

Visual Genealogy of Portraits, Self-Portraits, and Selfies: Same Phenomenon, Different Phase of History

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Abstract. This book chapter explores how the use of portraits has developed over the years. The purpose is to examine the genealogy of three types of portraits --- portraits, self-portraits, and selfies --- and to reveal similarities and diversity between these. A sample of portraits and self-portraits by painters, and selfies by amateur photographers, are analyzed through the four resources model by Freebody and Luke (1999). In this study, this model contains four theoretical concepts: visual code-breaking, visual meaning-making, visual use and visual analysis. The result shows that both professional artists, such as painters and photographers, and amateur photographers, are visual literate, but on different levels. Visual literacy ability is needed in all these types of portraits, and is always culturally grounded. The images included in this study, show the creators' awareness of how to express specific personalities. Although, there are differences between the older paintings and today's selfies, the similarities are more connected than might be thought.

Keywords: Portrait, self-portrait, Selfie, visual literacy, identity creating, subject positioning

The use of images has historically been essential to the process of social communication. Visual self-portraits have been a significant way of expressing oneself over the decades. Selfies signify the most recent manifestation of self-portraits. The selfie culture includes sharing photos on various sites of social networking (Kim, Lee, Sung & Choi, 2016). In this sharing of and partaking in each other's pictures, we expose and are exposed to personal lifestyles, private preferences, and images of one's identity and created personalities. Visual literacy and an aesthetic approach play a crucial role in this identity formation (Drotner, 1991; Farci & Orefice, 2015; Häggström, 2017). Visual literacy is understood as social practices, based on the concept of literacy, phrased by Barton and Hamilton (2000), Gee (2000) and Heath and Street (2008). The model of four literacy resources by Freebody and Luke (1999) is used in this chapter to understand and analyze the differences and similarities between portraits, self-portraits, and selfies. Of specific interest is the

connection between identity formation and visual literacy.

A portrait refers to a pictorial representation of a person, usually showing her or his face. Images of people's faces are not a new phenomenon (Rettberg, 2014). Royalties and other heads of state have posed for their portraits in order to market themselves and their authority, power, and agency (Gynning, 2007). These paintings were usually well-composed and displayed the person represented accompanied by status symbols. During the 18th century, the culture of the nobility was characterized by surface, luxury, and consumption, which is depicted as a sort of "social choreography" (Gynning, 2007, p.2). Just as in today's selfie culture, the aristocracy three hundred years ago deliberately staged themselves. It was a way to communicate their attitudes, signals, and appearances.

Throughout the ages, artists have painted self-portraits as an attempt to identify themselves. Who am I? How can I express who I am? How can this expression change, and how will I

change? There have been different ways of answering these questions aesthetically. The aesthetics in this chapter focus on paintings and photographs made by artists as well as by non-artists.

Today, taking selfies with a smartphone is the new way of making self-portraits. In the “new” technological era, it can be delusive to interpret the widespread selfie-culture as a new-fangled phenomenon, and as exaggerated self-absorbed behavior. However, as human beings, we have inscribed, carved, painted, sculpted, and written about ourselves since we found ways to make signs (Rettberg, 2014). Consequently, selfies do have quite a few similarities with historical portraits of royalty and aristocracy and artists’ self-portraits. To shed light on what might be viewed as contemporary egocentric performance, this book chapter aims to illuminate similarities --- and differences --- between the traditions of making portraits, self-portraits and selfies. This is made in view of visual literacy and the selfie culture. Visual literacy is here connected to the model of four resource model, by Freebody and Luke (1999). Selfies’ functions and connections to identity, communication, and relations are essential.

Theoretical Departure and Aim

Theoretically, this book chapter takes its point of departure in the model of four literacy resources (Freebody & Luke, 1999). It is here developed from concerning text to concerning visual images. The model is used as theoretical lenses to analyze the photos and paintings included in the text.

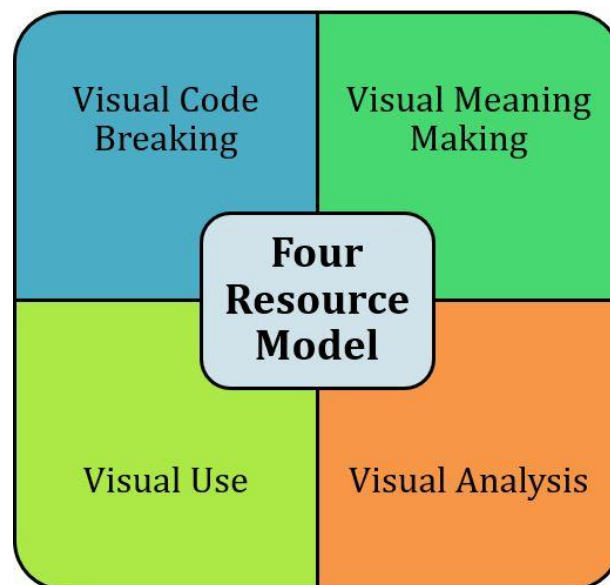


Figure 1. Four Resource Model (Freebody & Luke, 1999).

Visual Code-Breaking – *What is this image?*

Visual Code-breaking entails an understanding of how images are constructed and that images work in various ways depending on the context. It also includes an understanding of the variety of images. Guiding questions to enabling visual code-breaking are: What kind of codes does the image contain? How can these codes and accordingly, this image be interpreted? Thus, code-breaking implies the critical knowledge of images’ elements, such as color, shape, space, size, and the inter-relation between light and shadow, proximity and distance, perspective, and com-position.

Visual Meaning-Making – *How can I understand this image?*

Visual-meaning making builds on personal experiences of meeting images which always includes the individual preferences and cultural, social, and personal experiences. Guiding questions in visual the meaning-making are: What meaning can I make from this image, and

what does it mean to me? How can this meaning be interpreted? Consequently, meaning-making is constructed through prior knowledge of the world, life experiences, and specific topic knowledge along with understanding of how images are composed, i.e., code knowledge.

Visual Use – *How can I use this image?*

Visual use builds on an understanding of how images are used for different purposes. It may also empower the individual to use and create visual messages and to express her or his meaning visually. Guiding questions in visual use are: What is the intention and role of this image? Who is the anticipated spectator? How do pictures and other visible manifestations influence social and cultural performance and vice versa? Accordingly, visual use depends on knowledge of social-cultural pictorial aspects and the interchanges between different contexts.

Visual Analysis – *How can I interpret this image?*

Visual (critical) analysis increases and deepens the understanding of images' construction, utility, and effect on the viewer. In turn, this enables the viewer to assess visual messages, and reveal underlying intentions, norms, and ideologies. Guiding questions are: How does this image affect me? What is included or excluded, and why? How does this image relate to other images or other modes? Hence, visual analysis builds on the knowledge of image-creators' awareness and choice of image language and that there are various ways of both creating and interpreting images.

To Be Visually Literate

As been shown above, to be visually literate is to understand and intentionally use visual resources to communicate with others (e.g., Ausburn & Ausburn, 1978; Bamford, 2006; Messaris, 1995). According to Bamford (2006), this includes the capability to decode and interpret visual messages. Thus, visual literacy is a social practice (Barton & Hamilton; Gee, 2000; Heath & Street, 2008). The power of social influence and ideological implications on portraits is in this book chapter of central interest as is the social practices which enable cultural membership within specific contexts. Following Green's (1988) developed explication on literacy, the development of visual literacy incorporates three interrelated dimensions: a cultural, an operational, and a critical. For example, visual learning implicates visual culture, which in turn includes visual experience. This interdependency implies that visual literacy practices, i.e., the operational dimension, inevitably provides for the ability of code-breaking, meaning-making, and using visual resources to communicate. But what about the critical aspect? Visual literacy in education consists of the ability to make judgments of intentions, values, affective impact, and accuracies in visual messages. Is this ability significant later in life as well?

The connection between identity formation and visual literacy is of interest in this study. As a consequence, this study also builds on social constructionism. Social constructionism suggests that reality and identity are built and upheld through social practices. Meaning is constructed through interactions (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Burr, 2003; Bryman, 2008). Likewise, knowledge is built by communication amongst individuals in society, and so is language. Subsequently, meanings are shaped by language, and hence, images mediate meanings. Images communicate people's understandings of the world as well as their identities (Hall, 1997).

Visual Literacy, Identity Creating, and Subject Position

The act of making portraits, self-portraits or selfies includes at least three aspects of visual literacy: 1) a technological aspect --- independently of chosen technique, 2) an artistic aspect and 3) a cultural aspect (Farci & Orefice, 2015). As a result, the outcome has three functions. Firstly, as an aesthetic and cultural object. Secondly, as a personal representative, and thirdly as a message to the world. Farci and Orefice point out that a selfie foremost is a reflection in which one separate oneself from others seeking the uniqueness of oneself. Thereby, a self-portrait is one way to create identity in a physical material form, by the mediation of gadgets of some kind.

Identity building is depending on the context in which we live our lives, that is, when, where, and with whom we live. Consistent with constructive social perspectives, our understanding of the world is shaped by language. Through language, the individual interpret the surrounding world (Burr, 2003; Fairclough, 2010). Language arrangements change over time, which implies that our understanding of the world continuously shifts within cultural and historical times. Social, cultural, and environmental changes thus lead to a changed identity perception. How individuals view themselves today differ from how people looked upon themselves 20, 100, or 500 years ago, as comprehensions of self are context-bound. Hence, the subject is socially constructed (Foucault, 1971). The role of artists such as painters and photographers has also changed through the ages. Being an artist today is not the same as before, why artists' self-understanding recreates over time. Established conceptions of what and how an artist should perform may generate identity conflicts.

Identity, which is central in this study, regards how an individual identifies with the subject position offered within the specific context or discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000). Jørgensen and Phillips stress that identities are something a person adopts, is

assigned to and negotiates through discursive processes. The identity formation can, therefore, imply that potential characters and actions may be restricted. Such restrictions, are recognized in group-identifications of various kinds, where some personalities are more accepted, and others are dismissed. Identity formation is relational, which in turn implies that identity is created in relation to something, or to *the other* (de Beauvoir, 1997; Hall, 1997; Hutchinson & Smith, 1995; Levinas, 1979; Neuman, 2003). Further, Jørgensen and Phillips point out that we attribute different identities in different contexts. Visual literacy includes appearance, i.e., clothes, hairstyle etcetera, which are significant aspects of identity creation.

Identity Formation and Visual Representations

Discourses within cultural contexts are created and re-created continuously and cannot present "the truth" about reality. Discourses are resilient as they affect how we think about certain phenomena and how we react on the basis of different structures in society. One specific example of an influential medium, that shape our comprehension of reality is visual representations. According to Foucault (1971), discourses operate 1) enabling, 2) constraining, and 3) constructive. This means that discourses produces different conditions for different individuals. Visual representations are showing people's appearance influence how we value ourselves and the person we want to be. Visual representations exert influence on what kind of identity formation that could be enabled or discouraged, which contributes to constructing our self-image and how we see each other (Hirdman, 2001).

Visual representations contribute to our understanding of the surrounding world and our position in it. Hirdman (ibid) pinpoints three aspects of visual communication with significant effect, framed as: 1) *closeness and distance* – space between you and the motif, angels and

perspective, 2) *body rhetoric* – body language such as gestures, mimics, facial expressions, poses, physical posture and what the body is doing and 3) *vision positions* – gazes, directions and observing perspective. In relation to the four resource model, the first aspects connect to visual code-breaking, while the second aspects refer to meaning-making and partly to visual use. The third aspects link to visual critical analysis. These three aspects are present in any portrait creation and identity formation.

For this research, I distinguish portrait, self-portrait, and selfie in the following way: the portrait is made by another person than the depicted person. A self-portrait is made by the depicted person herself. A selfie is taken with a camera of any kind, for example a smartphone camera, and represent the photographer. A selfie is taken as a spontaneous snapshot, showing here and now and can change from one moment to another. By contrast, a portrait or self-portrait is a more lasting work, a piece of history, showing both a specific individual and a personality. These different approaches are combined today, by the use of technology. Much effort is put in the selfies, staging environments and outfits.

Aims and Research Questions

The overall aim of the study is to explore why we are so occupied with self-visual exposure. In this book chapter, the purpose is to examine the genealogy of portraits, self-portraits, and selfies, and thereby to elucidate similarities and diversity amongst these three different types of self-representations. As mentioned, the connection between identity formation and visual literacy is of central interest. The power of social influence and ideological implications on selfies is examined as is the social practices which enable cultural membership within specific contexts. To meet the aim and purpose, the following questions are raised:

- How do the functions of portraits, self-portraits, and selfies appear throughout the ages?
- Which social contexts are distinguished in these images?
- What kind of visual grammar or elements are similar, or distinct, through a number of selected images?

Answering these questions intends to shed light on visual code-breaking, meaning-making, use, and analysis.

Data Sources and Analysis

The whole data collection consists of 115 images which have been collected for seven years and various educational purposes, both in high school classes, and teacher education classes. In the high school classes, students worked both in the subject of art and in gender and language (Swedish) classes. Identity formation and portrait study was a recurrent theme in these classes (Häggström, 2015). Student teachers worked with the content of multimodality and tried out different ways of communicating (Häggström, 2016). Some of them focused on the selfie culture. In both the high school classes and the teacher education art history was included and images of different portraits analyzed. This book chapter contains fourteen images within nine genres, which are selected to represent the three types of portraits already presented. The particular images are also selected to build a red thread through history, rather than to show a broad variability of portraits. Hence, the paintings and photographs are selected by using a purposive sampling method. The aim and research questions of this study have been guiding this selection. Three types of examples are included in this chapter: portraits of celebrities, artists' self-portraits, and selfies. The paintings in the study are available as public domain and can be freely used for any purpose (Stockholm National Museum, 2019). The photograph of Crown princess Victoria is free for use (Royal court, 2019). The selfie photographers have approved participation.

Analysis

In examining the images, the researcher adopted a holistic approach of the four resource model (Freebody & Luke, 1999), that includes code-breaking, meaning-making, use, and analysis. This study follows Gee's (2000) claims that literacy ought to be studied in the context of social, cultural, historical, political, and economic practices. The data analysis carried out in four steps:

1. Describing visual codes --- looking at the image construction
2. Interpreting the visual codes ---- examining the social-cultural aspects
3. Revealing underlying purposes --- scrutinizing purposes and possible effects
4. Explaining the genealogy of the image --- discovering relationships

Although this analysis approach has holistic pretensions, it also has limitations. Images cannot speak for themselves, and several interpretations are conceivable. One way to overcome this issue is to include the creators of the images and other spectators' interpretations (Reissman, 2007). In this study, the former advice is not possible as the creators in some cases are no longer with us, and the latter suggestion would be too time-consuming for this study. Instead, an attempt to include "the story of producing the image" (Hayik, 2012, p. 6) is made, which mean to examine the condition of production, for example when the image was made and the social-cultural identities of the image-maker.

Result

The analysis is presented beneath three sub-titles: *portraits of celebrities*, *artists' self-*

portraits, and *selfies*, applicable to the theme of this book chapter. The intention is to reveal a red thread between the chosen images, or the genealogy of selfies. Although portraits of different kinds have been made for a long time, the researcher started in the 1700s when the art of painting portraits was at its apogee amongst celebrities. Artists at that moment had to find other motives, and self-portrait was one of them. The camera then became the new tool for many artists and eventually for the general public, not the least today when smartphones include a camera.

Portrait of Celebrities

This image of *the Swedish King Gustaf III and his brothers*, is painted 1771 by the Swedish artist Alexander Roslin, who lived in Paris and portrayed the European elite on demand (Peterson, 2009). The painting represents the Crown Prince and his two brothers at a table where a plan of the fortifications lies. In the background, book-shelves appear, and half a globe is placed to the right. All three brothers are wearing royal sashes. Prince Karl VIII is attributed with a sword, the Crown Prince is holding a book, and Prince Fredrik Adolf is keeping the plan. Together with the exclusive costumes and their fabrics, all these attributes and postures display the brother's rank as royalties and head of states, showing that they are men of the world. In these kinds of portraits, the attributes seem to take priority over personal and individual features. The ideal of appearance was repeated with small variations which make the portraits quite alike. At this time, the portrayed person should be depicted from her or his most favorable angle. The ideal was French; both in clothing, hairstyle, and manners.

The scene is no doubt orchestrated, and the artist's eager to please his purchasers is evident. The painting is concentrated on the representative aspect of the portrait rather than its narrative. Roslin's technical skills in painting fabrics, jewels, and interior, show sensitivity and psychological insight; sensitivity towards a portrait's social functions (Peterson, 2009).

Thus, the princes' interaction or activity is merely postures, and they seem more interested in the beholders, according to their glances. However, few could identify with the princes here; the distance between the people of Sweden is vast: the surrounding milieu, the clothes, and body-language --- everything that speaks of social-cultural status. Still, this image differs from many contemporary paintings of uniformed kings at the battlefield.

A painter like Roslin is noticeable visual literate; he has cracked the code for this kind of expression; he is real virtuosic in this genre. Moreover, he is aware of the meaning-making as well as how to use his skills. He is familiar with the cultural and social norms and ideologies. Besides, he is most certainly conscious of the image's effect on the viewer and how to use social-cultural pictorial features. He is moving through all the fields of the Four recourses model of Freebody and Luke (1999).



Image 1. The Swedish King Gustaf III and His Brothers (Roslin, 1771).

Through the years, the King's power in Sweden has been limited. Today, the Swedish Monarchy has no legitimate political authority. However, the Monarchy is still the country's "foremost representative and symbol" (Swedish Royal Court). Crown Princess Victoria has a strong commitment to the natural environment and global issues concerning sustainability. She likes to spend time in nature and pursue outdoor activities. Although the Royal family upholds a thousand years old establishment and tradition of being the head of the state, they seem to be comfortable as "ordinary people" and to expose such an angle. The photograph hereafter shows Crown Princess Victoria on one of her visits to the Swedish provinces. She is wearing proper outdoor clothes, her hair in a plain pony-tail, and she could be taken for any young woman on a walk. In the background, we see a typical Swedish old red house with white corners. To the left of the house, we see a small outhouse, which might not be associated with the Royal family. This arrangement is not a coincidence,

the researcher would argue, but deliberately planned. This portrait is revealing a person of flesh and blood, not just only a position of power. Maybe she also wants to make a connection to the Swedish people. The photograph would most likely have an impact on how the people value themselves. Through this photograph, they can identify with the Crown Princess.

The photographer shows that he is visual literate: he knows about the image's elements, and how to use them to visualize a specific tone and atmosphere. He is a composer, very conscious of every detail and where to place them in the image. He is not only sensitive in taking account of the Crown princess' love for her homeland, but in how to reach the viewer. This photograph shows the photographer's profound topic knowledge, and a deep analytical ability. As Roslin earlier, Stecksén masters the four aspects of Freebody's and Luke's model.



Image 2. Crown Princess in the Swedish Province of Dalsland (Stecksén, 2018).

Artist's Self-Portraits

Anders Zorn was a Swedish artist who entered the Royal Academy of Arts in Stockholm. Similar to Roslin earlier, he received a prominent position as an artist in Paris. He also attracted the art world of the USA (Smith, 2014). Like Roslin, Zorn painted celebrities, for example, several American presidents. Zorn became a man of the world. In the painting *Self-portrait in red* from 1915, this is evident although this painting is also revealing Zorn's countryside background. This painting too is orchestrated: the new tailored red suit in three pieces, the humble colorless setting and foremost, the artist's position. It is as if he is standing in front of a sitting spectator, which makes him look both tall and broad. Most probably, he has used a mirror and angled it backward (Brunius & Reuterswård, 1979). This painting demonstrates where he comes from and where he has ended up, in the same image. This demonstration might be a statement about class, about becoming what you want rather than what you are born into, or maybe a testimonial of the significance of one's roots. He always returned to his Swedish home. The painting is undoubtedly about identity and how the artist wants to represent himself, and the dualistic exposure is somewhat surprising, regarding his position as a quite influential artist amongst the world leaders.

Zorn too, is visually literate, which has been shown here through his knowledge of codes and how to elaborate with different meanings in the same image. He is aware of social-cultural connotations, and he lets them operate together to express his viewpoint. Zorn is deliberately breaking the social norms by combining his two worlds. He possesses the whole four recourses model.

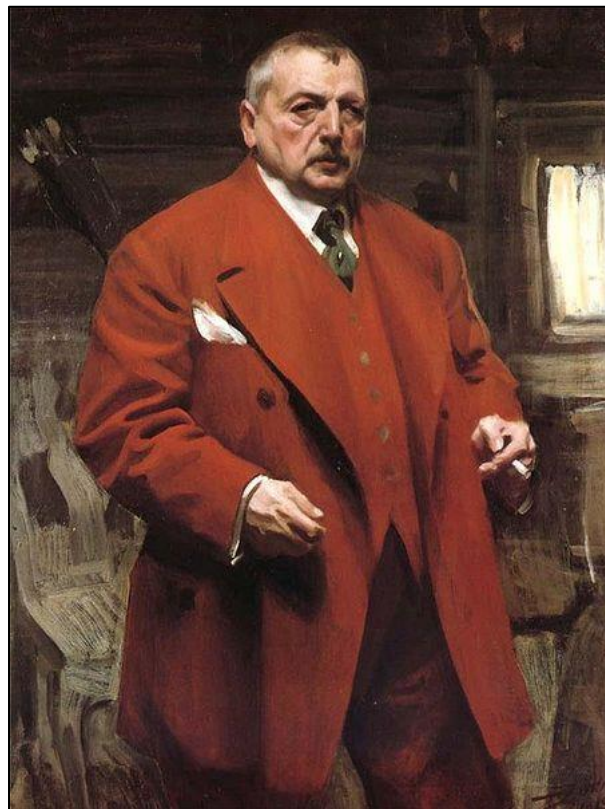


Image 3. Self-portrait in Red (Zorn, 1912).

About identity are also the self-portraits of the Finnish artist Helene Schjerfbeck, and the Swedish artist Isac Grünewald, both paintings here titled *Self-portrait 1912*. These artists represented modernism and were influenced by the European art movements and especially the impact of the exhibitions at the Paris Salon and in particular the expressionistic painters (Gedin, 2015; Holger, 2005). While Schjerfbeck uses a subdued palette, Grünewald is influenced by the fauvist painters who brought a bolder palette into the tradition of impressionists. However, they are equally expressive, showing the person inside themselves, rather than staging themselves or arranging a milieu to illustrate who they are. In contrast to Zorn's self-portrait, which shows "this is me," Schjerfbeck and Grünewald are instead asking: "who am I?" In doing so, they are revealing their state of minds, why the intentions with their images differ from Zorn's.

They are renewing the genre of self-portraits, excluding exteriors, focuses mostly on color.

We can presuppose that both Schjerfbeck and Grünewald are visual literate. They have cracked the code: they know both how to create moods and attitudes and how to use colors for this. The meaning-making is based on personal life experiences, and every brushstroke is consciously performed. Their knowledge of visual use for specific purposes and communication is evident. Together, these aspects of visual literacy are represented by the four recourse model.



Image 4a. *Self-portrait 1912* (Schjerfbeck, 1912).

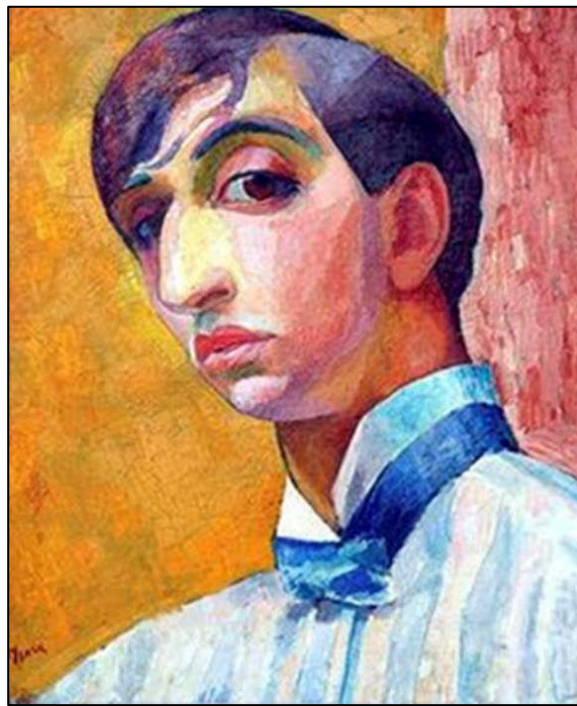


Image 4b. *Self-portrait 1912* (Grünewald, 1912).

Selfies

A new way of staging oneself in portraits is the selfie. Making portraits is no longer exclusively for artists. The selfie is now part of the contemporary visual culture of self-representation and selfies circulate through social networking, amongst “amateurs” as well as amongst known celebrities who use them as self-branding strategies (Busetta & Coladonato, 2015). Sharing selfies is a way of providing each other access to one’s personality. You can choose what part of your individuality you want to highlight or create. Thus, this is a self-promotional act, similar to the above-discussed images of the princes, Crown Princess, and Zorn. The selfie-culture is part of the broader tendency of social-technical networking (Farci & Orefice, 2015).

The selfie-culture has led to some new features according to portraits: to show a particular character and a pose. The established persona of so-called duck-face and stone-face are examples of these archetypes. A

chain of replicas of such portraits shows that: “I am just anyone – doing what everybody else is doing.” A duck-face is most often a female posing for a selfie, with sucked-in cheeks and lips together as in a pout. A stone-face is most often a male posing, with a hard-looking expression with no feeling showed (Forsman, 2014). Both types can be used as an ironic gesture.

As seen in image 5 and 6, visual literacy capability differs from those of the painters and

the professional photographer earlier. The code-breaking itself differs. To take a selfie such as the “duckface” and “stoneface” still needs some knowledge of composing, perspective, proximity, and distance. The meaning-making is based on specific topic knowledge, which not everyone is familiar to. However, the visual use relies on knowledge of limited social-cultural pictorial aspects, rather than on broad knowledge on how to express one’s meaning or create different visual messages.



Image 5. Duckface (Borhammar Wallin, 2019; Häggström, 2016).



Image 6: Stoneface (Häggström, 2015, 2019; Borhammar Wallin, 2019).

An expansion of the selfie culture is the tourist or travel selfie showing where I am, what I am experiencing, telling that I am a traveling person, or even a globetrotter (Axelsson, 2018; Kim, Lee, Sung & Choi, 2016). Research has shown that this kind of selfie can be empowering (Axelsson, 2018) as the tourist creates personal travel narrative (Edensor, 2000). Using social media for this narrative can generate “likes.” At the same time, Kim and Tussyadiah (2013) claim, while seeking this support from social networks, a person is also constrained by the impact of network peers. Images that gain many likes tend to be reproduced, which might influence both the tourist experiences and the following selfies (Lyu, 2016). The cultural impact on this kind of selfies is substantial and builds on the knowledge of “specific topic”, which refers to the aspects of meaning-making and the culture of social-cultural pictorial features in the context of traveling narratives. This cultural impact also illustrates how identity – as a widely traveled individual – is upheld through social practices and interactions.



Image 7. Me in Chicago. (Häggström, 2018).

The so-called deadly dangerous selfie has probably emerged from the tourist selfie, and is showing that I dare, I am brave, I am creative. I am *not* just anyone. It is a way to attract attention. On the other hand, it also encourages a demaging narcissistic behavior which has caused several accidents and even deaths (Lyu, 2016; Kim et al. 2016; Axelsson, 2018). The destructive effects of this kind of selfies have been revealed and debated by several reporters (e.g., Groundwater, 2015; Cosslett, 2018; Sigala, 2018). Driven by the aspiration to capture the most spectacular selfie people are willing to endanger their own life, putting themselves to edges in dangerous sites and situations. This behavior is implicit encouraged by tourism-related services such as travel agencies and hotels (Coslett, 2018). In this view, some people are taking considerable risks to create their identity, represent themselves, and send messages to the world. With regard to the four recourse model these individuals have problems with the critical dimension, i.e., being aware of images impact on others and others' willingness to visually respond to a dangerous selfie by taking the hazardous aspect to the next level.

Both the tourist selfie and the deadly dangerous selfie (image 7 and 8) is grounded in the culture of social media (as are most selfies). The visual code-breaking includes how to visualize a setting, scenery, or another desirable background in addition to communicating a feeling or mood through facial or bodily expressions. Knowledge of visual analysis is here limited to anticipated reactions from the viewers. However, it needs understanding of how to create and interpret this particular type of selfie. Visual literacy capability is required, but maybe be restricted to only this kind of images.



Image 8: An "innocent dangerous" selfie (Häggröm, 2019).

The selfie culture has a counterpart in contemporary art and artists' play with identity. Contemporary issues, like injustice and inequality has been a driving force for artists to stage themselves in various positions. These kinds of orchestrated photographs are dependent on the gaze of the other (Sartre, 1984; de Beauvoir, 1997). Through that gaze, one can espy one-self and thereby understand essential aspects of one's character --- both as self and as the assumed role of a specific identity. Sharing selfies on the internet can be regarded as a performance before a responding audience. Hereby, an interaction has evolved. Performativity (of gender) is a repetition of acts, an imitation of dominant conventions, Butler (1990) claims; it is an act that started long before one entered the scene. Artists have long used such reproductions for impersonation. Cindy Sherman is one of these artists. She has embodied female characters for almost 40 years, to explore and question traditional gender roles. Through different themes and series of photographs, she elucidates how women are depicted in media, popular culture, and art. This way of exploring identity and

societal issues may do well as a pedagogical approach (Häggström, 2017).

Visual literacy capability is in image nine grounded in the fourth field in the model of visual literacy, i.e., visual analysis. These images show awareness of how to express a specific identity, and urge an intended spectator to

reveal underlying intentions and norms. To express this, one needs to know other fields as well; knowledge of images' elements, life experiences, and specific topic knowledge, and knowledge of how to create this image and message.

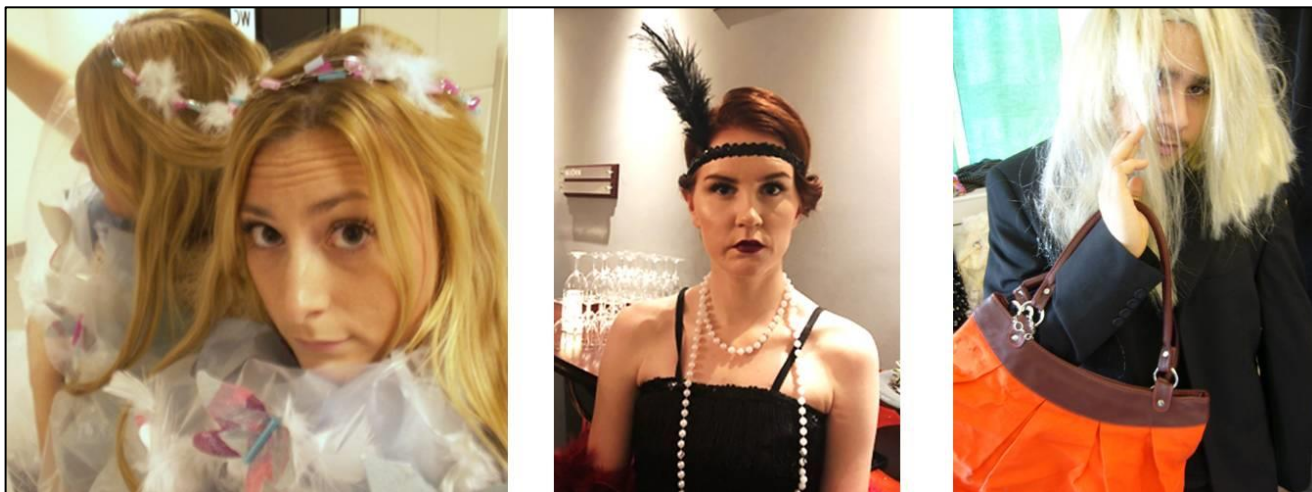


Image 9: *Staging oneself, trying out identities and roles* (Anonymous student, 2013; Borhammar Wallin, 2019; Anonymous student, 2011).

All these different types of selfies are orchestrated to varying degrees. In many cases, the selfie-taker is from the very beginning aware of the context where the selfie is supposed to be exposed. Via social media, selfies are spread and shared but also quite brutally scrutinized and commented. Still, this process enhances creations of self-images in the search for the “inner me.”

Discussion

This study has shed light on visual code-breaking, visual meaning-making, visual use, and visual analysis, through the four recourses model on literacy, by Freebody and Luke (1999), regarding visual exposure of self in portraits made by professional artists as well as in selfies made by non-professionals. The purpose of this chapter has been to examine the genealogy of portraits, self-portraits, and selfies.

The researcher has elucidated similarities and diversity amongst these three different types of self-representation. The emphasis has thus been on the various literacy resources required for each type of portrait and to find examples relevant to examining this. The role of being a professional artist compared to being a non-professional user of cellphone cameras has not been deliberated here.

In this section, the analysis is discussed in two paragraphs: first, through the social contexts, and the functions of portraits, self-portraits, and selfies, and second, the discussion focuses on similarities and differences found.

Social Contexts and the Functions of Portraits, Self-portraits and Selfies

As have been explored in this study, the social contexts for making, sharing, and distributing portraits, self-portraits, and selfies are crucial, which is acknowledged for visual code-breaking. Both artists and amateur photographers prove to have such knowledge. While professional artists display a range of abilities and visual experience, the amateurs' images demonstrate less awareness. The selfie format might determine what the user can accomplish and which skills can be shown. However, the technology allows for a rapid action regarding distribution and feedback. Today, when much of people's lives occur in social media, the latter might be critical to an individual's identity formation. As theorists like Berger and Luckman (1966) and Bryman (2008) point out, identity is constructed and upheld through social interactions. Thus, identity and visual literacy have resilient relations. Revealed here is also that understandings of self are deeply contextually grounded (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000). The way of portrait making changes over time as culture and history changes (Burr, 2003). This is evident in this study. Closeness and distance, body rhetoric and vision positions are the key aspects of visual communication revealed here as a developing process through the years. The distance between the painter or the photographer and the motif seems to decrease over the years.

Also, images too are part of, and create social-culture contexts, within which certain conventions reign. Images and identity are closely intertwined. This relation represents the self as an image, and the person within the framework of an image. The complexity of the functions of these different portrait genres has been elucidated here. A comprehensive function is to create an individual's self-conception, and through performative actions construct the world. The cultural aspect of visual literacy is profound in the making of portraits (Farci & Orefice, 2015). This making requires visual literacy, i.e., ability to break visual codes, make visual meaning, use, and analyze images in different contexts. In this study, this includes

the capability to deconstruct and reconstruct visual representations.

Similarities and Differences

Findings show that the functions of portraits, self-portraits, and selfies display kinship throughout the decades. Nevertheless, each category demonstrates significant features embedded in and governed by different contexts and discourses. Although the incentive for the three genres included in this chapter is based on human social needs such as affiliation, identification, affirmation, connection, and unity, specific aspects has emerged. The portrait of the three princes and the portrait of Crown Princess may be seen as parts of promoting campaigns --- albeit in various manners. While the former intends to demonstrate the power of the head of state, the latter wants to establish a more "folksy" image and thereby to win public support. Zorns' self-portrait might be regarded as a self-marketing; it also exposes an ambivalent personality. He is not trying to be ingratiating; then again, he is not in the position of needing people's support.

The self-portraits of Schjerfbeck and Grünewald are the representations that stand out amongst the included images. They did stand out already at the time that they were painted. They show vulnerability that the other pictures do not. Especially Schjerfbeck's portrait: no boldness as Grünewald's has, no attitude. She had to be courageous to expose herself in such a bleak and unfavorable perspective. In doing so, she had to break the conventional image of women and female artists. These paintings place the facial portrait in the center of the image, close to the viewer in a way the previous images have not. In this sense, they are pioneers and could be regarded as forerunners of the selfie culture.

Selfies have been shown, in no small extent, to live up to a variety of norms; whether it concerns identifying oneself as a specific character, display a traveling narrative or challenging oneself. Even though this behavior builds on imitating, it requires the abilities of visual literacy. In particular, the selfie maker knows very much about body rhetoric and the operational dimension of visual literacy. The

power of social influences is explicitly evident in selfies, and this study has shed light on some manners that are examples of that: the chain of a replica of the different genres of selfies. Humans' aspirations can explain this behavior for being part of a social membership. Using images is here a playful way of identity creation.

All examples in this study demonstrate knowledge of the essential components required for each context. Such knowledge is more or less explicit but always socially situated. Example, how to use the setting. Every detail is well planned in the paintings and the photograph of Crown princess Victoria, but seems to be less critical in several of the selfies. This difference may be due to different conventions or visual literacy skills. Either way, these images are examples of portraits used for various purposes based on various social norms in different ages.

To conclude, human beings have needs of being seen and acknowledged in different ways. This need is fulfilled through meetings with others, thus, it is dependent on communication in one way or other. Portraits are exposed in the public eye are exposed to the other's gaze and reactions. When making portraits, self-portraits, and selfies for the public, one has to be aware of this scrutiny. Making any kind of self-exposure is always to jeopardize one's position. Heads of states have to take such risks, painters live in the endangerment of such uncertainty, but "ordinary people" don't have to assume these risks. However, the selfie culture shows that many people are willing to risk their reputation by sharing selfies. Maybe the incentive for this is the experience of agency and empowerment. Thus, it may connect more to the genealogy of ancient portraits than imagined.

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