts (or some one's else, more likely), painted by Reynolds or Raeburn. Delightful persons whose ghosts we would give anything to meet.'¹⁵ Lee met many portraits throughout her travels in Britain and Italy, and she placed numerous portraits of various forms in her volume, *Hauntings*, to be encountered by her reader. In 'Oke of Okehurst', an ominous family portrait foretells the fatal end of its descendants, while a 'large-sized miniature' and portrait photograph also watch over events. 'Amour Dure' describes the influence of a portrait depicting the Renaissance duchess and Medusa-like figure, Medea da Carpi, on the historian, Spiridion Trepka. He relentlessly searches an archive for her

¹⁰ Lee, 'Faustus and Helena: Notes on the Supernatural in Art', in *Hauntings and Other Fantastic Tales, 1856-1935*, eds. Catherine Maxwell and Patricia Pulham (Plymouth: Broadview Press, 2006), pp. 291-319 (p. 294). The essay was originally published in *Cornhill Magazine*, 42.248 (August 1880), 212-28.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 294-95.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 295.

¹³ According to Catherine Maxwell, 'vagueness' was for Lee the true 'indicator of the supernatural'. See *Second Sight: The Visionary Imagination in Late Victorian Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 144. Indeed, the word 'vague' (and its related conjugations) appear in very high numbers in the 'Faustus and Helena' essay and across Lee's work.

¹⁴ See the chapter 'Puzzles of the Past', in *Hortus Vitae*, pp. 189-97.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

‘tragic portraits’, which seem to spell the death of any man who looks upon them.¹⁶ In ‘A Wicked Voice’, a penny-print engraving of the eighteenth-century singer, Zaffirino, teases the composer, Magnus, who longs to hear the voice of the sitter. In ‘Dionea’, the sculptor, Waldemar, casts the figure of a young girl, whose beauty remains unrivalled by ‘the goddess gradually emerging from the clay heap’.¹⁷ Each of Lee’s *Hauntings* is a testimony to how portraits from past ages can re-surface in later centuries to have psychological or emotional hold over an artist figure.

Following the publication of Lee’s *Hauntings* in 1890, a reviewer for the *Spectator* situated her work as part of the literary tradition of haunted portraiture, but only by distinguishing it from that of the Gothic master, Edgar Allan Poe, author of ‘The Oval Portrait’ (1842). In a qualified compliment, the reviewer suggests that *Hauntings* ‘does not strike us as so effective as the work of Edgar Poe, of which it certainly reminds us’.¹⁸ While the reviewer is unconvinced by the effectiveness of Lee’s tales to haunt – suggesting the stories ‘fail to touch us’ – they admire Lee on the same terms she had used to defend her writing to her brother. The reviewer praises ‘the cleverness with which these fantasies are wrought and the beauty of the style in which the stories are told’. Taking its cue from the reviewer’s comments, this chapter strives to rewrite Lee’s position within the literary tradition of haunted portraiture, and thereby reveal the specific type of textual haunting that she strove to craft in her supernatural fiction.

The literary tradition of haunted portraiture surged in popularity in the nineteenth century through the work of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Robert Browning, Henry James, and Oscar Wilde, who called his aging portrait of Dorian Gray, ‘the most magical of

¹⁶ Lee, ‘Amour Dure: Passages from the Diary of Spiridion Trepka’, in *Hauntings*, p. 52.

¹⁷ Lee, ‘Dionea’, in *Hauntings*, p. 99

¹⁸ [Unsigned], Review of ‘Hauntings. By “Vernon Lee.”’, *Spectator* (24 May 1890), p. 736.

mirrors'.¹⁹ In these authors' work, the portrait either provides an affective space for poetic exploration or plays a crucial role in propelling the plot of a novel. The portrait assumes supernatural agency to the point at which it can change its appearance, come to life, and even bring the fatal end of its subject or observer. Kerry Powell has observed that, in the nineteenth century, the 'magic-picture myth ripened beyond its status in the Gothic novel as only one fixture in a hall of horrors'.²⁰ The portrait became, Powell states, a 'versatile literary symbol through which a wider range of complicated issues could be explored'. Lee does not figure in Powell's account. Nor does she feature in Sylvie Richards's study, which similarly justifies portraiture's central position in supernatural literature. 'The eye becomes the organ of the fantastic', she argues, 'and, as such, is most intimately connected with painting, and most intensely with the portrait; so that the portrait becomes a most challenging vehicle for the creation of the fantastic.'²¹ Yet, since the general rise in scholarly interest surrounding Lee's work over the last few decades, her participation in the literary tradition of haunted portraiture has begun to be established.²² Patricia Pulham claims that Lee's 'focus on the art object, both in her theoretical works and in her fiction, compels examination', and, among other critics,

¹⁹ Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, ed. Robert Mighall (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 103.

²⁰ Kerry Powell, 'Tom, Dick and Dorian Gray: Magic Picture Mania in Late Victorian Fiction', *Philological Quarterly*, 62.1 (Winter 1983), 147-70 (pp. 163, 151).

²¹ Sylvie L. F. Richards, 'The Eye and the Portrait: The Fantastic in Poe, Hawthorne, and Gogol', *Studies in Short Fiction*, 20.4 (Fall 1983), 307-15 (p. 307). Lee is also absent from Barbara Onslow's study of portraits (haunted or not) in the work of nineteenth-century women writers: 'Deceiving Images, Revealing Images: The Portrait in Victorian Women's Writing', *Victorian Poetry*, 33.3-4 (Autumn and Winter 1995), 450-75.

Other studies on the development of magic-picture fiction include Theodore Ziolkowski, *Disenchanted Images: A Literary Iconography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977) on haunted portraits; and Sergio Perosa, *From Islands to Portraits: Four Literary Variations* (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2000) on, what he calls, 'killing portraits'. See also Deborah Maria Manion, *The Ekphrastic Fantastic: Gazing at Magic Portraits in Victorian Fiction* (University of Iowa: PhD Thesis, 2010); and Diana E. Bellonby, *A Secret History of Aestheticism: Magic-Portrait Fiction, 1829-1929* (Vanderbilt University: PhD Thesis, 2012).

²² The 1980s saw a resurgence in critical attention on Lee. Since 2000, she has received much attention from late-Victorian, Modern, and Feminist critics (see bibliography). Patricia Pulham reflects on Lee's place in literary criticism in her introduction to *Art and the Transitional Object in Vernon Lee's Supernatural Tales* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. xi.

Pulham has been especially compelled by Lee's use of the portrait.²³ Pulham, Mary Patricia Kane, and Catherine Maxwell share the aim to highlight Lee's presence within the literary tradition of haunted portraiture, while also distinguishing her work from her male counterparts for the way in which she applies portraiture to portray the power of specific character types, namely the *femme fatale*, Madonna, and vampire.²⁴

Yet readings of the portrait in Lee's *Hauntings* tend to remain narrow, pointing to its function as a coded object through which Lee explores and dismantles Victorian conventions of gender and sexuality. Kane reads the portrait in Lee's fiction as 'a space that contains what has been excluded, occulted and suppressed by the authoritative histories of Western civilisation'.²⁵ Pulham similarly identifies the portrait as an object that encodes homosexual desire, since it has the ability to 'express, and simultaneously hide, the seemingly inexpressible'.²⁶ She subsequently manoeuvres the representative function of the portrait to reflect back on Lee and reveal what has been widely interpreted as the author's repressed sexuality. As with critical studies of Walter Pater, the boundaries separating autobiographical and critical commentaries on the woman, Violet Paget, and the author, Vernon Lee, have become blurred.²⁷ Just as Pater left few documents by which he might be posthumously known, Lee decreed in her will: 'My life

²³ Pulham, *Art and the Transitional Object*, p. xvii.

²⁴ Mary Patricia Kane locates Lee's work within 'a Victorian metanarrative of haunted portraiture'. See *Spurious Ghosts: The Fantastic Tales of Vernon Lee* (Rome: Carocci, 2004), p. 23. Pulham notes how Lee employs the prevalent 'magic portrait motif'. See Pulham, *Art and the Transitional Object*, p. 132. Maxwell does not directly refer to this literary tradition by name, but locates Lee's writing within the fashion at the end of the century of ekphrastic female portraits, established by Henry James and Walter Pater. Maxwell thereby shifts the tradition of the haunted or magic portrait to encompass the motives of late nineteenth-century aestheticism. See Maxwell, 'From Dionysus to "Dionea": Vernon Lee's Portraits', *Word & Image*, 13.3 (July - September 1997), 253-69.

²⁵ Kane, p. 18.

²⁶ Pulham, 'Duality and Desire in *Louis Norbert*', in *Vernon Lee: Decadence, Ethics, Aesthetics*, eds. Catherine Maxwell and Patricia Pulham (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 123-42 (p. 128).

²⁷ Such readings stem from Burdett Gardner's psychological study of Lee's work, in which he diagnoses the writer under Victorian lesbianism. See *The Lesbian Imagination (Victorian Style): A Psychological and Critical Study of "Vernon Lee"*, ed. Stephen Orgel (London: Garland, 1987). In a survey of bio-critical writing on Lee, Jo Briggs identifies Gardner's study as the origin of gender and sexual readings of Lee's work. See 'Plural Anomalies: Gender and Sexuality in Bio-Critical Readings of Vernon Lee', in *Vernon Lee: Decadence, Ethics, Aesthetics*, pp. 160-73 (p. 160).

is my own and I leave that to nobody.'²⁸ Searching for Lee, Pulham goes so far as to suggest that the writer 'left masked portraits of herself in her own literature'.²⁹ While Pulham cautions against explicit biographical readings of Lee's texts,³⁰ she participates in the prevailing scholarly tendency to read Lee's writing as a characteristically Victorian and specifically private confession of sexual dissidence. In such readings, the portrait's role is to haunt conventionality.

Lee's *Hauntings* and other fantastic tales have received little attention as anything other than covert autobiography. In response, this chapter aims to free Lee's writing from its autobiographical constraints and to examine the portrait not as an object that reflects the author's life, but as one that alludes to Lee's style as a writer, a writer fascinated by textual composition.³¹ It redirects the portrait's meaning from the destabilisation of Victorian sexual identity to highlight the greater challenge it represented for Lee's aesthetic. Portraiture occupied a contentious place for Lee. While she was often captivated by the abstract art of music that promoted an emerging modernist aesthetic of formlessness, she was also continually drawn to the 'realist', concrete art of portraiture. Observing how Lee utilised this conflict in the composition of her shorter fiction relocates the sense of destabilisation observed by critics to within the structure of her text, a destabilisation that is symptomatic of her grappling with the problem of representing the ghostly in art.

The notion of haunting pursued in this chapter is informed by Julian Wolfreys's concept of 'textual haunting', broadly defined as the 'disorderly within an apparently

²⁸ This is ironically quoted in Peter Gunn's biography, *Vernon Lee: Violet Paget, 1856-1935* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. ix.

²⁹ Pulham, 'Duality and Desire in *Louis Norbert*', p. 132.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

³¹ Emerging critical studies have begun to challenge bio-critical readings of Lee's work. Notably, Vineta Colby's literary biography argues that to read Lee's supernatural stories 'as unconscious revelations of her inner self' is 'unrewarding'. See *Vernon Lee: A Literary Biography* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2003), p. 226.

straightforward narrative framework'.³² Portraiture, too, a traditionally straightforward genre due to its mimetic ties, becomes a challenging medium when handled by Lee. This chapter pursues a dialogue of haunted portraiture across Vernon Lee's literary career, bringing together her *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy* (1880), her critical essay on the Renaissance 'Portrait Art' (1883), her short story about an unfinished portrait in 'Oke of Okehurst; Or, The Phantom Lover' (1886), and her reflections on seeing 'Ghosts in a Roman Photograph Album' (1920). The dialogue uncovered suggests that Lee dismantled the realist notions of portraiture as a form of representation to destabilise the narrative framework of her fiction. This is where the supernatural lies in Lee's writing. A close reading of her short story 'Oke of Okehurst' re-evaluates the significance of the supernatural to locate Lee's haunting precisely within the diegetic fabric of her text constructed from multiple frame-stories.

*Faded Portraits, Forgotten Melodies, and Antique Stone:
Lee's Search for Ghosts in the Gallery of History*

As artefacts from the past and harbingers of ghosts, portraits attracted and puzzled Lee throughout her career, the evidence of which can be read not only in her fiction, but also in her art critical writing, travel writing, and aesthetic essays. While Pater looked to the Renaissance for artistic inspiration, Lee was fascinated by the spirit of the eighteenth century. For her, it formed a 'remote lumber-room full of discarded mysteries and of lurking ghosts', housing material for her earliest major publication, *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, first published in 1880 and re-released with illustrations in

³² Julian Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 5. Returning to the strain of autobiography, Wolfreys also identifies the text as being 'haunted' by its author and its historical moment: 'the story returns over and over, unexpectedly, out of the blue in different registers, each reflecting another perspective entangled in a skein of cultural interests' (p. 4).

1907.³³ Lee found these 'lurking ghosts' in the pages of old music manuscripts and on the canvases of portrait paintings, discoveries made in the deserted Italian buildings and gardens she visited on her travels to Italy. In her preface to the second edition of *Studies*, Lee explains that she resisted the urge to revise the text, besides adding the new introductory material, because she wished for the book to remain a record of her immediate responses to the environment and objects of the eighteenth century. 'For to revise would be to criticise; to criticise would be to demolish', she argued (*Studies*, p. xv). The volume therefore presents, in Lee's words, 'the log-book of my explorations through that wonder-world of things moth-eaten and dust-engrained', chronicling not only the objects she encountered, but also her 'youthful fancy' as it 'transfigured' those objects from the past into ghosts (*Studies*, p. xvi). Just as a visitor to the National Portrait Gallery was expected to view its portraits as a stimulus for the imagination and as ingredients for a story, rather than as closed visual recordings of specific individuals, Lee took the portraits she found in Italy as starting points for her imaginative entry into the past age from which they survived.

While Lee states literature and music of the period to be the focus of her interest, visual art, almost always in the form of portraiture, repeatedly seems to have caught her eye. She explicitly claims at the outset that '[t]he plastic arts were dead everywhere, and had not yet been galvanised by criticism into a spectral semblance of life', but the course of her study tells a different story (*Studies*, p. 7). Portraits continually function as material for her galvanising imagination: the 'portraits of worthies in black doublets and scarlet caps' hanging in 'lofty rooms' (*Studies*, p. 58); the 'time-stained portraits of long-forgotten men and women' in the Bosco Parrasio (*Studies*, p. 20); and the 'crowd of dead

³³ Lee, 'Retrospective Chapter: Preface to New Edition' (November 1906), *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, Second Edition, Illustrated with New Preface (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), p. xvi. Further references to Lee's *Studies* are made to the 1907 edition and are given after quotations in the text, with the abbreviation *Studies*.

musicians, members of the once famous Philharmonic Academy [...], who look down upon us from the walls' of the Accademia dell' Arcadia (*Studies*, p. 105).³⁴ Many of the portraits appear as decorative furniture typical of eighteenth-century country homes and public buildings, serving primarily as historic artefacts in support of Lee's investigation into the people that populated the musical world of the past. Some subjects pictured in the 'mouldering portraits – grim spectres looking down on the final ruin of Arcadia' go unnamed since Lee's tour guide, she explains, was unable to identify 'one portrait from another' (*Studies*, p. 18). Yet, amongst the 'forgotten, nameless figures', several portraits stand out for what they can tell about history (*Studies*, p. 106). Much like the role of portraits photographs in the nineteenth-century marketplace, Lee comments on the dissemination of portraits in the eighteenth century as a measure of celebrity. Here, the face must have a name. Lee notes the popularity of the 'musical idol', Marchesi, knowing that 'every one possessed his printed portrait': 'the ladies wore miniatures of him, sometimes four at a time' (*Studies*, p. 184).

Studies follows Lee's physical and imaginative movement between Italy's grand halls lined with portraits and its libraries filled with manuscripts. In the Musical Lycæum of Bologna, Lee comes face to face with the British historian, composer, and musician, Charles Burney (fig. 4.1):

there is one who can procure us a glimpse into that world: opposite us hangs the portrait of a man in the brocade gown of a doctor of music; thin, sharp, with a shrewd, kindly, humorous face. [...] of all his contemporaries he is the only one who does not look down on us in silence. (*Studies*, p. 106)

Burney's portrait by Joshua Reynolds serves as a visual preface to the 'heaps of time-soiled scores and bundles of faded letters' Lee subsequently goes through to traverse in

³⁴ Hilary Fraser makes the same observation in 'Regarding the Eighteenth Century: Vernon Lee and Emilia Dilke Construct a Period', in *The Victorians and the Eighteenth Century: Reassessing the Tradition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 223-49 (p. 227).

her imagination, and thereby recreate, the musical tour through France and Italy that Burney made in 1770 (*Studies*, p. 106).

Alongside musical manuscripts, the portraits give form to the formlessness of music, which was more formless when it belonged to a bygone age. 'Have you ever thought over the fate of forgotten melodies?', Lee asked.³⁵ Melodies lost to history were, for Lee, impossible promises; their paradoxical silence made them imaginatively potent. The formlessness of music stands in opposition to the plastic arts and specifically the portrait, the art form arguably most tied to reality. Lee directly equated the life-span of music to a human life: a melody lasts as long as 'the hearts which, swept by them, shivered with pleasure or pain', vehicles in which music can be 're-echoed' and remembered.³⁶ In contrast, Lee reasoned, the plastic arts are 'eternal to our life'. She labelled the portrait in particular as 'a curious bastard of art, sprung on the one side from a desire which is not artistic, nay, if anything, opposed to the whole nature and function of art – the desire for the mere likeness of a person'.³⁷ Lee's longing to hear forgotten voices was central to her story 'A Wicked Voice' (1887), in which a composer tears up an engraved portrait in response to his futile efforts to hear the voice of eighteenth-century singer Zaffirino – if he cannot have one, he will not have the other.

If eighteenth-century melodies are ultimately out of reach, trapped in the past, even for Lee's imagination, portraits are distinguished by their capacity to memorialise their subjects from the ravages of time and, when looked upon in future years, to bring those subjects back to life. *Studies* becomes an illustration of something that Lee confessed in her essay on the supernatural in art: that '[t]o raise a real spectre of the

³⁵ Lee, 'The Immortality of the Maestro Galuppi', in *Juvenilia: Being a Second Series of Essays on Sundry Aesthetical Questions*, 2 vols (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1887), ii, 3-17 (p. 12).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁷ Lee, 'The Portrait Art of the Renaissance', *Cornhill Magazine*, 47.281 (May 1883), 564-81 (p. 565).

antique is a craving of our own century'.³⁸ Looking at Reynolds's portrait of Burney, Lee's imagination transports her back to a time when the deceased subject was alive and conjures his person as if he were to inhabit the space alongside herself. Lee sees 'the ineffable suppressed smile with which this sharp, shrewd, caustic little man [...] sauntered through the Italian musical world of the eighteenth century' (*Studies*, p. 147). Throughout *Studies*, Lee pauses on specific portraits that function as much more than mere documents for the historian. Her account of a portrait of Pietro Metastasio by an unnamed artist occupies two full pages. Challenging the temporal stillness of painting, Lee animates the heavy, painted features in anticipation of their movement:

the large head is raised, but the high wide forehead, the imaginatively turned down brows, are weighted down and materialised by the lumpish aquiline nose, and the long square jaw, imbedded in double and triple chins; the long slit mouth is smiling sweetly, the eyes are lit up with humour, the heavy cheeks are dimpled, yet there is a melancholy, an absence of animal spirits, a something which tells you that this face is but a living mask, the muscles of which will easily give way, the eye grow dull, the mouth droop, the jaw drop, the whole collapse into vacancy. There is no strong life in the man, though there is a flickering semblance of life. (*Studies*, pp. 330-31)

Notably, the portrait Lee encounters in the Arcadian Academy is only an 'old copy' of the original. If it were the original, the life of Metastasio may have flickered for Lee even more brightly. Much of Lee's short fiction follows historians who similarly push the boundaries of objectivity and fall in love with a past pictured as the imaginary historic.

Lee reads the characters of the 'worthies' looking down from the walls of the Academy in Italy in a similar manner to how an early visitor to the National Portrait Gallery in London was guided to interpret its portraits of British Greats. Yet the relative proximity of the historic moment embodied in the portraits of interest to Lee, and the authenticity of the setting in which they were encountered, were crucial ingredients for her imaginative animation and therefore distinguish her account from commentaries on

³⁸ Lee, 'Faustus and Helena: Notes on the Supernatural in Art', p. 319.

the National Portrait Gallery in the periodical press. Although Lee wrote of the eighteenth century as a forgotten age, it was a period only-just-passed and therefore in 'touching' distance. Ironically, the fact that fewer years had passed also meant that the portraits and manuscripts were less likely to have been touched by as many subsequent hands. The over-eager historian or museum curator had not yet had the opportunity to 're-frame' the objects from their authentic state. At the same time as providing her reader with access to the spaces and time of the eighteenth century, Lee expresses regret for how her act of writing enacts a disturbance of the past equivalent to the physical touch of the curator, and for how this in turn implicates her reader:

we have been brushing away, perhaps over roughly, cobwebs and dust which lay reverently on things long untouched, that we have been intruding into a close, weird atmosphere filled with invisible ghosts. The men and things of the Italian eighteenth century have not yet been exhumed and examined and criticised and classified; they have not yet been arranged, properly furbished and restored, like so many waxwork dolls [...] or preposterous nicknacks in the glass cases of our historical museum, to be gaped at or sniffed at by every vacant idler or heartless antiquary, like the men and things of our English, French and German eighteenth century. They have been forgotten and neglected, but not insulted; the dust of their own day has lain thick upon them, and that dust has brought home to our hearts that the men and women once lived and felt, and the things once charmed and amused. An old book of cantatas of Porpora, and old volume of plays of Carlo Gozzi, does not affect us in the same manner as a darkened canvas of Titian or a yellowed folio of Shakespeare; these latter have passed through too many hands, been looked at by too many eyes, they retain the personality of none of their owners. But the volume of Gozzi's plays was probably touched last by hands which clapped in applause to Truffalfino-Sacchi [...] with this dust, which we shake reluctantly out of the old volumes, vanishes we know not what subtle remains of personality. (*Studies*, pp. 437-38)

The environment of the gallery or the condition of the modern art print, through which Walter Pater and Edmund Gosse experienced art, would have lacked the authentic, historic tactility that defines Lee's encounter with eighteenth-century Italy. For Thomas Hardy, the multitude of both named and anonymous hands through which a card portrait was passed in the nineteenth century provided it with imaginative potential and formed the new stories it could tell. Yet, for Lee, this would have been 'too many hands' as the

story she was interested in was the original one. Of course, the controlled environment of the gallery was designed, in part, to reduce physical contact with art works, but the touch of the curator would have already been too great, having erased the authenticity of historic location that Lee valued as a way to access the 'personality' of the past.

Lee's critical commentary on the art of portraiture received little attention as serious art writing outside Lee studies before Hilary Fraser illuminated the role of the female art critic in the nineteenth century.³⁹ Fraser notes that Lee presented herself not as an antiquarian, literary historian, or music critic, but as an 'aesthetician': 'one who knows Italy intimately, and whose understanding of its eighteenth-century art and life is felt on the pulses'.⁴⁰ Writing to Henrietta Jenkin in 1874, when she was only eighteen, Lee was reserved about her literary aims: 'I have for my pleasure studied on various points of art and literature, not deeply perhaps but sufficiently I think to write magazine articles on the subject.'⁴¹ For Lee, 'general ideas' were all that were required for her to 'write articles sufficiently interesting'. At this stage, she had not yet adopted the name 'Vernon Lee', under which she would write throughout her career, but these words are not youthful naivety or false modesty. They are an early indication of Lee's motivation to write and of her imaginative, meandering manner of criticism that aimed simply (but not only) to be a 'log-book' of authentic observations about the spirit of a place and time.

³⁹ Art writing by nineteenth-century women, a field within which Lee plays a significant role, is receiving increased critical attention. See Hilary Fraser, *Women Writing Art History in the Nineteenth Century: Looking Like a Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); and John Paul M. Kanwit, *Victorian Art Criticism and the Woman Writer* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2013). See also Meaghan Clarke, 'On Tempera and Temperament: Women, Art, and Feeling at the Fin de Siècle', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 23 (2016), 1-29. <<http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

⁴⁰ Fraser, 'Regarding the Eighteenth Century: Vernon Lee and Emilia Dilke Construct a Period', p. 226. Fraser uses Lee's own term. In *Studies*, Lee refers to her point of view as a writer as 'generally aesthetic' (p. 2).

⁴¹ Lee to Henrietta Jenkin, 23 October 1874, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 43-44 (p. 43). Also quoted in *Selected Letters*, ed. Gagel, pp. 179-181 (p. 180).

From early on, Lee desired writing to be her 'profession', as well as her 'pleasure'.⁴² It was her determination 'never to write a thing which did not happen to interest me at the moment'.⁴³ One subject that repeatedly interested her was portraiture. The environment in which it was encountered was of continued concern as her career progressed.

Lee's first critical piece devoted to portraiture was on 'The Portrait Art of the Renaissance', published in *Cornhill Magazine* in 1883. Given Lee's penchant for the ghostly spirit of art, the portrait in this essay is remarkably material and embodied: it takes the form of sculpture. Lee draws upon the history of Greek, Roman, and Renaissance portrait-sculpture commissioned as commemorative effigies of the deceased to instil a deathliness within this medium: 'its life, its power, depend upon death; it is an art developed in the burying vault and cloister cemetery'.⁴⁴ Although still concerned with the link between portraiture and people passed, her emphasis is on the surface detail of the sculpted figures, specifically on the representation of 'wrinkles and creases of the face'.⁴⁵ The marble surface prevents Lee from attaching the same level of psychological ghostliness to the forms with which she had earlier associated with painted portraiture, and which proves essential for her later supernatural tales. This essay stands as an anomaly within Lee's writing on portraiture in more ways than one. Besides her focus being uniquely on sculpture, her style is also less imaginative and more academic. She seems to write with greater effort to fulfil the role of an art critic rather than an aesthetician. Laden with art historical terminology as part of Lee's attempt to survey historical schools of art, the essay presents an inconsistent aesthetic. When Lee turns to portrait painting for comparison, her account of the differing styles of Velazquez and

⁴² Lee to Henrietta Jenkin, 2 October 1874, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 40-41 (p. 40). Also quoted in *Selected Letters*, ed. Gagel, pp. 176-77 (p. 176).

⁴³ Lee to Eugene Lee Hamilton, 31 August 1893, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 363-65 (p. 364).

⁴⁴ Lee, 'The Portrait Art of the Renaissance', p. 569.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 575.

Raphael becomes increasingly elliptical or 'baffling' in the manner that her brother identified with regards to her fiction.

Lee's correspondence reveals that Walter Pater read the essay when it was reprinted with the more generic title, 'The Portrait Art', in *Euphorion: Being Studies of the Antique and the Medieval in the Renaissance* the following year. Pater wrote to Lee naming three aspects of her work which 'especially impress', one being 'that admirable power of writing [...] evidenced in the treatment of very different matter'.⁴⁶ Is there something about the art of portraiture in particular which was perceived by Pater to be difficult to express in words? Although Pater 'got a peep' of the article in *Cornhill Magazine*, he felt it demanded re-reading, as Lee had asked of her brother. For Pater, its 'power comes out increasingly' through repeated reading. '[I]t is not easy what you have done in the essay on "Portrait Art",' he wrote, 'for instance – to make, viz. *intellectual theorems* seem like the life's essence of the concrete, sensuous objects, from which they have been extracted'. Such praise from Pater is ironic given his own tendency to write in a laborious and often tortuous manner. Another reader of Lee's essay was the portrait painter, G. F. Watts. Following a visit to his studio, Lee wrote to her mother describing him as 'a most charming old man', with whom she spoke for 'a long time about the *Portrait Art*'.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, Lee does not elaborate about what comprised their conversation to aid an analysis of Lee's thinking on portrait sculpture.

Lee also wrote about sculpture in her autobiographical essay 'The Child in the Vatican' (1881), in which she categorically states that while portrait statues are 'so utterly sepulchral', they are not ghosts since 'they have never been born and never will

⁴⁶ Walter Pater to Vernon Lee, 4 June 1884, in *Letters of Walter Pater*, ed. Lawrence Evans (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 53-54 [80].

⁴⁷ Lee to Matilda Paget, 2 July 1883, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 122-23 (p. 122). Also quoted in *Selected Letters*, ed. Gagel, pp. 428-30 (p. 429).

die'.⁴⁸ While sculpture is valuable for its ability to not simply represent, but embody a figure, Lee seemed to favour less solid forms and favoured painting for portraiture. A child does not respond to a sculpture in the same way as a painting, Lee argues:

For they are dull things, in their dirty whiteness: they are doing nothing, these creatures, merely standing or sitting or leaning, they are looking at nothing with their pupilless white eyes, they have no story to tell, no name to be asked. The child does not say to them, as to the people in pictures, the splendid people in strange colours, and holding strange things, "Who are you? why are you doing that?"⁴⁹

The question Lee posits in the mind of a child looking at a portrait painting recalls the question Pater assumed would be asked of any portrait, and which he desired his reader to ask of his *Imaginary Portraits*: 'What came of him?'⁵⁰ An essential difference between their approaches, however, lies in their perception of the value of the gallery space, which Lee regarded as, like sculpture, too concrete. For Lee, the Vatican is 'a dismal and scientific piece of ostentation, like all galleries; a place where art is arranged and ticketed and made dingy and lifeless'.⁵¹

'Compare the pleasure of a picture tucked away in a chapel or sacristy with the plethoric weariness of a whole Louvre or National Gallery', Lee compelled her reader.⁵² While she accepted that museums may be 'necessary things' to conserve art 'from candle smoke, sacristans' ladders, damp, worms, and street boys', they were not places that invited aesthetic and imaginative appreciation of art.⁵³ For Lee, the gallery space was lifeless because it overcrowded the individual art work with others that diminished its meaning, and because it created an artificial environment. That environment included a painting's frame. Writing about a Botticelli at the Villa Lemmi, Lee criticised how the

⁴⁸ Lee, 'The Child in the Vatican', in *Belcaro: Being Essays on Sundry Aesthetical Questions* (London: W. Satchell, 1881), pp. 17-48 (pp. 18, 21).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵⁰ Pater to Mr Grove, 17 April 1878, in *Letters of Walter Pater*, pp. 29-30 (p. 30) [47].

⁵¹ Lee, 'The Child in the Vatican', p. 18.

⁵² Lee, 'In a Hotel Sitting-Room', in *Hortus Vitae*, pp. 85-93 (p. 88).

⁵³ Lee, 'The Child in the Vatican', p. 18.

touch of the various hands that make an art work available to the public decry its historical authenticity and therefore its beauty:

A new back has been substituted for the old wall; and the frescoes are intact, unspotted, safe, framed, portable, ready for the wooden cases of the packers, the seals of the officials, the van of the railway, the criticism of the experts, the gape of the public.⁵⁴

While portability was highly valued with regards to the circulating and mutable 'galleries' of portrait photographs in the mid- to late nineteenth century, Lee situated the aesthetic appreciation of an art work 'only in one place': its historic location.⁵⁵ Lee aligned historicity of place with aesthetic value. She expressed 'annoyance' that 'dead art, art faded to a ghost' be 'now upon the wall of the grand staircase of the Louvre' where, she argued, its true value as a ghost is made too solid and therefore misunderstood by the crowds.⁵⁶ Historicity of place and aesthetic value work together since, Lee argued, one cannot only look at an art work to appreciate it; 'beautiful and interesting things also require a deal of riding, of playing with; let us put it more courteously – of wooing'.⁵⁷ The authentic physical place was important for the other space it opened up, one whose borders are less easily defined: the historic imaginary, a space in which the past is 'played' with in the present. Lee valued the 'deliberate pilgrimage', the geographical journey undertaken to view an art work, as equally as the parallel mental journey it stimulated to a 'shrine' in one's memory.⁵⁸

Although Lee repeatedly turned to portraiture throughout her career, her views on the genre cannot be synthesised into a consistent interpretation. Portraiture appears to have served as a vehicle through which she could internally debate and experiment with ideas of form, representation, and the supernatural. She was most successful in capturing

⁵⁴ Lee, 'Botticelli at the Villa Lemmi', in *Juvenilia*, i, 79-129 (pp. 79-80).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁵⁷ Lee, 'In a Hotel Sitting-Room', in *Hortus Vitae*, p. 87.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

the ghostly potential of portraits when she embraced her meandering style, combining the role of an art critic with that of a fiction writer. A scene from *Studies*, in which Lee moves from the library into the 'red-brick belfry of S. Giacomo Maggiore', could belong to the opening pages of a haunted portrait plot:

We tie up the bursting portfolios of old prints, we replace the ill-sewn, musty-smelling music books on their accustomed shelves; we close the cardboard box of yellow, shrunken letters, and we take our leave. In going away we pause a moment in the vast, vaulted, desolate refectory, where our steps re-echo as in a church; the grey twilight is slowly filling the place, and from out of it faintly appear the rows and rows of portraits: Marcello, stately and sad in his patrician robes; Jommelli, heavy and bowed; Farinelli, strange and weird in his knightly mantle of Calatrava [...] once famous, now forgotten. (*Studies*, pp. 214-15)

It is this 'dead, forgotten world of art, which has faded away', which Lee attempts to resurrect (*Studies*, p. 215). In *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, Lee writes about the haunting of the past that will soon be out of reach, yet remains just in touching distance: the moment before it is 'exhumed, restored, put into glass cases and exhibited mummy-fashion in our historical museum' (*Studies*, p. 440). Lee lamented that visitors to a gallery struggle to appreciate the past:

they suffer not because there is too much past to admit the present, but because they have not enough of that many tinted though faded tapestry of the past, into which to weave, to secure them, the brilliant threads of the present.⁵⁹

Using Paterian language, Lee suggests that the alternative (viewing art in its original location) leads to an 'aesthetic life', in which the past and present are in harmony. As part of the 'faded tapestry of the past', portraits served for Lee as historic furniture, but they also continually threatened to become more than passive witnesses to the past.

⁵⁹ Lee, 'The Lake of Charlemagne', in *Juvenilia*, i, 3-76 (p. 70).

Re-Framing Lee's Photographic 'Ghosts': Haunted Stories and Stories as Hauntings

Through the course of Lee's career, portraiture became increasingly aligned with her craving for the past and with the evocation of ghosts. From Renaissance sculpture and eighteenth-century painting, she turned later in her career to mid-nineteenth century photographs. Lee was familiar with photography as part of everyday Victorian life. As explored in chapter three, it was the norm for Victorians to collect photographs. The Lee-Paget family collected an album of *cartes de visite*, bound in leather and decorated in ivory (figs. 4.2 - 4.4).⁶⁰ In 1874, Lee wrote to Henrietta Jenkin asking for a portrait photograph as a Christmas gift, it being something she had 'long coveted' and which she 'should be extremely proud to possess'.⁶¹ Scholars have also noted that Lee had a particular fondness for a photograph of Annie Meyer, which hung over Lee's bed until her death in 1935.⁶² Moreover, Lee's correspondence with her childhood friend, the portrait painter, John Singer Sargent included the exchange of photographic reproductions of his portraits for copies of her latest stories.⁶³ While photographs were unsurprisingly a feature of her life, it was a long time until Lee positioned them at the centre of a non-fiction ghost story in 'Ghosts in a Roman Photograph Album' (1920). In the essay, Lee recalls stumbling upon an album of photographic 'ghosts' while staying in a summer house rented by friends four years earlier.⁶⁴ The album contained the portraits of a West Sussex family and documented their travels to Italy. Although photography

⁶⁰ Lee's family photograph album is part of The Collection of Vernon Lee Materials, Colby College Special Collections, Waterville, Maine.

⁶¹ Lee to Henrietta Jenkin, 20 December 1874, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 47-48 (p. 48). Also quoted in *Selected Letters*, ed. Gagel, pp. 184-86 (p. 185).

⁶² Vineta Colby notes that little is known about Annie Meyer beyond that she and Lee had a brief 'romantic attachment'. By Annie's early death in 1883 (or early 1884), she and Lee had already quarrelled and parted. Yet Lee kept the photograph of Annie, in a very personal and intimate location, for years to come. See Colby, p. 52. For a discussion of the photograph's significance for Lee's approach to portraiture, see Pulham, *Art and the Transitional Object*, pp. 177-78.

⁶³ For an account of Lee and Sargent's correspondence, see Richard Ormond, 'John Singer Sargent and Vernon Lee', *Colby Library Quarterly*, 9.3 (1970), 154-78.

⁶⁴ See Lee, 'Ghosts in a Roman Photograph Album', *English Review* (May 1920), 431-38. Further references to this publication are given after quotations in the text, with the abbreviation *Ghosts*.

was (in relative terms) a new mode of portraiture that belonged to her lifetime, Lee nonetheless regarded the photographic portraits with a sense of the historic. The 'old unhinged photographic album' of the West Sussex family triggers ghosts of an Italian past to resurface in Lee's mind, in response to the 'enigmatic pale and paler photographic ghosts' it holds (*Ghosts*, p. 432). The essay settles the ambiguities of Lee's earlier writing on the properties of portrait ghosts, and serves as an exercise in the rhetorical, haunting mechanics of Lee's supernatural story-telling, strategies which can then retrospectively be read in her short fiction.

The opening of Lee's essay provides the circumstances expected of a ghost story. The scene is set in the mysterious 'View Top' house, which contains, along with the furniture of its usual occupants, the home's 'enshrined ancestors' taking the form of 'a number of old family photographs now marooned in passages and spare bedrooms', otherwise known as 'back-stairs limbo' (*Ghosts*, pp. 436, 431, 432). The family members are also contained within 'the great find' of Lee's investigation of the house: the photograph album (*Ghosts*, p. 432). *View Top* provides a fitting environment and opportunity for a haunting to ensue. Yet, unlike a typical ghost story – and paramount to Lee's definition of the supernatural – the haunting takes the form of the past that compels a story to be told.

The story the house tells is one of the lives and travels of the West Sussex family and their acquaintances. Lee offers no description of the 'too-too solid' friends currently inhabiting the house with her (*Ghosts*, p. 432). Her imagination occupied with its past occupants, Lee provides a catalogue of *View Top*'s ghostly population:

There were the customary ovals of clergymen in the languishing attitude that compensated for the photographic rigid head-rest; the groups of schoolboys and volunteers; also the ill-focused bridal parties in ivied porches; moreover, governmental groups, with swarthy attendants and palmy pagodas. Of course,

also the fading profiles of crinolined aunts and nieces long since demised. (*Ghosts*, p. 431)

With the eye of an art critic, Lee identifies the technical faults of the portraits resulting from the demands of early photographic methods such as long exposure time; but, with the eye of a story-teller, she also captures the nostalgia and pathos that accompanies such ghostly images. For Lee and her friends, 'it became a game to go from room to room, mount on chairs comparing portraits; and speculate at meal-times on possible identities and supposed discoveries': to 'weave genealogies and biographies of those bygone unnamed strangers, more and more puzzling with each additional piece of "evidence" which we discovered' (*Ghosts*, p. 432). She wonders whether the Governor, pictured with 'restrained whiskers', could have been the one who played from the 'little morocco covered music-book' now sitting on the top shelf of the library (*Ghosts*, p. 432). Lee's speculation becomes increasingly creative when she turns to the photograph album and its textual adornments. To her, the 'signature, surrounded not merely by eau-de-Cologne-bottle flourishes, but by French sentences, of mingled respect and tenderness', told of a love story tragically cut short between the daughters of the house and a mysterious 'Gustave' (*Ghosts*, pp. 437-38). The house is populated by stories lying dormant, many perhaps hidden from occupants of the house, waiting for Lee's imaginative, even creative, gaze to bring them to life.

The environment of Lee's portrait encounter has shifted from the picturesque eighteenth-century music academy in Italy, which produced *Studies* forty years earlier, to the prosaic backdrop of a rented house in England's West Sussex, 'near Cold Waltham East' (*Ghosts*, p. 436). The setting has been radically domesticated. Yet the 1920 essay is a product of the same practice of historical investigation into place, combined with imaginative observation, that initiated the earlier work. Lee describes 'ransacking

shelves, book closets, and those pieces of furniture with which I associate, perhaps erroneously, the name of *What-not*' to find the photograph album (*Ghosts*, p. 432). She cannot help but make connections between the remnants in visual portraiture and the remnants of musical manuscripts. Given the nature of nineteenth-century photographs as portable and collectible items, the album provides access to geographical and temporal spaces just as exotic as the cultural hub disclosed in *Studies*. Alongside portraits, the album contains snapshots of art works (sometimes serving as backdrops to portraits) that the family encountered on 'weary gallery' visits (*Ghosts*, p. 433). The 'wonders recorded by the smallest (the half-franc) size photographs' included 'the Apollo, Laocoon, Venus Borghese, and that so attractively semi-improper mysterious parricide Beatrice Cenci'. Pictured within a photographic 'frame', sculpted figures become two-dimensional and therefore offer Lee greater imaginative immateriality compared to when she saw such figures in marble in the Vatican. While viewing someone else's encounter with art by way of a photographic record would presumably distance Lee from the original subject, the items gain a sense of their authenticity. They transport a foreign land to the domestic arena and thereby maintain Italy as the home of Lee's imagination. Moreover, Lee's allusion to a 'Roman' photograph album for the title of her essay successfully captures the allure of the Antique for the modern medium of photography. Combined with Lee's sensitivity to history, the photograph album offers access to a past closer than the eighteenth-century, but one that has already started to gather dust and therefore imaginative potential – the album, 'a little off its hinges, with white marble magnolia on a black marble background' is dust-laden (*Ghosts*, p. 436).

Compared to the Italian Academy, the portraits in the West Sussex home have been subject to a kind of domestic curation: they have been framed and organised within an album. Yet this does not seem to trouble Lee, since the metaphoric and literal

fingerprints left on the photographs are from, or at least intimately connected to, their subject. Their arrangement and written annotations create a second layer of historic authenticity, and the house becomes a unique exhibition space, resisting the 'ticketed' lifelessness that Lee associated with formal galleries. The photographs tell the story of the location in which they are found, as well as a story of Italy. Yet the most vivid history evoked by the photographs is Lee's own. The album's temporal and imaginative reach is extended further when its photographs serve as the vital starting point for Lee's travelling thoughts, which journey from West Sussex to Rome, from the present to the past, and from strangers' experiences to her own. Lee dates the album to 'A.D. 1867':

a photograph, coaxed to slip out of the album, revealed that date on its glossy back. But I should have known it to be thereabouts from the people's dresses. Had not my mother and her acquaintances worn just such geometric flounces and moderate *tournures* (Grecian *Bends* I heard them called)? (*Ghosts*, p. 433)

In dating the photograph, Lee begins to personalise the album with details of her own life. For Lee, the album revealed that 'these unknown former occupants, had been in Rome fifty and more years ago'; it also recalled that *she* had been in Rome and, in a greater temporal shift and imaginative leap, it evoked the feeling that she 'was back there', not only as she was looking at the photographs in 1916, but also while she was writing about them in 1920 (*Ghosts*, p. 432).

Lee wrote that the stories told by the portrait photographs grew 'more puzzling with each additional piece of "evidence" [...] discovered' (*Ghosts*, p. 432). Developing the relationship between art and the imagination that was forged in *Studies*, Lee's implicit critique of the nature of 'evidence' offered by the portraits in the Roman photograph album signals a shift in the kind of haunting that motivated her writing. In her preface to *Hauntings*, Lee identifies the ghosts of interest to her as 'no genuine ghosts in the scientific sense; they tell of no hauntings such as could be contributed by the

Society for Psychical Research, of no spectres that can be caught in definite places'; rather, they are ghosts that have 'haunted certain brains, and have haunted, among others, my own and my friends'.⁶⁵ The Society for Psychical Research had been founded in 1882 to offer objective, supposedly unbiased, scientific explanation of alleged paranormal phenomena.⁶⁶ Certainly, figures seem to manifest from the photograph album as if supernaturally. Lee recalls how she 'accidentally evoked from that dusty Roman photograph-book', 'the shrunken, discoloured ghosts [...] as out of a Solomon's Bottle' (*Ghosts*, p. 438). The phenomenon may support the observation that some people made of Lee: that she was a medium, the type that would have been of interest to the Society for Psychical Research. In 1883, she noted that an acquaintance 'felt *sure* [she] must be a ghost seer from [her] expression'.⁶⁷ Yet Lee's use of italics, again, discloses her doubts about the supernatural being something that is external to the human brain.

Lee was a ghost seer of a particular kind. In Lee's essay on the photograph album, her imagination becomes, more than ever, the driving force of the story being told; the objects only tell their stories because of the power of Lee's imagination to transfigure them. The circumstance of walking through a private gallery of ancestral portraits forms a scene common to a Victorian novel. Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray*, for example, 'loved to stroll through the gaunt cold picture-gallery of his country house and look at the various portraits of those whose blood flowed through his veins'.⁶⁸ Yet Lee rewrites Wilde's sensational scene as a commonplace biographical game and thereby redefines the

⁶⁵ Lee, Preface to *Hauntings*, p. 40.

⁶⁶ For an overview of psychical research in the nineteenth century, see *The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History, c. 1880-1900*, eds. Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 269-90. For a comparison of Lee's notion of a ghost with that of the Society for Psychical Research, see Hilary Grimes, *The Late Victorian Gothic: Mental Science, the Uncanny, and Scenes of Writing* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 125-29.

⁶⁷ Lee to Matilda Paget, 15 July 1883, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 127-28 (p. 127). Also quoted in *Selected Letters*, ed. Gagel, pp. 436-37 (p. 437).

⁶⁸ Wilde, p. 137.

supernatural for her own ghost stories.⁶⁹ The significance of Lee's approach in the context of the late nineteenth-century interest in spiritualism was captured by William Sharp in his review of *Hauntings*. He suggested that, by declaring her 'scepticism in the matter of bogeys', Lee disappointed her readers, it being

as though a spiritualist were to invite you to a séance, and just as you were getting your nerves ready to thrill he were to dissipate all mysterious expectations by the announcement that apparitions, and raps, and all the rest of it were mere clap-trap.⁷⁰

For Lee, the truly effective ghost was 'the haunter not of corridors and staircases, but of our fancies'.⁷¹ She thereby psychologised the supernatural, as evident in her treatment of the Roman photograph album.

Its function being to picture the past, to fix what is fleeting, photography provided Lee with the quintessential medium through which to conjure ghosts. Throughout her career, Lee struggled with the historic idea that art tries to replicate 'reality' – a concept as ambiguous as the supernatural. For someone who was interested in vagueness, in reappearance and disappearance, photography provided Lee with the answer because of its paradoxical nature. In her essay 'The Blame of Portraits', Lee warns that any portrait could become 'a mere square of painted canvas, a few pencil scratchings, a bare mechanical photograph' if the observing eye fails to animate the image with memory and feeling.⁷² For the same reason, she suggests that 'we should cherish them as useful delusions, or rather realities, so long as they awaken a reality of feeling'.⁷³ When Lee located the ghostly within human fancy, she also shifted the idea of reality from the external world to the internal. Although Lee refers to various portrait forms, her

⁶⁹ This is not to simplify the nature of the supernatural in Wilde's novel. Wilde parallels the magical alteration of Dorian Gray's portrait with a more scientific suggestion based on nineteenth-century theories of heredity: that Dorian inherits the sins, and thereby repeats the lives, of his ancestors.

⁷⁰ William Sharp, Review of '*Hauntings: Fantastic Stories*. By Vernon Lee', *Academy* (24 May 1890), p. 352. Despite his criticism, Sharp celebrates Lee's stories as 'quite genuinely ghostly in effect'.

⁷¹ Lee, 'Faustus and Helena: Notes on the Supernatural in Art', p. 310.

⁷² Lee, 'The Blame of Portraits', in *Hortus Vitae*, pp. 137-48 (p. 140).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

retorical replacement of delusion for reality best captures the functional paradox of portrait photographs. While, for Lee, portrait sculpture posed the problem of deathly stillness by way of its solidity, photographs successfully evoked a living ghostliness because they embody a material presence at the same time as they signify absence. Lee's ghosts take many forms, but they are always characterised by a similar duality as both insubstantial and embodied:

a ghost is the long-closed room of one long dead, the faint smell of withered flowers, the rustle of long-unmoved curtains, the yellow paper and faded ribbons of long-unread letters ... each and all of these things, and a hundred others besides, according to our nature is a ghost, a vague feeling we can scarcely describe, a something pleasing and terrible which invade our whole consciousness, and which, confusedly embodied, we half dread to see behind us, we know not in what shape, if we look round.⁷⁴

This meandering list, typical of Lee's style, brings together spaces and moments that are suspended on the boundary between presence and absence. It is in the moment in which something is just about to appear or disappear, and then disappear or appear again, that Lee locates her photographic ghosts.

Such appearance and disappearance is evoked in the imaginative process by which Lee observes the photograph album, which near the end of the essay discursively slips into being a metaphor for Lee's mind. The photographs, framed in the album, are re-framed as re-visions in her imagination:

All these impressions of Papal Rome were duly received, more or less, by that West Sussex family, fifty and more years ago. And through them, by myself, fifty years later, their images getting framed and interlaced (like patterns on an old chintz or lacquer screen) in my mind with the orange-tiled South-country cottages, the reedy ponds, the jagged pines profiled against the pale escarpments and chalk-gashes of the South Downs, and the last phloxes and dahlias in the war-neglected garden. Yes: alternating with these English things, visions of terraced travertine steps rising chrome-yellow into a moist blue sky, glimpses of sere Campagna dotted with tombs and laced with aqueducts; and even remembered sounds, plashing of palace-yard fountains in chilly winter sunshine; spells of long ago [...] issuing out of that large album. (*Ghosts*, pp. 435-36)

⁷⁴ Lee, 'Faustus and Helena: Notes on the Supernatural in Art', pp. 309-10.

Lee seamlessly shifts from the materiality of the photograph album to the malleable photographic memories that it triggers, and back again. The Sussex family's experiences merge with Lee's own about her time in Italy to form a tapestry of 'interlacing' photographic images. The scenes predominantly take the form of landscapes, but accumulatively they interlace to form a portrait of Lee's mind. The visions become increasingly blurred to the point that Lee must repeatedly qualify the source of the original photographs outside her mind: 'I mean that photograph book'; 'I mean the house that owned that album' (*Ghosts*, p. 437). While Lee attempts to discursively control the photographic images, their setting and who they belonged to no longer seems to matter.

The imagery of re-framing evokes a sense of temporal disruption that weaves together past and present, and multiple perspectives, in a manner suggestive of a ghostly story-telling process that comes to define Lee's approach to writing. The scenario of investigating the ghostly contents of a building suited Lee's visage and can also be found in her letters (fig. 4.5). In 1886, she recalled having undertaken similar 'antiquarian slumming' with friends in Newcastle.⁷⁵ After visiting 'the most marvellous dilapidated old houses', she reflected: 'had I but the story, I have got background for five and twenty ghosts'.⁷⁶ If only that dilapidated house had contained portraits like *View Top* in West Sussex, Lee may have found a story. Nevertheless, the ghost stories were given a home in her supernatural writing, and presented through Lee's textual signature of malleable framing.

For Lee, portraiture raised aesthetic questions about realism and form, which informed her thinking on the temporality of reading and writing. The concept of imaginative re-framing suggested by the photograph album can be read in Lee's analysis

⁷⁵ Lee to Matilda Paget, 13 August 1886, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 230-31 (p. 230).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

of style in *The Handling of Words and Other Studies in Literary Psychology* (1923), in which she asserted that the 'craft of the Writer consists [...] in manipulating the contents of his Reader's mind'.⁷⁷ One writer whose craft she analysed in detail was Walter Pater. While many found Lee's own writing as difficult, she was highly critical of Pater's laboured and weighty style in *Marius the Epicurian* (1885). Having read the novel multiple times, she emphasises

how long Pater carries an item in consciousness by showing how long he expects his reader to carry it. This kind of memory, rather similar to that of a composer dealing in long modulations, is probably what explains Pater's quite astonishing clinging to the pronoun; [...] Pater strikes me, so far, as a person who insists on carrying too much mental luggage; and, not being at all acrobatic, trailing some of it and getting it all mixed.⁷⁸

For Lee, this 'mental luggage' had taken the form of material and mnemonic photographic images. The fact that they become 'all mixed' is a sign of the success of her imaginative acrobatics, rather than her failure. Lee identifies Pater's style as 'a mark of insufficient locomotion, of a tendency to circle round the same items and weave them closer together rather than to string them clearly in rows or dispose them in definite logical patterns'.⁷⁹ Lee's analysis of Pater's concentrated and woven style echoes Edmund Gosse's comments on the author in *Critical Kit-Kats* (1896):

He is to be distinguished from those who had so much to say that their speech was forced out of them in a torrent, nor less from those whose instinct led them to bubble forth in periods of natural artless grace. If we take these symbols of a mountain-stream or of a fountain for other prose-writers who have won the ear of the public with little effort, then for Pater the appropriate image seems the artesian well, to reach the contents of of [sic] which, strata of impermeable clay must be laboriously bored.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Lee, *The Handling of Words and Other Studies in Literary Psychology* (London: John Lane, 1923), p.1. On Lee's views about the contract between writer and reader, see also 'Any Reader and Any Writer', *New Statesman* (18 August 1907), 470-71.

⁷⁸ Lee, 'The Handling of Words: A Page of Walter Pater', *Life and Letters*, 9.50 (September 1933), 287-310 (p. 303).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

⁸⁰ Edmund Gosse, *Critical Kit-Kats* (London: William Heinemann, 1896), pp. 261-62.

While Pater was well-known as someone who agonised over his prose,⁸¹ Lee's efforts to diagnose the mechanics of his style also reveals her to be a writer for whom the structure and shape of narrative was of great concern. Her fastidious analysis of style was, however, balanced by an alternative approach: understanding a book's 'spirit' or 'charm' 'by merely turning over the pages' or even by 'carrying it about'.⁸² For Lee, 'this particular manner of absorbing a book's spirit stands to the material operation called *reading*'. These disparate approaches point to reading being a process that is both material and psychological, perhaps in the manner of looking at a portrait photograph.

Colby highlights Lee's own stylistic luggage and suggests that she was 'confident of her reader's patience, knowing that one reads her not for specific information but for a ramble among her cluttered impressions'.⁸³ Colby was not being scathing of Lee's style, rather she was celebrating the unexpected journey her writing could take. After bringing together Lee's meandering, 'cluttered impressions' on portraiture, this chapter will now apply the ideas of the ghostly, and of malleable textual framing it evoked for her, to examine the construction of her supernatural fiction. In 1874, Lee wrote to Henrietta Jenkin:

I do not think I should ever be able to write a regular novel, as I seem to be totally wanting in the organ of eventuality. Of course what I should like eventually would be to write serious works on literature and art, but that would take years of training and study and an already more or less established literary reputation.⁸⁴

In the nineteenth-century pseudo-science of phrenology – the process of reading the external conformation of the cranium as an index for mental faculty – 'eventuality' was

⁸¹ Gosse noted: 'I have known writers of every degree, but never one to whom the act of composition was such a travail and an agony as it was to Pater'. *Critical Kit-Kats*, p. 262.

⁸² Lee, 'Reading Books', in *Hortus Vitae*, pp. 37-44 (pp. 42-43).

⁸³ Colby, p. 248.

⁸⁴ Lee to Henrietta Jenkin, 2 October 1874, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 40-41 (p. 41). Also quoted in *Selected Letters*, ed. Gagel, pp. 176-77 (p. 176).

Lee's attempts at novel writing, which produced *Miss Brown* in 1884 and *Louis Norbert* in 1914, have met with harsh criticism. Pulham concludes that 'success in the novel form eluded her'. See Pulham, 'Duality and Desire in *Louis Norbert*', p. 123.

defined as 'the faculty of observing and remembering the order of succession in events'.⁸⁵ The letter illustrates Lee's choice to write, what may be called, irregular narratives that challenged temporal progression. Lee expressed a preference to write 'bits of stories on the rare occasions of knowing some side of life well' on the justification of fatigue: 'I get tired if I read two hours a day'.⁸⁶ Putting aside the 'regular novel', she turned to the more condensed literary frame provided by short fiction. Like many of her contemporaries, including Edmund Gosse and Walter Pater, the compact literary space offered her something that a longer piece could not.⁸⁷ In the short story, Lee manipulates the historical telling of events through the construction of multiple narrative frames. 'Oke of Okehurst; Or, The Phantom Lover' provides a suitable test case for locating the spectral quality of her textual hauntings. Before being collected in *Hauntings*, Lee's story was published as a 'shilling dreadful' novella in 1886.⁸⁸

The Case of 'Oke of Okehurst; Or, The Phantom Lover'

The primary narrative of Lee's story 'Oke of Okehurst; Or, The Phantom Lover' commences at the moment when an unfinished portrait of a mysterious woman – a 'singular being' of intrigue in many newspapers – is presented by an artist to a visitor in

⁸⁵ "eventuality, n.", *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, June 2017): <<http://www.oed.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

⁸⁶ Lee to Eugene Lee Hamilton, 31 August 1893, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 363-65 (pp. 364-65).

⁸⁷ Lee's short story 'Amour Dure' was originally imagined as a 'Renaissance novel', but she could not secure a publisher (see *Hauntings*, note 1, p. 41). Lee laughed at W. Blackwood rejecting the novel in 1885 on the grounds that 'he thinks it a pity to have put the historical facts into a fictitious frame!' See Lee to Matilda Paget, 25 July 1885, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 182-83 (p. 183). This is exactly what Pater was doing in his short stories, *Imaginary Portraits*, of which Lee was almost certainly aware. Lee borrowed Pater's title for one of her stories: 'An Eighteenth-Century Singer: An Imaginary Portrait', published in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1891. Lee subsequently condensed the Renaissance novel to produce 'Amour Dure' as a short story for publication in *Murray's Magazine*, before including it in *Hauntings*. Lee notes that she 'cut it down' in a letter to Matilda Paget, 4 August 1886, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, pp. 228-29 (p. 229). On its acceptance by *Murray's Magazine*, see Lee's letter to Matilda Paget, 13 August 1886, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 230-231 (p. 231).

⁸⁸ Lee to Matilda Paget, 15 July 1886, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 222-23 (p. 223).

his studio.⁸⁹ The portrait painter answers a question which, within Lee's narrative framework, the reader is not permitted to hear. The story opens in the middle of a conversation: 'That sketch up there with the boy's cap? Yes; that's the same woman' (*Oke*, p. 105). Crucially, the painter is not presenting a single portrait, rather a series of 'mere scratches' of the as-yet nameless woman he has been unable to capture on canvas (*Oke*, p. 106). Dramatising this fact, the series of unfinished images are descriptively joined together by the portrait painter to form an accumulative verbal portrait: 'Here she is leaning over the staircase, and here sitting in the swing. Here she is walking quickly about the room. That's her head' (*Oke*, p. 106). The act of verbally sketching the woman brings her to life from the canvas, but also figuratively dismembers her. The ensuing conversation is just as truncated as the portrait painter begins his retrospective account of his visit to Okehurst to paint Alice (her name is revealed) and her husband – or rather the events surrounding his inability to paint the portrait. The text of Lee's story, 'Oke of Okehurst', is similarly characterised by gaps and frames that disrupt the narrative.

Symbolically, Alice's portrait remains unfinished: 'This is her portrait; a huge wreck. I don't suppose you can make much of it; it is merely blocked in, and seems quite mad' (*Oke*, p. 106). The unfinished portrait has biographical and literary precedents. Following one of her many visits to John Singer Sargent in June 1883, Lee noted that '[t]here were two very fine begun portraits in his studio'.⁹⁰ Lee could also have been drawing on Honoré de Balzac's short story 'The Unnamed Masterpiece' (1831), in which an aspiring portrait painter longs to see a mysterious masterpiece in a master's studio. Even after a lifetime, the masterpiece remains unfinished. Any attempt to complete it, results in its ruin. The portrait becomes 'a confused mass of colour inside a multitude of

⁸⁹ Lee, 'Oke of Okehurst; Or, The Phantom Lover', in *Hauntings*, p. 106. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text, with the abbreviation *Oke*.

⁹⁰ Lee to Matilda Paget, 23 June 1883, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, p. 117. Also quoted in *Selected Letters*, ed. Gagel, pp. 422-23 (p. 423).

weird lines, making a wall of paint'.⁹¹ Only on closer study can it disclose 'a naked foot emerging from the chaos'. A battle between realism and formlessness to capture the spirit of a captivating female model similarly informs Lee's tale. Lee's opening scene in the studio presents Alice Oke as an enigma to be revealed and identifies portraiture as a mode of representation to be interrogated within the structure of Lee's narrative.

In comparison to other haunted portrait stories, Lee presents a distinctly *unfantastical* portrait.⁹² Its historic counterpart, the early seventeenth-century full-length portrait of Alice Oke's ancestor, on display in the Oke family home, is closer to the fantastic portrait a Victorian reader would expect to encounter in such tales. Yet even the fantastic quality of this canvas remains a matter of uncanny resemblance. The portrait does not have the kind of supernatural agency Wilde instilled into the portrait of Dorian Gray. In contrast, it is mundane; 'neither very good nor very bad', it captures 'the same vague eccentricity of expression' the portrait painter recognises in Alice (*Oke*, p. 118). Its likeness stretches across history to resemble someone who did not sit for it, someone not yet born. The portrait of the earlier Alice Oke therefore stands as what the unfinished blocked-in canvas has the promise to become, but can never be.

Alice Oke is characterised by movement. She is always represented in motion, descriptively pictured as a fragmented form. Maxwell and Pulham claim that the character of Alice was likely based on Janey Sevilla, better known as Lady Archibald Campbell, who was painted by James McNeill Whistler as an *Arrangement in Black* circa 1883 (fig. 4.6).⁹³ The claim is supported by a letter that Lee wrote the following year,

⁹¹ Honoré de Balzac, 'The Unknown Masterpiece', in *The Girl with the Golden Eyes and Other Stories*, trans. Peter Collier, ed. Patrick Coleman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 39-65 (p. 62).

⁹² This observation is indebted to Deborah Maria Manion, *The Ekphrastic Fantastic: Gazing at Magic Portraits in Victorian Fiction* (University of Iowa: PhD Thesis, 2010), p. 166.

⁹³ Maxwell and Pulham, *Hauntings*, p. 106 (see note 1).

recalling an afternoon spent in the company of 'Lady Archie'.⁹⁴ Lee records her suggestion that "many people – ever so many – perhaps most nice people – have got phantom lovers". The comment, Lee supposed, clearly implied that 'Lady Archie' 'had one herself'. In Lee's story, the phantom ghost takes the form of Mr Lovelock, who is buried in the grounds of the house, and who haunts Alice's heart and her husband's mind. Lee saw Whistler's portrait of 'Lady Archie' at the Grosvenor Gallery in June 1884 and described it as 'a marvellous [sic] thing'.⁹⁵ The sense of movement that characterises Alice's fleeting form is reminiscent of Lee's account of the portrait:

The young woman, tall & [...] dressed in a very plain black woollen frock & sealskin cape, is ~~go~~ walking quickly out of a room, finishing pulling up her gloves, and turning round as if to give a message; the first impression of this black tall figure on the black ground is that you won't see her receding head at all, so quickly is she turning away.⁹⁶

Whistler achieved a sense of ghostly translucency in his portraits through a process of repeatedly scraping down and building up layers of paint.⁹⁷ While Whistler was frequently criticised for his lack of finish,⁹⁸ Arthur Symons was so captivated by the painter's spectral brushwork that he sensationally suggested Whistler need only to 'think

⁹⁴ Lee to Matilda Paget, 20 July 1887, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, 259-60 (p. 260). The letter includes another reference to Lee's story: Lee recalls 'Lady Archie' say that she will read Morris's *Love is Enough* on her train journey home, the book that the portrait painter recommends to Alice (p. 260).

⁹⁵ Lee to Matilda Paget, 13 June 1884, in *Selected Letters*, ed. Gagel, pp. 542-44 (p. 543). I quote the Gagel edition as it includes Lee's original spelling error (corrected by Cooper Willis). See *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 145-46 (p. 145).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 543. I quote the Gagel edition because it retains Lee's original strike-through (omitted in Cooper Willis's edition).

⁹⁷ Arthur Symons described the haunting facture of Whistler's paintings: 'He begins by building his world after nature's, with supports as solid and as visible. Gradually he knocks away support after support, expecting the structure to support itself by its own consciousness, so to speak, at the perfect moment he gives to the eye just enough to catch in the outlines of things that it may be able to complete them by that imaginative sympathy which is part of the seeing of works of art.' See *Studies on Modern Painters* (New York: William Edwin Rudge, 1925), p. 33.

⁹⁸ Ruskin saw Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* (1875) at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877 and wrote a response, published in *Fors Clavigera: Letters to the Workman and Labourers of Great Britain* (1871-84): "I have seen, and heard, much of Cockney impudence before now, but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face." It formed the basis of the Whistler-Ruskin trial in 1848. Quoted by Linda Merrill, in *A Pot of Paint: Aesthetics on Trial in Whistler v. Ruskin* (London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), p. 1.

his picture upon the canvas – and there it is!’⁹⁹ When looking for visual equivalents of Lee’s descriptive composite of Alice, one cannot help but also draw parallels to Lee’s portrait painted by Sargent in 1881, which similarly catches her in movement (fig. 4.7). Lee commented that ‘it is of course mere dabs & blurs & considerably caricatured, but certainly more like me than I expected [...] the goodness of my sitting seems to consist in never staying quiet a single moment’.¹⁰⁰

While the motif of an unfinished portrait is representative of Lee’s interest in vagueness, it is rather the series of sketches that best captures her idea of the supernatural and its role in the story. As the story progresses, it is revealed that the portrait painter produced (at least) one hundred and thirty sketches of Alice. She is also described as a mass of lines in her person. Alice fulfils the portrait painter’s ambiguous search for something that ‘once in a thousand years’ may arise: ‘a combination of lines, a system of movements, an outline, a gesture, which is new, unprecedented, and yet hits off exactly our desires for beauty and rareness’ (*Oke*, p. 114). To the painter, Alice is ‘a wonderful series of lines’ (*Oke*, p. 114); her ‘straight supple back’ forms an ‘exquisite arrangement of lines’ (*Oke*, p. 144). She is a walking sketch.

The series of ‘scratches’ and the multitude of sketches participate in what Catherine Maxwell highlights as the significance of the fragment for Lee’s writing. Maxwell focusses on the archaeological fragment as a ‘haunting of the incomplete’.¹⁰¹ Indeed, in her essay on the supernatural, Lee claimed that ‘the more complete the artistic work, the less remains of the ghost’.¹⁰² Specifically in terms of the portrait, Lee asked:

⁹⁹ Arthur Symons, ‘The Decadent Movement in Literature’, *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* (June 1893), 858-67 (p. 859).

¹⁰⁰ Lee to Matilda Paget, 25-27 June 1881, in *Selected Letters*, ed. Gagel, pp. 295-98 (p. 296). Also quoted in *Vernon Lee’s Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, p. 65. I quote the Gagel edition, due to slight discrepancies in punctuation.

¹⁰¹ Maxwell, *Second Sight*, p. 138.

¹⁰² Lee, ‘Faustus and Helena: Notes on the Supernatural in Art’, in *Hauntings*, p. 310.

‘Why, as soon as a figure is seen, is the charm half-lost?’ Applying this idea of the fragment to Lee’s textual *Hauntings*, Maxwell notes that ‘all the stories [...] are structured around incompleteness – an incompleteness which makes their protagonists susceptible to revenants and which also marks their projects and outcomes with inconclusion’.¹⁰³ In ‘Dionea’, Alessandro De Rosi is left with only ‘the heap of notes’ for a ‘never-finished book on the Exiled Gods’.¹⁰⁴ The facsimile of Spiridion Trepka’s diary, that comprises Lee’s story ‘Amour Dure’, similarly ends abruptly. The cause, namely his death, is disclosed by Lee’s addition of an editor’s note. Building on Maxwell’s observation, this chapter claims that, on a deeper textual level, many of Lee’s *Hauntings* are themselves crafted from ephemeral items: letters or diary extracts that leave much of the plot untold. The reader sometimes learns of events retrospectively, or is left to imaginatively reconstruct the narrative from fragments of information provided by an unreliable narrator, such as Lee’s portrait painter. Probing the relationship between art and the supernatural, Lee also asked: ‘Do not these embodied ghosts owe what little effect they still possess to their surroundings, and are not the surroundings the real ghost?’¹⁰⁵ The ‘surroundings’ that contain Lee’s ghosts were not only the musical Academy in Italy, or the family home in West Sussex, but also the framework of her text.

While the portrait triggers the beginning of Lee’s tale, it is turned to face the wall when the painter begins to narrate his recollections of the unusual events surrounding its creation. This gesture performs a kind of displacement. The spectral potential of the portrait, which causes the painter to want to hide its formless face, is symbolically transferred to Lee’s text. ‘You have never heard the story in detail?’ (*Oke*, p. 107), the portrait painter asks Lee’s reader, as well as the visitor to his studio. Lee’s narrator is not

¹⁰³ Maxwell, *Second Sight*, p. 142.

¹⁰⁴ Lee, ‘Dionea’, in *Hauntings*, p. 101

¹⁰⁵ Lee, ‘Faustus and Helena: Notes on the Supernatural in Art’, p. 311.

only a portrait painter, but also a story-teller. As well as painting Alice's portrait, he wishes to school her in literature. In their portrait sittings, he suggests she read Dante's *Vita Nuova* and William Morris's *Love is Enough*, tales of courtly romance that portend the painter's all-consuming passion for his sitter. He confesses that he is a portrait painter of a 'particular sort' (*Oke*, p. 122). That sort is a portrait painter who is more accomplished as a story-teller.

Yet the reader must take an active role in piecing together the text. In the opening scene in the studio, Lee's prose omits the exchange of dialogue between the painter and his guest. The portrait painter responds to events and statements that remain unheard, and that would otherwise remain unknown. 'Help me move these pictures away from the wall. Thanks.'; 'Yes; you have guessed it quite right'; 'I forgot you had relations in that part of the country' (*Oke*, p. 106). From an ambiguous position both inside and outside of the text, the reader must deduce a complete dialogue from these conversational fragments, filling in the gaps left by Lee. At various points in the painter's narrative, he either promises to describe a particular incident and fails to do so, or becomes distracted by such incidents that disrupt the progression of recounted events. For example, he abruptly breaks from introducing a conversation that took place between himself and Mr Oke with: '— But I must mention a curious incident that happened' (*Oke*, p. 146). Lee represents these repeated disruptions on the page as an extended dash. The painter shares Pater's tendency (as characterised by Lee) to carry surplus mental luggage. He postpones thoughts and prose, only to fail to pick them up again later. The result is an unfulfilled narrative.

Lee invites the reader to question the reliability of the portrait painter as the narrator of the story in the same manner as Robert Browning does in 'My Last Duchess' (1842). Lee was an admirer of Browning, who, she noted, treated her 'like a long lost

grandchild'.¹⁰⁶ His poem similarly opens with the presentation of a portrait: 'That's my last Duchess painted on the wall'.¹⁰⁷ A duke gestures towards the portrait of his late wife and begins to recount events to an unknown auditor. Herbert Tucker expresses how one should seek meaning in the gaps in Browning's dramatic monologues: 'we do not so much as scrutinize the ellipses and blank spaces of the text as we people those openings by attending to the overtones of the different discourses that flank them'.¹⁰⁸ As Lee's reader attempts to read the blank spaces of her text, the central subject of the story shifts. The 'Oke' of the tale's title refers to Mr Oke, but the story centres on his wife and her phantom lover. While they both offer intriguing studies, it is the portrait painter whose psychology and manner of narration begins to take centre stage. He confesses that his time in the house 'all seems so distant, vivid but unreal, like a thing of my own imagination' (*Oke*, p. 107).

Lee appears to borrow from Browning's approach to the dramatic monologue, but the poet's blank spaces are enlarged in her story as she introduces a second narrative frame. The series of sketches made of Alice are reflected in the sequence of dialogic frames that encase Lee's central narrative – the portrait painter's account of events at the Oke family home – and destabilise the reading process. The historic sequence of events that take place at Okehurst are framed within the portrait painter's report to the unnamed visitor; that conversation is, in turn, framed by a letter from Lee to Count Peter

¹⁰⁶ Lee to Matilda Paget, 11 June 1887, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 244-45 (p. 245).

¹⁰⁷ Robert Browning, 'My Last Duchess' (1842), in Christopher Ricks, ed., *The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, 2002), pp. 117-18.

Helga Ramsey-Kurz notes that, for both Lee's painter and Browning's Duke, their adoption of the role of narrator is their undoing. See 'Portraits of Fractured Selves or Fractured Self-Portraits? "A Phantom Lover" by Vernon Lee', in *The Self at Risk in English Literatures and Other Landscapes: Honoring Bridgette Scheer-Schäzler on the Occasion of her Birthday*, ed. Gudrum M. Grabher (Innsbruck: Verlag des Instituts für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck, 1999), pp. 203-12 (p. 207).

¹⁰⁸ Herbert F. Tucker, 'Dramatic Monologue and the Overhearing of Lyric', in *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism*, eds. Chaviva Hošek and Patricia Parker (London: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 226-43 (p. 232).

Boutourline, dated 'Kensington, July 1886' (*Oke*, p. 105).¹⁰⁹ Lee uses the framing letter to provide a backstory to the fantastic tale. It tells of a past conversation between herself and the count in which he urged her to write the story she had previously told him in person. Lee's use of this second dialogic frame-story stretches the text's narrative away from the fictional world of the tale towards its creation and inspiration, simultaneously exposing the fallacy of the story and implicating herself within its fictional conceit. Lee employs a double frame to construct 'Oke of Okehurst' as a conversation within a conversation. The portrait painter's question as to whether the auditor had heard the story of Alice Oke is preceded by Lee's analogous address to Boutourline: 'Do you remember my telling you, one afternoon that you sat upon the hearthstool at Florence, the story of Mrs. Oke of Okehurst?' (*Oke*, p. 105).

Lee's manipulation of the temporal framework of her text is evident not only in her fiction, but also in her critical writing. Her essay 'Imagination in Modern Art' (1897) is similarly constructed from encased narratives. Lee's discussion of the future of art is framed by recalling the experience of overlooking the river from a professor's study at King's College, 'watching the elms on the opposite bank growing gradually dark and without substance: 'mere silhouettes [...] ... It suggested to us, [...] by its delightfulness of pattern and colour, whether painting would, in future, revert to decoration'.¹¹⁰ The temporal gap and imaginative link from one narrative to another is marked by the ellipsis. Another frame soon appears. Lee's essay commences out of her recollection of a meeting, a meeting in which, Lee recounts, the professor reminded her of something they

¹⁰⁹ Balzac's 'The Unnamed Masterpiece' is similarly prefaced by a letter, the content of which is mysteriously censored. All that is provided is the textual furniture, or frame, of the letter: 'To a Lord ... 1845' (p. 39). 'The Unknown Masterpiece' ('Le Chef-d'œuvre inconnu') was first published as a 'conte fantastique' in two parts in *l'Artiste* on 31 July and 3 August 1831. The letter dedication was added to the Furne edition of Balzac's *Comédie Humaine* in 1846.

¹¹⁰ Lee, 'Imagination in Modern Art: Random Notes on Whistler, Sargent, and Besnard', *Fortnightly Review*, 62 (October 1897), 513-21 (p. 513).

had discussed in a preceding conversation. Lee's narrative essay on the photograph album is similarly something recalled, but something that cannot be recollected fully due to the passage of time between the event and the occasion of writing: 'I have put off and off attempting to record – and now it may be too late to recapture'.¹¹¹ The result is a half-recollected, ghostly story.

Through this kind of double encasement, the story of Alice Oke is effectively being told multiple times through both verbal and scriptural means. By blurring the sequence of events within the text, and the sequence of events that led to its creation as a text, Lee creates a complex structure of multiple frames that interrogates the duality of fact and fiction, and of oral and written story-telling. The frame-story validates the central narrative to suggest that it exists outside of the text, with the status of a myth that Lee is simply recounting. There is no reason to doubt that this is the true origin of the story, rather than an imagined literary contrivance.¹¹² Yet, because Lee employed the motif of multiple frames repeatedly across her writing,¹¹³ it becomes a significant part of her literary style. It forms the defining quality of her supernatural tales that take the form of textual hauntings: a folding of the narrative in on itself, a weaving of the past and the present in a manner that leaves temporal gaps.

In the frame-letter, Lee notes that Bourtourline 'urged' her to write the story 'at once', but that she was hesitant to do so since 'to write is to exorcise, to dispel the charm', for 'printers' ink chases away the ghosts that may pleasantly haunt us, as

¹¹¹ Lee, 'Ghosts in a Roman Photograph Album', p. 431.

¹¹² Lee's correspondence reveals that she knew Bourtourline personally, but no letter is known to have been sent between them. Lee states her decision to dedicate the story to Bourtourline in a letter addressed to Matilda Paget, 15 July 1886, in *Vernon Lee's Letters*, ed. Cooper Willis, pp. 222-23 (p. 223).

¹¹³ The same technique of recalling a previous conversation opens Lee's essay 'In Praise of Old Houses'. She uses an ellipsis to figure the move from the past moment into her present thoughts: 'My Yorkshire friend was saying that she hated being in an old house. *There seemed to be other people in it besides the living*'. On the contrary, as this thesis has explored, the feeling of being in an old house provided Lee with creative inspiration. See Lee, 'In Praise of Old Houses', *Limbo and Other Essays* (London: Grant Richards, 1897), pp. 21-41 (p. 21).

efficaciously as gallons of holy water' (*Oke*, p. 105). For Lee, a ghostly half-recollection was preferable to a perfectly-wrought record. The painter, unable to capture Alice in paint, similarly laments that 'if the pencil and brush, imitating each line and tint, can't succeed, how is it possible to give even the vaguest notion with mere wretched words – words possessing only a wretched abstract meaning [...]?' (*Oke*, p. 115). Lee's reference to printers' ink is an acknowledgment of the status of the tale as a published text, but her apologetic tone goes so far as to almost suggest that her story should not have been written at all. Perhaps the value of the supernatural tale would have been greater if it had remained in the ephemeral form of a conversation, comparable to a forgotten melody. The text on the page is therefore a so-called exorcised version of the original (unobtainable) ghost story that was voiced to Boutourline. While, as a work of fiction, the integrity of Lee's short story must hold, her playful framing increases the reader's intrigue. Over-hearing a tale that was once a private conversation, and that might not have existed on paper, is a privilege.

Writing to Lee, thanking her for sending her ghost story 'Apollo the Fiddler: A Chapter in Artistic Anachronism' (1882), Pater (after having read it twice) expressed appreciation for its 'charming portraiture of Italian things and ways'.¹¹⁴ In response to Lee's first ghost story, 'A Culture Ghost: or, Winthrop's Adventure' (later published as 'A Wicked Voice'), John Singer Sargent similarly praised its 'local atmosphere'.¹¹⁵ This 'strikes me as real "raison d'être" of the thing [sic], and the ghost story a pretext', he commented, with the warning: 'But this is prying behind the scenes'. It has been this chapter's aim to 'pry' behind the scenes of Lee's ghost story, to suggest that its spectral

¹¹⁴ Walter Pater to Violet Paget, 18 November 1882, in *Letters of Walter Pater*, pp. 45-46 [70] (p. 45). Lee's essay 'Apollo the Fiddler: A Chapter in Artistic Anachronism' was published in *Fraser's Magazine* (July 1882), 52-67. It was later reprinted in *Juvenilia*, i, 167-218.

¹¹⁵ John Singer Sargent to Vernon Lee, [September or October] 1881, quoted by Richard Ormond, in 'John Singer Sargent and Vernon Lee', pp. 167-68 (p. 167)

effect lies not only within Lee's sense of the spirit of a place, but also within the scaffolds of her stories. As a reader and as a writer, Lee was in search of moments when 'one feels that there really is something astonishing and mysterious in words taken out of the dictionary and arranged with commas and semicolons and full stops between them'.¹¹⁶

At the same time, Lee doubted that a ghost could effectively be captured in a story or in a picture. 'By *ghost* we do not mean the vulgar apparition which is seen or heard in told or written tales', she wrote.¹¹⁷ Her solution was to create, through the literary conceit of multiple frame-stories, gaps within her narrative wherein the ghostly subsequently resides. Lee's tales are distinguished from the literary tradition of the haunted portrait story in that the supernatural lies not in the portrait in its plot, but within the telling of the portrait story itself. The framed structure of the text enables her story to resemble a ghost: a 'half-faded recollection', 'sprung from the strange confused heaps, half-rubbish, half-treasure, which lie in our fancy' and which construct Lee's *Hauntings*.¹¹⁸ Lee's achievement was to construct fiction that recreated a repetitive process of literary and artistic re-vision. She set out her problem with the supernatural plainly:

paint us that vagueness, mould into shape that darkness, modulate into chords that silence – tell us the character and history of those vague beings [...] What do we obtain? A picture, a piece of music, a story; but the ghost is gone.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Lee, 'Reading Books', in *Hortus Vitae*, p. 41.

¹¹⁷ Lee, 'Faustus and Helena: Notes on the Supernatural in Art', p. 309.

¹¹⁸ Lee, Preface to *Hauntings*, p. 39.

¹¹⁹ Lee, 'Faustus and Helena: Notes on the Supernatural in Art', p. 310.



Figure 4.1 *Charles Burney*, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1781. Oil on canvas. 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 24 in. (749 x 610 mm). © National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG 3884. Purchased, 1953.



Figure 4.2 The Lee-Paget family photograph album. $6 \frac{1}{4} \times 4 \frac{7}{8} \times 1 \frac{3}{4}$ in. (15.5 x 12 x 4.3 cm). Ivory and Leather binding. All pages show *cartes de visite* ($5 \frac{3}{4} \times 4 \frac{5}{16}$ in.). The Collection of Vernon Lee Materials, Colby College Special Collections, Waterville, Maine.



Figure 4.3 From the Lee-Paget family photograph album: Violet Paget (Vernon Lee) and Eugene Lee Hamilton, 1866. The Collection of Vernon Lee Materials, Colby College Special Collections, Waterville, Maine.



Figure 4.4 From the Lee-Paget family photograph album: Violet Paget (Vernon Lee), 1877 (printed). The Collection of Vernon Lee Materials, Colby College Special Collections, Waterville, Maine.



Figure 4.5 Vernon Lee, photograph by M. Taylor, Sestri, 1914. The Collection of Vernon Lee Materials, Colby College Special Collections, Waterville, Maine.



Figure 4.6 James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Arrangement in Black* (*The Lady in the Yellow Buskin*) (Portrait of Lady Archibald Campbell), c. 1883. Oil on canvas. 7 ft. 2 in. × 43 ½ in. (218.4 x 110.5 cm). Reproduced with the permission of Philadelphia Museum of Art (this image is in the public domain). W1895-1-11. Purchased with the W. P. Wiltach Fund, 1895.



Figure 4.7 John Singer Sargent, *Vernon Lee*, 1881. Oil on canvas. Support: 537 x 432 mm.
Photo: © Tate, London 2017. NO4787.

CONCLUSION

‘Stuffing their Pilferings into their Pockets’:
Writers in the Gallery

In her 1925 essay ‘Pictures’, Virginia Woolf reflects on the role of the visual arts in literature by imagining the writer and the painter as literal and metaphoric neighbours. ‘[A] critic of the twenty-fifth century’, she argues, ‘would be able to deduce from the works of Proust alone the existence of Matisse, Cézanne, Derain, and Picasso’.¹ From his books, the critic would know that these great painters had been ‘covering canvas after canvas, squeezing tube after tube, in the room next door’. Woolf subsequently pictures writers ‘moving round the gallery’ (*Pictures*, p. 142). Moving between the spaces of where art is created and where it is viewed, Woolf’s account of the writer and painter takes multiple turns to form a complex picture of inter-art relation: painting and writing are connectable artistic practices, but they are often ‘prejudiced’ (each claiming superiority for themselves), and they can only be bridged by the most skilled of practitioners (*Pictures*, p. 141). ‘[I]f we accost [writers] in picture galleries, disarm their suspicions and get them to tell us honestly what it is that pleases them in pictures’, Lee suggests,

they will confess that it is not the art of painting in the least. They are not there to understand the problems of the painter’s art. They are after something that may be helpful to themselves. It is only thus that they can turn those long galleries from torture chambers of boredom and despair into smiling avenues, pleasant places filled with birds, sanctuaries where silence reigns supreme. (*Pictures*, pp. 141-42)

Writers turn galleries into books, but in doing so they are, in Woolf’s eyes, acting as ‘irresponsible dragon-flies, mere insects, children wantonly destroying works of art by

¹ Virginia Woolf, ‘Pictures’, in *The Moment and Other Essays*, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: The Hogarth Press, 1947), pp. 140-44 (p. 140). This edition dates the essay to 1925. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

pulling petal from petal' (*Pictures*, pp. 143-44). 'In short', she states, any writer in the gallery 'had better be off, for here, oaring his way through the waters, mooning, abstract, contemplative, comes a painter, and stuffing their pilferings into their pockets, out they bolt, lest they should be caught at their mischief'.

Woolf was familiar with each of the authors studied in this thesis. She was an admirer of Gosse's biographical writing (as discussed in chapter two) and a harsh critic of Lee's style (as noted in chapter four). She was also a frequent reader of Pater's work and she considered Hardy to be one of those writers who could successfully evoke the purity of the visual in words.² A writer moving round a gallery was a scenario common to the nineteenth century. Woolf's picture of thieving, mischievous writers reflects upon the shifting gallery space of the mid- to late nineteenth century, on the specific experience of portrait galleries (or 'smiling avenues'), and on the creative exchange between viewing portraits and reading texts that developed. Yet, by illuminating this creative exchange, this thesis paints Woolf's picture of 'pilfering' writers in a different light. Writers took from the gallery, but they also gave a lot back.

While the writer's presence in the gallery was more common than it was circumspect in the second half of the nineteenth century, Woolf's term 'pilferings' captures the typical nature of the portrait encounter for that period, an encounter that was increasingly defined by its material, shifting, and sometimes untypical environment. According to Woolf, portraiture had something particular to offer that other artistic compositions did not: 'somebody's room, nose, or hands, some little effect of character or circumstance, some knick-knack to put in our pockets and take away' (*Pictures*, p. 143). In the late nineteenth century, writers' portrait 'pilferings' included prints,

² Woolf groups Hardy with Proust, Flaubert, and Conrad as writers who used 'their eyes without in the least impeding their pens' (*Pictures*, p. 141).

photographs, and cigarette cards that were distributed and circulated outside the walls of the gallery. Precisely because of the increasingly informal, unmonitored, and portable nature of portrait collecting, in a way, writers never left the ‘gallery’. Therefore, contrary to Woolf’s suggestion, they never needed to ‘be off’. They took the gallery with them, in their pockets and in their imagination. For the mid- to late nineteenth-century author, material ‘pilferings’ were even more malleable as imaginative ‘pilferings’.

Woolf’s term ‘pilferings’ is evocative, but her description of ‘long galleries’, ‘torture chambers of boredom and despair’, misunderstands the full nature of portrait galleries in the mid- to late nineteenth century, firstly because of the social and material democratisation of the culture of collecting, and secondly because of the words through which galleries were represented and through which they functioned. According to Woolf, art should work ‘silently’ (*Pictures*, p. 143). A ‘story-telling picture’ – the kind that dominated in the nineteenth century – was, to her mind, ‘as pathetic and ludicrous as a trick played by a dog’ (*Pictures*, p. 142). She suggested that understanding a painting as a story yielded limited results: ‘with half a sheet of notepaper we can tell all the stories of all the pictures in the world’. In contrast, paintings were most valuable in the nineteenth century as stories. Art critics, biographers, novelists, and poets produced page after page that told narratives about portraits and portrait collections.

Portraits may have been an exception for Woolf as they appeared to break their silence at various moments throughout her life and career.³ Maggie Humm notes that ‘a favourite card game’ of Woolf’s childhood was ‘played with family photographs in

³ For an overview of Woolf’s relationship with the visual arts, see *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts*, ed. Maggie Humm (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), especially the chapters: ‘Virginia Woolf and Portraiture’, by Elizabeth Hirsh, pp. 160-77; and ‘Virginia Woolf, Art Galleries and Museums’, by Benjamin Harvey, pp. 140-59. See also Maggie Humm, ‘Virginia Woolf and Visual Culture’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, Second Edition, ed. Susan Sellers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010 [2000]), pp. 214-30. In this chapter, Humm labels Woolf as ‘modernism’s most accomplished visual writer’ (p. 229).

which “the ugliest took the trick””.⁴ The game closely compares to Lee’s playful biographical weaving about the West Sussex family photographs. When Lee reviewed the Royal Academy exhibition of 1919, she animated the framed figures in a manner reminiscent of Joseph Beavington Atkinson writing on the South Kensington portrait exhibitions in the 1860s.⁵ She personifies ‘a lady in full evening dress’ standing at the top of the staircase leading to the exhibition, imagining her ‘lips are just parted [...] about to say, “How nice of you to come!”’⁶ Yet in the nineteenth century, portraits were never silent and the written word actively participated in the experience of portraiture. While technological developments enabled the reproduction and distribution of images to become a thing of ease, and images gained authority for their ability to instruct, the written word did not become superfluous. This thesis has sought to place word and image alongside one another, as they were experienced within the nineteenth-century portrait gallery, in the art periodical, and even in the passport. From these basic scriptural accompaniments to art criticism, and from art criticism to fiction, text provided an important vehicle through which portraits could be made to ‘voice’ stories.

For the Victorians, portrait collections mapped networks of relation and affective exchange; they created intimate fantasies of social formation and personal intimacy; they served as products of history and as windows onto the past; by materially remembering the past in the present, they also challenged the passing of years; and, as a result, they

⁴ Humm, ‘Virginia Woolf and Visual Culture’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf*, p. 216.

⁵ See [Joseph Beavington Atkinson], ‘Historic Portraits’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, 100.613 (November 1866), 571-84 (p. 571). Atkinson is identified as the author by *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*: <<http://wellesley.chadwyck.com>> [accessed 24 June 2017].

⁶ Virginia Woolf, ‘The Fleeting Portrait: II. The Royal Academy’, in *Granite and Rainbow: Essays by Virginia Woolf*, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: The Hogarth Press, 1960 [1958]), pp. 219-24 (p. 219). Woolf’s essay, ‘The Royal Academy’, was originally published in the *Athenæum* (22 August 1919), 774-76 (p. 774). While Woolf refers to other paintings according to the title or RA catalogue number, it is difficult to identify the title and artist of the portrait from her description. For more on Woolf and the Royal Academy, see Maggie Humm, ‘Editing Virginia Woolf and the Arts: Virginia Woolf and the Royal Academy’, in *Woolf Editing / Editing Woolf: Selected Papers from the Eighteenth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf* (Clemson: Clemson University Digital Press, 2009), pp. 154-59.

lent themselves to the construction of narratives. In his study of *The Making of Modern Identity*, Charles Taylor states that ‘an inescapable feature of human life’ is the desire to ‘grasp our lives in a *narrative*’.⁷ The Victorians were obsessed with writing lives. They found visual material in the portrait, and the proliferation of portraits throughout the period meant that there was a multiplicity of narratives to be told.

In reflection of its plural and contested nature in the mid- to late nineteenth-century gallery imaginary, the portrait has literally and figuratively been on the move throughout this thesis. It has been encountered in different mediums (paintings, sketches, photographs, and prints) and in a variety of material environments. It has moved from the wall of the public gallery, to an individual’s pocket, and to the bound personal album; and it has journeyed from the world of art into the literary consciousness. The portrait’s presence in society was fixed, but its material existence was increasingly mobile and its cultural meaning similarly fluid.

The breadth and complexity of the critical conversation between literature and portraiture in the mid- to late nineteenth century is evident in the interconnections between the chapters of this thesis on the recurring themes of celebrity, history, biography, authenticity, feeling, materiality, frames (and framing), miniatures (and miniaturising), ephemerality, and the ghostly. Throughout this multi-faceted conversation, the assumptions about portraiture as an imitative art have repeatedly been challenged. The purpose of portraiture has long rested upon the ability of the subject to be recognised – by their face and name – but, through an expansion of portrait media and spaces, portraiture increasingly became a mechanism to make visible and to make known. Tied to history, biography, and authenticity, portraiture was commonly regarded

⁷ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 47.

for its truth-telling, but from the national pantheon of great men, to paintings laden with eighteenth-century dust, to the photograph album complete with autographs, portraits could also be anything but objective documents. Just as they could be fragile in their materiality – scratched and faded as they passed from hand to hand – portraits were fragile in their meaning, which was subject to the geographical and temporal locations in which they were experienced. Through this mutability of meaning, the portrait gained agency within the literary imagination. This thesis has charted a move from understanding the portrait as a visual aid or model for written biography (chapter two) to the portrait as an object with its own ‘biography’ (chapter three). That biography was ‘written’ by the portrait’s material environment, by the imaginative gaze looking at it, and by the literature that not only took advantage of the particularities of portraiture, but also helped to construct them for the Victorian eye.

The themes of frames (and framing), miniatures (and miniaturising) repeatedly highlighted in this thesis point to how, in the mid- to late nineteenth century, portrait-objects triggered portrait-processes that could be applied by writers. In 1869, a critic writing for *All the Year Round* reflected that ‘[t]he window of a large photographic shop affords a capital means of judging the tone of the public mind at any given time. From the popular photographs, it is easy to discern what sort of books are being read’.⁸ Authors of the most popular novels would have been in high demand. Yet from books, it can also be discerned what kind of portraiture people were looking at and how they were looking at them. In the shared world of portraits and texts, the borrowings between visual and literary media went in both directions. The portrait provided templates for physically and imaginatively communicating with people, which writers sought to textually recreate by bringing together the real and the imaginary, by exploring the implications of affective

⁸ [Unsigned], ‘Looking in at Shop Windows’, *All the Year Round*, 2.28 (12 June 1869), 37-43 (p. 42)

materiality, and in the form of hauntings. The descriptive and narrative capacity of literature provided mechanisms through which the imaginative possibilities of portraiture could be expressed. In so doing, literature also shaped how the Victorians viewed portraits as imaginative objects.

Looking Backwards and Looking Forwards

The authors highlighted in this thesis for the materiality of their connection to the portrait gallery are associated not only with Victorian culture at large, but also with the specific cultural climate of the *fin de siècle*. Gosse, Pater, and Lee are commonly regarded as *fin-de-siècle* writers. Hardy fits less neatly into this category because the length of his career ties him as much to the height of pastoral fiction beside George Eliot, as it does to the emergence of decadence at the century's close.⁹ Yet Hardy's late novels, particularly *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved* (1892) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895), alongside his poetry, to which he devoted the final years of his career before his death in 1928,¹⁰ reflect on themes of degeneration and art versus life to comfortably place him in their company. Gillian Beer addresses the critical neglect of Hardy's affinity with decadence when she recognises his concern for transience – 'how things decay, yet how fully and abruptly they are alive'.¹¹ A fading yet living thing of affective significance for Hardy was the

⁹ Some early critics speculated that Hardy's novel *Far from the Madding Crowd*, which first appeared anonymously in *Cornhill Magazine* in January 1874, was the work of George Eliot. Henry James recalled: 'Mr. Hardy's novel came into the world under brilliant auspices – such as the declaration by the London *Spectator* that either George Eliot had written it or George Eliot had found her match.' See *Nation* (24 December 1874), reprinted in *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage*, ed. R. G. Cox (London: Routledge, 1979), pp. 37-40 (p. 37).

¹⁰ Although Hardy's first volume of verse, *Wessex Poems*, was not published until late in his career in 1898, he had been writing poetry since before he had thought to become a novelist professionally in the 1870s. Hardy turned to poetry professionally after *Jude the Obscure* received hostile reviews. Poems composed early in his life were combined in publication with those he wrote very late in his career. See Millgate, *Thomas Hardy*, pp. 355, 356, 363.

¹¹ Gillian Beer, 'Hardy and Decadence', in *Celebrating Thomas Hardy: Insights and Appreciations*, ed. Charles P. C. Pettit (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 90-101 (p. 90). Suzanne J. Flynn has similarly illuminated the links between Hardy's work and the naturalist, symbolist, and decadent movements that

portrait photograph. The moment at which a photograph is fading, but has not yet fully disappeared, also serves as a metaphor for the condensed literary period in which this thesis has been situated: the 1880s and 1890s were a time of looking backwards and looking forwards.

In terms of its key texts, this thesis is historically focussed, but the artistic culture to which it has referred is expansive. In many ways, however, it has looked back more than it has looked forward, illuminating how the proliferation of portraits from the mid-nineteenth century created new opportunities for writers. The thesis has frequently shared the backward-looking gaze of writers at the end of the century. Gosse, Pater, Hardy, and Lee looked to portraiture of the past that was a part of the cultural conditions of portrait viewership in their present. Gosse, Pater, and Lee looked back to Renaissance and eighteenth-century portrait painting. Although Hardy worked with the contemporary medium of photography, it can also be said that he looked back (albeit to a past only recently passed) by showing preference for the creative possibilities of photographic formats that were already going out of fashion. The temporality of this backward glance enhanced the temporal semiotics inherent to the portrait medium to inform the *fin-de-siècle* use of portraits as tangible and haunting items.

This thesis will now conclude with a brief look forwards. As a traditionally imitative art, portraiture fitted uneasily with the modernist pull away from mimetic and didactic obligation towards an appreciation of ‘art for art’s sake’. One product of this uneasy negotiation was James McNeill Whistler’s portrait of his mother (1871), titled ‘Arrangement in Grey and Black’, challenging the traditional function of portraiture as

dominated the cultural scene at the end of the nineteenth century. See ‘Hardy in (a Time of) Transition’, in *The Ashgate Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. Rosemarie Morgan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 87-100.

‘the ultimate expression of the realist semiotic gesture’ (fig. 5.1).¹² Whistler’s portrait of his mother was one of two arrangements of the same colour combination, the other being a picture of Thomas Carlyle. In 1967, John Berger reflected on ‘The Changing View of Man in the Portrait’ to identify a decline in portraiture that began from the rise of photography, which ironically had also enabled its proliferation. ‘We can no longer accept that the identity of a man can be adequately established by preserving and fixing what he looks like from a single viewpoint in one place’, he stated.¹³ His belief that ‘the demands of a modern vision are incompatible with the singularity of viewpoint which is the prerequisite for a static-painted “likeness”’ points towards the development of cubism in the twentieth century. The Cubists challenged the ontological assumption of representing what existed, distinguished from what was visible. Developing the ideas of impressionism, the notion of what could be ‘seen’ by the eye was radically reimagined in a move towards a more ‘real’ reality. As a result, the face of portraiture changed radically, evident in Pablo Picasso’s portrait of the notable art dealer, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler (fig. 5.2). Unlike Whistler’s portrait, Picasso’s is titled as a likeness of a specific individual. Yet, while Whistler’s portrait was relatively conventional in its depiction of a human figure, the mechanisms of visual representation that Picasso’s portrait relies upon have significantly loosened.¹⁴

As much as the specificity of portraiture may appear anomalous within the progression of the avant-garde, art historians now recognise its value in the development of modernism. Shearer West rejects the critical trope that ‘portraits appear to have little

¹² Victoria Coulson, *Henry James, Women, and Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 51.

¹³ John Berger, ‘The Changing View of Man in the Portrait’ (dated 1967), in *John Berger: Selected Essays*, ed. Geoff Dyer (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), pp. 98-102 (p. 102). The essay was originally published in Berger’s *The Moment of Cubism* (1969).

¹⁴ On Picasso’s portrait of Kahnweiler, see Marcia Pointon, ‘Kahnweiler’s Picasso; Picasso’s Kahnweiler’, in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 189-202.

place in the evolution of modernism' and 'the creative freedom assigned to the avant-garde'.¹⁵ Indeed, Heather McPherson argues that portraiture appealed to modernist artists because of its 'particular ontology and its art-historical baggage'.¹⁶ The *fin de siècle* stands as an intermodal period for portraiture, caught between realist duty and the pull towards modernism. This thesis has explored how *fin-de-siècle* writers took advantage of this representational friction, revealing the imaginative possibilities of portraiture. Yet, by focussing on the portrait, the thesis has also highlighted the realist foundations that supported the thinking and style of some of the key proponents of aestheticism and decadence who were paving the way at the end of the century.

In 1929, Woolf wrote to the draughtsman, William Rothenstein, in expression of, what she called, 'the ordinary persons [sic] love of a likeness and desire to be reminded by portraits of real people':

I have been greatly interested and pleased to find in your pictures a trace of my father and mother. They are more worn and sad than I remembered them; but no doubt this is accounted for by the fact of my father's illness. I admit that I think, perhaps with the partiality of a daughter, that my mother was more beautiful than you show her; but I am very glad to have these records of them, and must thank you very sincerely for sending them.¹⁷

Thinking less as a writer as she did in 'Pictures' and more as an 'ordinary person', Woolf's value of portraiture is firmly rooted in mid- to late nineteenth-century assumptions of portrait viewership.¹⁸ The desire to visually recall 'real people', without precluding the use of the imagination to embellish reality, can be read in the work of Gosse, Pater, Hardy, and Lee. They made it clear that an 'ordinary' person's love of a

¹⁵ Shearer West, *Portraiture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 187.

¹⁶ Heather McPherson, *The Modern Portrait in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 201. In observation of Picasso's portraiture, Marcia Pointon similarly argues that 'modernism and the portrait might be said to be impacted, welded together'. See 'Kahnweiler's Picasso; Picasso's Kahnweiler', p. 190.

¹⁷ Virginia Woolf to William Rothenstein, 14 January 1929, in *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, iv, 6-7 [1984].

¹⁸ On Woolf's Victorian sensibility, see Kate Flint, 'Virginia Woolf and Victorian Aesthetics', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts*, pp. 19-34; and Steve Ellis, *Virginia Woolf and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

likeness was far from ordinary. Portrait collections gave rise to imaginative conversations that began with a piece of reality, but that travelled large distances in the mind of the Victorian viewer of art – journeys made even greater by the movement of the writer's pen.



Figure 5.1 James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1 (The Artist's Mother)*, 1871. Oil on canvas. 1.443 x 1.63 m. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photo: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay) / Jean Schormans. RF699.



Figure 5.2 Pablo Picasso, *Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler*, 1910. Oil on canvas. 39 ⁹/₁₆ x 28 ⁹/₁₆ in. (100.4 x 72.4 cm). The Art Institute of Chicago. Gift of Mrs. Gilbert W. Chapman in memory of Charles B. Goodspeed, 1948.561. © Succession Picasso / DACS, London 2017. Photo: The Art Institute of Chicago / Art Resource, NY. ART527015.

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