“Faint Flickerings”: Woman as a Genre.

Gender, Pleasure and Modernity

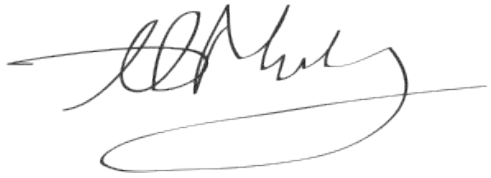
Helen Murphy

Submitted for PhD examination

Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London

2018

I, Helen Murphy, declare that this thesis is composed by me and that all work herein is my own unless explicitly attributed to others. This work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.



……

Helen Murphy

Abstract

"Faint Flickerings": Woman as a Genre. Gender, Pleasure and Modernity.

This thesis contributes knowledge of the material, aesthetic and ideological conventions of a set of everyday images that depict women and were made in nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In justifying the examination of this trivialised material, the established studies argue that these images were produced and circulated by women and/or men in their original societies. However, this approach results in generalisations and contradictions regarding gender, agency and power where women are positioned in society as both subjects and objects. To address these issues, I take an approach to the examination of the images that focuses on the interaction between the image as a cultural artefact and its observer, and asks what specifically shapes that interaction in a given societal and historical moment. I begin with the provenance of the different sorts of materials. Then I situate my approach to the investigation of the material in a historiographical, and cultural, societal and historical context. I follow with a review of the literature to explain what I view as inadequate about the dominant historical arguments and their means of analysis. Having contextualised my position, I analyse historical and contemporary readings of the images in a range of different arrangements in order to identify the conventions of the genre. I conclude that the woman as a genre pleasurably manages lived contradictions in the everyday life of the individual viewer-possessor, and articulates anxieties concerning a fear of the unknown in individual lived experience.

Acknowledgments

My PhD study was supported by funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

This project benefited from the engagement of my fellow postgraduate students and the research staff at RCSSD. I thank my supervisor Simon Shepherd for his guidance and for his encouragement of bold creativity; Katharine Low for encouraging diverse viewpoints and contexts, and Simon Donger for his sharp questions, generosity and enthusiasm. Thank you too to Joel Anderson for his reading, time and support in the final stages. I would also like to thank the staff at both the V&A Theatre and Performance Department and the V&A Word and Image Department for the opportunity to access their collections. I am further grateful to the scholars with whom I have engaged while putting together this research. Thank you in particular to Flora Pitrolo, Sadiah Qureshi, Elin Diamond and Alison Gibb.

My parents and family provided unconditional support while I was researching and writing this thesis, and I extend my everlasting gratitude to them.

Table of Contents

Introduction: How I Arrived at This Research Project (9)

I. The Provenance of the Material: Mass-Made and Personal (20)
Introduction (20)
The Structure of This Chapter (23)
I.I. Lithographs (24)
I.II. Fashion plates (28)
I.III. Photographs (30)
I.III.I The Emergence of Photography (c.1839) (30)
I.III.II. Portrait Photographs (1854-c.1910) (32)
I.IV. *Cartes de visite* (39)
I.V. The Lady Clementina Hawarden Photographs and the Countess di Castiglione Photographs (56)
I.VI. Postcards (69)

II. Arrangements and Histories: A Literature Review (76)
Introduction: Archive Material (76)
The Structure of This Chapter (80)
II.I. A Review of the Established Literature on the Images (80)
II.I.I. Visual Arrangements: Theme, Motif and Symbol (82)
II.I.II. A Contemporary Critical and Theoretical Context for the Emphasis of the Images' Visual Arrangement (87)
II.I.III. Time and Space: Historiographical Implications (99)
II.I.IV. Ambiguity, Generalisations and Contradictions in the Dominant Historical Arguments (105)
II.I.V. Established Means of Addressing the Problems from Postcolonial and Gay and Lesbian Studies (110)
II.II. A Review of the Scenographic Literature (1116)
II.II.I. Insights from Theatre and Performance Scholarship (116)
II.II.II. The Cultural, Societal and Historical Context of This Thesis (118)

III. Original Arrangements and Historical Readings (139)
Introduction (139)
III.I. Fashion Plates and Costume Plates or Ballet Prints (140)
III.II. ‘La Divine Comtesse’ (151)
III.III. ‘Faint Flickerings’ (160)

IV. Collections and Contemporary Readings (168)
Introduction (168)
IV.I. Narrative Readings (172)
IV.I.I. Introduction (172)
IV.I.II The *Cartes de visite* Portraying Lydia Thompson (176)
IV.I.III. The Lady Clementina Hawarden Photographs (180)
IV.I.IV. The Postcards of Women in Gardens (183)
IV.II. The Ahistorical Ideological Production of the Images (185)
IV.II.I. Introduction (185)
IV.II.II. The *Cartes de visite* Portraying Lydia Thompson (186)
IV.II.III. The Lady Clementina Hawarden Photographs (194)
IV.II.IV. The Postcards of Women in Gardens (211)
IV.II.V. Close Descriptive Readings (217)

V. Conclusion (223)
Appendices (229)
Bibliography (248)

List of Illustrations

Figure 1. "Miss Maud Allan as 'Salome'," postcard, recto, c.1908. Author's collection. (20)

Figure 2. Heath and Beau, photographer, "Photograph of Lydia Thompson," c. late nineteenth-century. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. (43)

Figure 3. King, Horatio Nelson, photographer, "Photograph of Lydia Thompson," c. late nineteenth-century. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. (46)

Figure 4. King, Horatio Nelson, photographer, "Photograph of Lydia Thompson," c. late nineteenth-century. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. (47)

Figure 5. Alexandre Lacauchie, "Une danseuse Italienne dans La Fille de Marbre," from the series *Quadrille des 4 parties du monde,* lithograph, 1840s. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. (51)

Figure 6. "Photograph of Lydia Thompson," c. late nineteenth-century. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. (52)

Figure. 7. Fashion plate, *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine,* April 1968. (145)

Figure. 8. Portrait photograph from "Maud Allan and her Art," c.1908, Maud Allan biographical file, V&A Theatre and Performance Department. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. (166)

Figure 9. “Photograph of Adah Isaacs Menken as Mazeppa with an unidentified woman in Mazeppa at Astley's Theatre,” c.1860s. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. (179-80)

Figure 10. Clementina, Lady Hawarden, photographer, “Clementina Maude beside cabinet, 5 Princes Gardens; Photographic Study,” c. 1862-1863. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. (181)

Figure 11. Clementina, Lady Hawarden, photographer, “Photograph,” c. 1862-1863. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. (197)

Figure 12. Edwardian postcard depicting a woman in a garden. Author’s collection. (230)

Figure 13. Edwardian postcard depicting a woman in a garden. Author’s collection. (230)

Figure 14. “Miss Maud Allan as ‘Salome’,” postcard, verso. Author’s collection. (231)

Introduction: How I Arrived at this Research Project

Perhaps I should begin by defining a term according to its etymology, or with a brief introduction to my subject matter and what I intend to show by examining it. However, the title of this thesis, "Woman as a Genre," refers principally to a technique, and the term "woman" is so contested that it would be impossible to adequately introduce as a concept and category in our society, or as a subject, that is, if such a subject even exists. In the interest of setting parameters though, my use of the term "woman" in the title is defined by our knowledge of "woman" as a concept and societal category. What I am proposing, then, in naming "Woman as a Genre," is a certain technique which addresses a particular means by which "woman" as an institutionalised concept and category is produced and circulated in modern western culture and society. The means under examination is a set of nineteenth and early twentieth-century material images that depict women in various costumes and settings that are typical of western culture during or prior to the period in which they were originally made. The proposed technique aims to fundamentally challenge the choice to attend to everyday archival materials that depict women and to question how we read such materials. In other words, it asks why, and how, are everyday depictions of women read in their societies, and to what affect? Epistemologically, had I initially set out to focus principally on depictions of women and therefore taken "woman" or "women" as a fixed subject of study then I possibly would not have found reason to radically challenge the production of "woman" as a cultural and social institution. I will therefore

introduce this thesis by explaining how I arrived at this inquiry, with reference to the literature.

I began this research project with an interest in what I was vaguely and loosely calling Orientalist scenography. The necessity of a study that questioned why and how we read and attend to everyday depictions of women was obliquely apparent to me when I surveyed literature that documented a fashionable, transnational, Orientalist, aesthetic style in the culture (in the form of theatre, dance, literature, fashion and fine arts painting) of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Britain and France.[1] On one hand, there are the stage and costume designs of Harley Granville Barker's Shakespeare productions such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1912-14) which, in their employment of decoratively detailed, vaguely oriental costumes and geometrically patterned scenic backdrops suggest a flattening or abstraction of the spatial relation between the performing body and viewer and stage (see Dymkowski 1986). On the other hand, there are the *cartes de visite* and postcard images that portray female performers in Orientalist costumes and settings. When they appear in the established literature these material images are offered as illustrations or as secondary evidence in studies of the literature, theatre and performance at the turn-of-the-century whose protagonists staged vaguely Oriental female figures from myth and legend such as Salome and Cleopatra or adopted 'Oriental' guise as part of everyday life (see Apter 1996; Kultermann 2006; Wollen 1993).

In surveying this literature I was troubled by the studies that presented the material images and their treatment of the Orientalist female performer as more of a socio-political and psycho-sexual artefact than a cultural artefact. The

[1] I am deliberately not using nationalist terms of identity here because this is not a study of culture and nationality.

narrative makes claims of the Orientalist female performer that directly concern the position of women and men *as* subjects in a society. Importantly, the argued subject positions are shaped according to relations of gender, sexuality and power. For example, Emily Apter (1996) argues that women in sapphic literary and theatre circles of the fin-de-siècle such as Colette, Ida Rubenstein and Isabelle Eberhardt enacted the pose of the Orientalist stereotype and, in doing so, objectified themselves in order to be a subject in their societies. According to her analysis, this subject is distinctly female and lesbian. On the other hand Wollen (1993) focuses on how men such as Leon Bakst and Paul Poiret actively objectified women by dressing them, for the stage and for fashion respectively, in a new 'Oriental' style. While these arguments are not expressly concerned with images per se, in each there is clearly a fundamental concern with the display of the woman's body as a signifier of desire within a society, and with the Orientalist guise that that female body presented in a particular societal and historical moment.

In explaining why I view the above historical narrative to be inadequate I may well observe its almost immediate emphasis on the socio-political and psycho-sexual production of the Orientalist female performer/figure, as well as the unaddressed contradictions in its claims. In the case of Ida Rubenstein in the eponymous role of *Cleopatra*, for example, according to the claims made in Apter (1996) and Wollen (1993), she is narrated as a woman who was both objectified by the powerful men who officially directed and costumed her role, and as a conscious lesbian subject. Rubenstein may well have been both but the former position as an object of male desire would place a noteworthy and

problematic limitation on her agency as a lesbian, or as a woman who desired other women, in her society.

I make these observations here but, heeding Gen Doy's caution, I do not intend to efface myself as author or suppose that I may speak from "a disembodied position of supposed, or hoped-for, neutrality" on the topic (Doy 2008: 4). The reasons that the above historical narrative on the Orientalist female performer/figure troubles me are certainly inseparable from my position as a reader of the material. No doubt my position as a reader concerns my ostensible identity as a white, middle-class, cis-gendered, British/Scottish woman. But it is also shaped by an intense period of reflection on (and I also believe lived experience of) the limitations of that identity and the determination of my position as a contemporary reader. Accordingly, the tools that inform this self-reflection also shape my reading of the material and subsequent analysis of the set of images that depict women.

I would broadly delimit the first set of tools as scenographic concerns, namely an emphasis on materiality, temporality, scale and how the body is positioned in space. Such questions are largely neglected by the established literature on the Orientalist female figure and, as I point out in Chapter 2, by the studies that analyse the images included in the identified set. However, as I also show in that chapter, they are explored in literature that is highly pertinent to, but not especially concerned with, the everyday material images in question.

This literature includes Jonathan Crary's work on the positionality of the observer in the nineteenth-century. Crary (1992) demonstrates what, in my view, is a fundamental point that demands attention from the outset because it problematises the relationship between the subject (as observer or viewer) and

his object. His research shows that the nineteenth-century was a moment when the subject as observer was no longer defined by a representational distance from his object, and was instead remade through a complex process involving, among other modern techniques of observation, the production and circulation of mass-made images.[2]

In light of these findings I would argue that, in focussing on the notion of the objectified woman, and explaining her production in terms of male or female authorship, the above studies assume that there is some conscious degree of relational distance between such a woman as an object and the subject who gazes on/views/observes her. It is as if the subject could continue to define himself and the world around him on the concrete grounds of objective vision which, in this case, would be the shared comprehension of the woman as an object. In light of Crary's study, it may be hypothesised that the emergent point is not the depicted woman as the object or even both the subject and object of the look, but rather that there is no woman to speak of in these terms, that the woman to 'whom' we refer in the encounter with the image does not exist.

As noted, the studies mentioned above are not expressly focussed on images, although they are implicitly concerned with the woman's body as a signifier of desire and present such images as illustration of their subject. Rather, they situate their analysis within the context of art forms with an authorial tradition: theatre, fashion, literature and painting. In problematising the historical argument that the production of the Orientalist female figure relates directly to the existence of the despotic male director and designer, or to

[2] In framing the interaction with the material image I use the pronoun 'he' for semantic reasons, not in reference to the known existence of a male subject position (see Chapter 2: 116-117).

women such as Ida Rubenstein's status as a lesbian, it is interesting to very briefly contrast their narrative with the representational collapse between subject and object pinpointed by Crary (1992) and slightly later examples of theatre productions that employ Orientalist design or motifs. I make this contrast here in order to offer a well-rounded cultural and historical context for the comprehension of the invoked material and its production. For example, Crary's findings are arguably consistent with the later 'flattening' effect rendered by Granville-Barker's production of Shakespeare, as noted above. In addition, it is worth noting other productions of the early twentieth-century such as *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (1925), which stages themes of childhood and the inhuman forces of the supernatural set to Ravel's Orientalist score. In Colette's libretto the female figure of 'Sido' is indicated as a shadowy presence on the stage. Contrary to the claims made in the above historical narrative on the Orientalist female figure, I would argue that these productions suggest the waning of the authorial agency of the human subject.

In this respect I would like to make one further key point with regards to the positionality of an observer in relation to the material in question, which is that the very importance of the author of the image should be in doubt for historical, material, aesthetic and ideological reasons. In emphasising the representational collapse between subject and object which occurred in the nineteenth-century, it is difficult to meaningfully conceive of an author of everyday material images. Moreover, it is worth noticing Svetlana Boym's finding that modernist poets were in effect writing their own deaths (Boym 1991). In the vein of the notion that modernism involves some degree of remaking or inventing a subject, there is also a substantial theoretical premise

for emphasising the reader, rather than the author, of a modern text when examining its production (see Macherey 2006; Barthes 1977). For these reasons I focus principally on readings of the material images rather than any claim to their authorship.

The second set of tools that shape my reading of the material and analysis of the set of images is delimited by the concerns of queer theory, namely the conscious effort "to confront the default heteronormativity of modern culture" (Warner 1991: 16). In reading the narrative that draws on the *cartes de visite* and postcard images I was and continue to be troubled by the heteronormativity of its logic, its historical description and generalisation of a society where there are two gender categories and sexuality exists as if it were a function of being either male or female. Feminist approaches directed by the deconstructive, anti-essentialist postmodern theory of the 1990s, such as those taken by Apter (1996) and Wollen (1993), helpfully demonstrate where in western culture woman is an imaginary construct produced by and subject to the oppressive forces of a patriarchal ideology. However, I question whether there is an adequate means for understanding that oppression and its resistance in arguments that attribute those forces, explicitly or implicitly, to a societal and historical moment of female/male identity and agency. In such arguments there is a tendency to elevate materials that are traditionally and historically denigrated – that is, the material images that are presented as illustrations – to the level of art forms (for example, theatre productions) and human relationships. Moreover, the feminist commitment to naming and challenging inequalities of power in gender difference tends to result in the narration of the concept of woman as a fixed political referent. This elevation of traditionally

denigrated material and the political 'fixing' of the concept of woman are what I fundamentally question in making a queer reading of this material and its depiction of women. In this sense I deploy the term 'queer' according to what Eng, Halberstam and Esteban Muñoz (2005) delineate as the "subjectless critique" of queer studies in order to attend to the concept and category of woman as one of "those hegemonic social structures by which certain subjects are rendered 'normal' and 'natural' through the production of 'perverse' and 'pathological' others" (Eng, Halberstam and Muñoz 2005: 3). Returning briefly to Crary's historical findings, I am interested in the hypothesis that the subject he identifies as being remade in the nineteenth-century through the invention of new techniques of observation is rendered 'normal' and 'natural' through these material images' production of 'woman' as its 'perverse' and 'pathological' other.

As an author stating my interest in queer theory, while explaining how I arrived at my research inquiry, I should like to foreground Eng, Halberstam and Muñoz's point in citation of Judith Butler, that: "The operations of queer critique […] can neither be decided on in advance nor depended on the future." (Eng, Halberstam and Muñoz 2005: 3) I did not plan this project with a view to conducting a queer critique, and the operations of the critique to follow make no claim to posit its materials as a proper subject or object of the field of queer studies. Politically, my project is invested in bringing to light some of the fundamental limitations of the concept and category of woman and its production and circulation in western culture and society; it claims the term 'queer' as a critical vantage point, and not as a distinct method, subject position or societal and historical moment.

My project began with an examination of the literature on Orientalist elements in the scenography of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century. However as I have outlined above, my reading of established literature on this topic identified certain problems in studies that drew on images depicting the Orientalist female performer/figure as illustrations. The main problems I have identified are as follows: first, the neglect of the fundamental reorganisation of vision and the observer in the nineteenth-century, which altered the relationship between a subject and his object; second, the heteronormativity of a historical narrative that names the producers and consumers of the image which depicts a woman as male or female. With these problems in mind, I chose to focus specifically on the material images and their material, aesthetic and ideological conditions. I need to stress that my aim is not to somehow disprove, repudiate or reduce the claims made in the literature I critique, to argue that men such as Paul Poiret were not despotic masters of the female performers and models who executed their designs, or that Ida Rubenstein did not possess a limited degree of 'sapphic' agency in her role as 'Cleopatra', for example. Rather, I focus on the material images as a possible means of investigating the fundamental mechanisms that underpin the production and circulation of woman as a concept and category in western culture and society, namely with a view to the possibility that such claims, based on the bodies of others, will consequently cease to make sense, or will, at least, will lose some of their narrative power.

In making the material images my focus I chose to include examples of the different sorts of material images made between the nineteenth and early twentieth-century that depict women in a range of different sorts of costumes and settings that are typical of western culture. I made this decision principally

for two reasons: first, it is necessary to include earlier material because, as Crary (1992) identifies, the representational collapse between subject and object occurred in the nineteenth-century not the early twentieth-century, so here it needs to be traced to material made at that moment in time; second, in agreement with literature on archives and their historiographical implications (see Chapter 2), I argue that, in first choosing to attend to images that depict women and then reflectively challenging and examining that choice, it is necessary to attend to different arrangements of those material images. Broadly, the set of material images presented in this thesis, which is one such archive, is understood to represent 'woman' as a hegemonic cultural institution.

Over the course of the following chapters I examine and contribute knowledge of the material, aesthetic and ideological conventions of this set of material images which depict women. Throughout the thesis I attend to the relationship between image and observer and examine what it is that determines that interaction in given historical moments. Consequently, I demonstrate that, contrary to their treatment as being merely trivial or perverse, these images' production and circulation of woman is symptomatic of dominant ideas in western culture and society since the nineteenth-century.

Chapter I

The Provenance of the Material: Mass-Made and Personal



Figure 1. "Miss Maud Allan as 'Salome'," postcard, recto, c.1908. Author's collection.

Introduction

The image above (Figure 1) is an example of an everyday material image that depicts a female performer/figure in Orientalist costume and setting. In this material and visual sense it is typical of the sorts of images that are presented as illustrations in the studies I critiqued in my introduction, which examine Orientalism in turn-of-the-century British and French culture, specifically in theatre and performance. This material image (an Edwardian postcard) is from my own collection and is one of a set of images I have chosen to examine that portray female figures in costumes and settings as typical of western culture. Besides the Orientalist scenes, the costume and settings deployed in these images include those which portray renowned female historical, national or literary roles in theatre and dance, such as *Une danseuse Italienne dans La Fille de Marbre* (Figure 5), or the female figure in a costume and setting that is contemporary to the period when the image was originally made, such as "Photograph of Lydia Thompson" which shows Thompson posed in a Victorian dress and interior, in front of a mirror (Figure 2). I am keen to use the more neutral term "female figure" rather than "woman" at this stage because it signifies that the woman's body is not yet read as such; rather, my choice of this material is governed by two fundamental principles, namely the principle of exemplarity and the principle of idiosyncrasy.[3] These images are exemplary in the sense that they each depict a *female* figure in a certain costume and

[3] My identification of these principles has been helpfully informed by Naomi Schor's self-reflection on her personal position as a reader. She asks: "To what degree has my trajectory, as I have reconstructed it, been idiosyncratic, hence of no interest to the general audience, and to what degree exemplary, which is to say banal?" (Schor 1995: viiii)

setting that is broadly typical of *western culture*. Sometimes the same sort of costume and setting (or prop) appears in images from different periods (see Figure 5 and Figure 6). They are also idiosyncratic insofar as they depict *details*: for example, the individual features on the female figure's face, the wrinkle in fabric (Figure 1), the seam on a stocking (Figure 5), the hand-held object that is too small or too obscure to identify (Figure 3 and Figure 4).

The set of images selected on the basis of these principles is the primary material evidence in my thesis. It is made up of different sorts of material images as follows: early-to-mid nineteenth-century lithographs and fashion plates, mid-to-late nineteenth-century studio photographs and *cartes de visite* of actresses and female performers, and early twentieth-century photographic postcards of female performers and unidentified women.

To put the question of the chosen visual characteristics of these material images to one side for a moment, the first crucial point to observe when bringing these sorts of evidence to attention in a single study is the sheer quantity of material. From the lithographs and fashion plates to the photographs and postcards, the material is a product of advances in printing technologies brought about by the invention of lithography in 1798 and, much later, the emergence of photography in the 1830s. By "advances", I refer to the fact that lithography and later photography yielded images on a mass industrial scale. This point raises a fundamental challenge in the development of a research project that seeks to investigate a wide range of material that was made over the course of approximately a hundred years, namely how to approach the diversity of the materials' original social, cultural and political contexts. In what follows, I heed the injunction from Kate Dorney (after

Maggie B. Gale and Anne Featherstone) that: "in order for historians to engage with archival material, they must first understand how it has been acquired and arranged." (Dorney 2014: 120) In this chapter I therefore lay out the provenance of the materials in question. I aim to show that the principles that govern my choice of images also broadly govern their provenance as materials. That is, where my choice of images is governed by the principles of exemplarity and idiosyncrasy, the provenance of the material is governed by its principles as a thing that is both mass-made and typical (therefore to some degree banal) and personal or idiosyncratic (therefore to some degree trivial). So, while I consider the sheer range of possible examples of lithographic and photographic materials that were made in the nineteenth or early twentieth-century, I want to highlight that the choice to attention to images with the above visual characteristics is in principle operating in accordance with their origins as material objects. I therefore initially introduce and contextualise this material with the principles that govern its production, not with its assumed pertinence to *a* subject.

The Structure of this Chapter

The facts on the materials' provenance are arranged chronologically so that I trace the different sorts of material from its earliest situations in the period in which it was made. I am concerned with the evidence's origins as a material object, as something that was made and consumed. In this respect, I draw attention to two themes that emerge from the evidence, while observing the difference between lithographic images and photographic images. First, all of

the materials were made by means of technologies that produced detailed images on a mass-scale. Second, in the primary instance, the materials were mostly made and consumed for personal reasons. Therefore, although the lithographs (the ballet prints and fashion plates) and photographs (the studio photographs, *cartes de visite* and postcards) were made in massive quantities, the items themselves were personalised material objects.

In each section, I provide information that relates generally to the sort of material evidence (for example, its printing technology) and to specific examples. In accordance with the above statement outlining the intentions of this chapter, at this stage, my guiding aim has been to provide information on the provenance of the material evidence itself. The reader will find that the examples I refer to specifically portray women. However, because I am concerned with the highlighting that the principles that fundamentally govern their choice as images are similar to those that govern their production as materials I am not concerned with their portrayal of women as a subject here.

I.I Lithographs

It is authoritatively accepted that the Prague-born, Bavarian-raised Aloïs Senefelder invented lithography in 1798 (Pennell and Pennell 1915: 5). Lithography hailed a watershed moment in the history of printing that defined the output of images during the nineteenth-century from that of the previous century, when printing had been limited to intaglio techniques such as engraving and relief techniques such as the letterpress (Gutenberg). As to be expected, Senfelder's invention emerged from a number of different

experiments. The eventual outcome defined lithography as a means of chemical "surface printing" (Pennell and Pennell 1915: 14). Therefore, the basic technical distinction is that, while earlier techniques necessitated that the image or text to be printed had to first be rendered in a matrix of grooves (made, for example, of wood or metal), lithography enabled a drawing to be produced directly onto a flat surface (the lithographic stone or the paper). This meant that the image itself could be finer. But it also had consequences for the capacity of the printing apparatus to produce numerous images. Abigail Solomon-Godeau (1996) rightly observes that the innovativeness of lithography had to do with three factors: quantity, efficiency and quality. She writes:

> What the advent of lithography signaled within print technologies had first to do with quantity; a lithographic stone could generate a far greater print run than any previous print technology. It was this attribute that made lithography affordable, even for a working-class clientele. Second, because a lithographic drawing was produced directly on the stone, it provided for a degree of spontaneity of execution unrivalled by any other print media. This was itself a factor in its adoption for immediately topical and political purposes … Third, by the late Restoration, the period when lithography had achieved technical perfection, lithography was capable of rendering a broad range of aesthetic effects, from the most linear and detailed effects of pen drawing to dramatic

> chiaroscuro and sfumato effects, which augmented both its artistic and its commercial applications.
>
> (Solomon-Godeau 1996: 122)

Lithography therefore lent itself to a phenomenon that would develop with the emergence of subsequent image-making technologies that relate to the other sorts of evidence in my project. That is, the spontaneous, convenient execution of finely detailed images on a mass-scale.

As Solomon-Godeau's comments imply, lithography was put to numerous uses, both commercially and artistically. In fact, its inventor's background was in acting and playwriting. Senefelder originally began experimenting with printing techniques out of a desire to see his play-texts printed and published (Pennell and Pennell 1915: 6). Ballet prints, many of which were lithographs, were originally produced during the short-lived years of the Romantic Ballet, between 1832 and the 1840s. The production of *La Sylphide* at the Paris Opéra on 12 March 1832, which was choreographed by Filippo Taglioni for his daughter, Marie, is historicised as the moment that marked the beginning of this era. Because the literature that relates to this material has focussed on the ballet itself (its costumes, its choreography, its title dancers) not the lithograph, it can be difficult to find precise information on the original arrangement and format in which the material was purveyed to the public. One source is *The Romantic Ballet in Lithographs of the Time* (1938), a study that nonetheless treats the lithographs as evidence of the Romantic Ballet itself. Cyril W. Beaumont, the author, records that probably

the first lithograph to portray Marie Taglioni was *Flore et Zéphyre* (1831), lithographed by R. J. Lane (Beaumont and Sitwell 1938: 40). He continues:

> This print was followed by *Six Sketches of Mademoiselle Taglioni,* also drawn on stone by Lane, and published in August of the same year. They depict her in *Flore et Zéphyre, La Tyrolienne, La Nayade (sic), La Bayadère, La Napolitane,* and in semi-private dress.
>
> (Beaumont and Sitwell 1938: 40)

It is not clear what constitutes the intriguingly phrased "semi-private dress" since he does not provide the image. Edward Chalon, a member of the Royal Academy and admirer of Taglioni, produced a portfolio of six lithographs, published with J. Mitchell and entitled *Souvenir d'adieu de Marie Taglioni* (1945) (Beaumont and Sitwell 1938: 40-41). Beaumont suggests that, because Taglioni appears as "a slender nymph" in one image and more "mature" ("the chin is fleshy, the breasts are full, the shoulders plump") in another, the portfolio contains lithographs that were likely drawn at different points in Taglioni's life (Beaumont and Sitwell 1938: 41). Notwithstanding the method of his deductions (more is happening in this text than is declared), it is clear that the lithographs were originally produced in portfolios under a specific title. However, where a professional lithographer had drawn the lithographs that were contained in a portfolio over the course of a number of years, then it is

likely that the same prints were also offered as a slightly different product, for example, as individual items.

Other ballet prints were produced in series, which is shown by the details that are printed on the actual lithograph. For example, a print that portrays Fanny Cerrito in the title role of the *La Fille de Marbre* (c.1847) is labelled "Gallerie Dramatique Academie Royale de Musique" and numbered 381. Another in the series is entitled *Une Danseuse Italienne dans La Fille de Marbre (Quadrille des 4 parties du monde),* and numbered 384 (see Figure 5). The difference between a portfolio and a series is that the latter is produced and defined a sequential order.

I.II Fashion Plates

In the nineteenth-century fashion plates were issued in French and British women's magazines as illustrations of the current fashions from Paris. They were therefore originally arranged among the other articles of interest that constituted a magazine, a particular sort of commercial and cultural object that is distinct from the fashion plate itself. Vyvyan Holland provides a definition as follows: "A fashion-plate may be said to be a drawing made for the purpose of showing people the right kind of clothes for them to wear to be abreast of the fashion of the moment" (Holland 1955: 21). According to Holland (1955), it has antecedents in early costume prints. The history, or histories, of women's magazines in the nineteenth and early twentieth-century, of which there were

numerous, is not in the scope of my project.[4] However, in order to provide information on the original arrangement and context of fashion plates, I need to observe the fact that the content of the magazines changed over the course of the nineteenth-century. Here, with *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* as my case example, I outline how fashion plates were arranged in issues – or "numbers" as they were then called – of British women's magazines that were founded at different periods in the century. My source for this information on the arrangements is drawn from Nineteenth-Century Collections Online (NCCO) where the magazines are digitally archived according to their original arrangements.

Publication of *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* ran between 1852 and 1877 (Beetham 1996). It typically opened its issues with a fashion plate. The July 1861 issue of *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* provided literary content including serialised short stories, history and poems as well as the fashion plate, a section on "The Fashions" and reader's comments entitled "The Englishwoman's Conversazione". "The Fashions" are reported sightings from Paris, which describe in detail the clothing seen on others:

> In Paris, now the weather is settled, nothing but light and airy dresses are seen; and the *Exposition des Beaux Arts* being open, one meets hundreds of elegantly-dressed ladies in the Champs Elysées. The following are a few of the toilets which we noticed: – A grey and white striped silk dress, trimmed at the bottom with two black ruches put on the skirt with a space between each…

[4] For an historical account of Victorian women's magazines see Beetham (1996).

The reader's comments reference an individual reader's practical difficulties in following a dressmaking pattern that had been included in a previous issue. According to the magazine, on hearing this complaint, the Editress set about demonstrating the pattern herself. By the 1870s, examples from the online archives show that fashion plates were no longer featured on the front page.

I.III. Photographs

I.III.I. The Emergence of Photography (c.1839)

Since most of the images in my study are photographic, it would be remiss of me to neglect the fact that photography and its techniques were also the outcome of experimentation at a particular historical moment in time. However, the question of a precise "inventor" of photography is far less settled than in the case of lithography. In a canny statement, Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell (1915) observe that, in producing his defensive textbook on lithography, Senefelder explained away the potential of contemporaries, historians and critics to dispute or intervene in his authority over the technology's invention:

> Perhaps the most indiscreet moment in Aloys Senefelder's life was when, in 1818, he began to write the history of his invention. For then it was he ruined his chances with the modern chronicler, or

> critic, who, in the history of art, prizes above all else the unknown, the dubious, the undescribed, the uncatalogued, the obscure.
>
> (Pennell and Pennell 1915: 6)

Photography, by contrast, has been subject to a great deal of theoretical and historical debate. As Geoffrey Batchen (1999) has made clear, since the late 1970s, in the wake of postmodern theory, historians and critics of photography have moved away from any notion that their discipline can be traced to a precise origin, and sought to keep its continuity under review. Here the question of "photography's 'true' inventor" is described as the debate over photography's origins at "its most vulgar" (Batchen 1999: 25). Nevertheless, such debates have historical significance. In the late eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century, claims to and debates over inventions (including photography) were frequent, evidencing that the act of venturing for ownership over a new technology was a crucial and spirited endeavour during this period. A successful claim as an inventor, signified especially by the lawful patent, could secure a person's reputation as a businessman or businesswoman and innovator. Therefore, without discounting what Pennell and Pennell (1915) describe as the historian and critic's prizing of the unknown and what Batchen (1999) on the contrary describes as the vulgarity of seeking to ascertain a true inventor of photography, it is worth keeping in mind from the outset the fact that these image-making technologies have their provenance in the context of a societal and historical moment that valued innovation, novelty and commerce. In the case of photography, the medium was distinguished from its antecedent,

the camera obscura, by its capacity to produce a fixed image. It emerged from experiments between circa 1725, when the chemicals and theoretical principles were assembled but not the method itself, and 1839 when the French Academie des Sciences announced that Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre had succeeded in a method of producing a fixed image later known as a photograph (Batchen 1999: 24-25). I would suggest that the long-running debate that ensued as to whether Daguerre or his partner Nicéphore Niépce deserved the credit is the attenuated result of the era's productivity and competitiveness around matters of business, technology and innovation.

I.III.II. Portrait Photographs (1854-c.1910)

In order to acknowledge that the photographic images in my study derive from an era of early photography, I am not going to attempt to summarise a history of the medium, since the provision of such a history is not in the scope of my project. The first decades of photography were diverse in activity and experimentation. While Paris has been recognised as the pre-eminent capital of photography, there are other reasons to attend to events in England and even the United States.[5] Instead I make the following introductory observations regarding photography in the context of its early decades. I then provide information that is specific to the provenance of the photographs in my study.

First, what is a photograph and how was it achieved in the nineteenth-century? To put it in general terms, experimenters in photography were

[5] Paris has been shown as having had the largest concentration of dedicated studios, which were established in numbers that steadily increased from the late 1840s until 1870 (McCauley 1994: 51).

engaged in a process that aimed at fixing the light reflected by the material world onto an actual material surface. When successful, the photograph rendered a fixed image of a particular view of the material world in visual detail. The image's precise detail and initial durability depended on the photographic process by which it was made. The daguerrotype was an image sharp in detail but fragile on its silver-plated surface (McCauley 1994: 2). In the same year that Daguerre's method was announced, the Englishman Henry Fox Talbot began to arrive at his method: the callotype. The callotype process did not produce an image with the sharpness of the daguerrotype, showing instead a characteristic blurriness, but its use of a paper negative meant that it was eventually more stable and printable. The mass-production of precisely detailed photographs was made possible when the Englishman Frederick Scott Archer invented the collodion-on-glass negative in 1851 (McCauley 1994: 2). In the less successful early experimental stages, the photograph rendered a dark image that faded from its material surface. The following quotation from Fox Talbot's niece in 1834 evidences one such occasion while also testifying to the insubstantial formation of the photographic image itself: "Thank you very much for sending me such beautiful shadows … I grieved over the gradual disappearance of those gave you me in the summer." (Hambourg 1993: 3)

Second, what subjects were photographed in the nineteenth-century? Our knowledge of the actual subjects that were photographed depends on evidence of the surviving photographs themselves, periodicals, letters and official registers such as the Parisian *dépot legal* (see McCauley 1994). I do not aim to provide an exhaustive résumé of the various subjects photographed over the course of the 1840s, 50s and 60s. However, as images that exclusively portray

women, the photographs in my project are by no means representative as a body of nineteenth-century photography. I therefore need to provide an overview of the other subjects that were in circulation during this period so that the images in question are not misleadingly extracted and isolated from their original context. First of all, I exclude any photographs that were made in the first half of the nineteenth-century, since the subject under investigation was portrayed chiefly by lithographs during this earlier period, not photographs. Second, from evidence of photographic output during the 1850s and 60s, it is possible to discern certain categories that describe the more frequently photographed subjects.

Elizabeth Anne McCauley has conducted highly informative research on photographic studios in Second Empire Paris, which is helpful here. She notes that: "the Parisian photographic industry and its pattern of development mirrored those of other Western European, American, and even Middle Eastern and Asian cities." (McCauley 1994: 2) In this pattern of development, "to a large extent, even the products were comparable." (McCauley 1994: 2) Therefore, while she acknowledges that further research must compare her findings to the development of photography in other nations, for the moment we can treat them as representative of the industry more generally. She observes that *dépot légal* records of photographs available for sale in 1852 list views of Paris, studies of churches, sculptures and monuments, studies of female nudes, North Africans, genre scenes, and Italianate models (McCauley 1994: 50). [6] We know from letters and the photographs themselves that original

[6] Ali Behdad (2013; 2016) has conducted in-depth research on this sort of subject in early photography, examining the photographs in the Middle Eastern colonial context in which they were taken. He points out, in a vein similar to

artworks were reproduced as photographs. Further, studies of female nudes, or académies, were, according to McCauley, "ostensibly produced for artists and registered for public sale in 1854." (McCauley 1994: 149) These académies were the progenitors of the pornographic photograph.

The photographic images I investigate fall principally under the category of portrait photography, or "likenesses" as they were then called. The format of portraits ranged from full plate photographs to the smaller and cheaper *cartes de visite*. In some cases they were painted, decorated or tinted by hand. The clientele of the studios, that is, the persons whose portraits were taken, differed in social class and occupation. Existing photographs show that portraits were taken of the ruling elite (for example, members of the monarchy such as the Empress Eugénie and Emperor Napoleon III and bankers such as James de Rothschild) to the middle and lower-middle classes (portraits of anonymous families). Celebrity portraits of artists, performers and writers also ranged from the noted elite (for example, the painter and early photography enthusiast Eugène Delacroix and actress/tragedienne Adelaide Ristori) to the *demi-monde* (Alexandre Dumas *père* and Adah Isaacs Menken). Unsurprisingly, given the range of material, the portrait photograph was the specialist subject of many studios in Second Empire Paris, with the largest and most renowned situated on the fashionable boulevards of the Right Bank (McCauley 1994: 72). McCauley authoritatively writes that:

---

the finding that the progenitors of pornographic images were introduced as tools for artists, that such photographs were at first produced as archeological tools for Egyptologists and Orientalists.

> The attraction of the Grande Boulevards for photographers was that they were a well-established center for entertainments of all sorts. Expanded under Louis XIV into broad promenades lined with trees, the boulevards attracted vehicular and pedestrian traffic and were crowded with theaters, restaurants, cafés, hotels, expensive clubs, art dealerships, and haberdasheries as early as the eighteenth century.
>
> (McCauley 1994: 73)

The subjects of nineteenth-century portrait photographs correspond to the metropolitan context of the photography studios. That is to say, the subjects of the portraits are varied but they also have a point in common, which is that they all relate more-or-less directly to the active roles offered by the metropolitan street. This is the case, whether the subject built and governed the street itself, managed finance, provided entertainment/pleasure or consumed fashion. Therefore, it is the street and its activities that shape the subjects' status and signification as *persons* vis-à-vis the portrait photograph.

Lastly, there is the subject of the genre scene. By comparison to research on the above photographic subjects, the genre scene photograph is somewhat neglected. In providing an encyclopaedic entry on this category of photograph, John Hannavy identifies its antecedent in seventeenth and eighteenth century painting, remarking that:

> As a category of subject matter in painting, genre refers to incidental scenes of everyday life. In photography, the term further suggests the artificial re-creation of such scenes for the camera … Often associated with Victorian art photography, genre photography typically involves the staging of a narrative tableau, using paid or amateur models to enact familiar scenes.
>
> (Hannavy 2007: 575)

The genre scene photograph is therefore characterised by its depiction of ordinary or everyday life. However, it should be noted that the distinction between the portrait and the genre scene is not always clear-cut. As I demonstrate below with examples, some of the photographic images I investigate can be positioned as both portraits and genre scenes. Further, the process of taking a genre photograph would have involved staging a narrative tableau; however, the term "tableau" is a slippery one when employed to describe a photograph itself since in a nineteenth century context it tended to refer to a distinctly *live* event more properly named a *tableau vivant* (Apraxime 2000: 33).

In summary, there existed a wide range of photographic methods and subjects in the early decades of the medium. I concentrate on material that was made after Scott Archer had invented the collodion-on-glass negative and images that are categorised principally as portrait photographs but also potentially as genre scenes. My overview of the subjects is limited in the sense that it has focussed on their emergence as a part of what has been identified as

the commercial output of photography. McCauley defines a commercial photographer "as one who regularly earns part or all of his or her living from taking and marketing photographs." (McCauley 1994: 3). This definition distinguishes commercial photography from amateur practice, which defines a considerable portion of nineteenth century photography, though there are, as McCauley notes, grey areas between the two (McCauley 1994: 4). Here my introductory focus on commercial photography is suitable because the majority of the material in my investigation consists of objects that were sold to the public on a regular basis over a period of time. However, I also include material that was not sold to the public on a regular basis but was in fact the work of an amateur, as well as material that is produced as partly the work of an amateur and partly the work of a commercial operator. As I proceed, I am careful to make distinctions where required. It is also worth noting that the question of a specific photograph or photographer's artistry tends to be secondary to its position as the work of a commercial or amateur photographer. In what follows, I narrow my investigation to provide information on the provenance of different sorts of photographic material made between the years 1854 and c.1910, which I list as follows: *cartes de visite* of the female burlesque performer Lydia Thompson, photographs of the Countess di Castiglione, Lady Hawarden's photographs of her daughters, postcards of women in gardens and postcards of female performers in orientalist dress. I have chosen these examples because, as I pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, they evidence the principles of exemplarity and idiosyncrasy, and present the female figure posed in costumes and settings that signify a range of typical western cultural references. More specifically, with regard to my

challenging the choice to attend to archive materials that depict women, these particular examples are especially renowned and have attracted attention from critics, as I show in the following chapter.

I.IV. *Cartes de visite*

I begin with the *cartes de visite* of Lydia Thompson. Here again Elizabeth Anne McCauley's research is a crucial resource because, while her work is by no means the only study to document the *cartes* as an innovation in the history of photography, she has provided the key authoritative text that examines a range of *cartes de visite* in-depth. In 1854, André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri invented and patented the *carte de visite* photograph, "a small portrait, six by nine centimeters, that could be pasted on the back of a conventional engraved calling card" (McCauley 1985: 1). Today these very early *cartes de visite-come*-calling cards as material objects are all but destroyed or disappeared. McCauley was unable to locate any for her research, instead focussing on what she properly names the "mature" *cartes de visite* that were made between 1858 and 1870 (McCauley 1985: 4). Indeed, the *cartes* of Lydia Thompson belong to this "mature" category since they were made in the late nineteenth-century. Yet, because I am concerned with a range of images including later card formats (the postcard), not solely photographs, and focussing on the material itself, it is useful to briefly observe the original connection between the *carte* and the calling card as part of a broader context of nineteenth-century card and print culture.

The calling card, or visiting card as it is also known, predates the material evidence in my investigation. Originally fashioned from a playing card, by the mid eighteenth-century the calling card was a specific sort of engraved card consisting of a pictorial design and a space for the bearer's name, which could be handwritten or engraved (Staff 1966: 10). The cards were therefore items that signified an individual's presence. Among the pictures were decorative borders, pastoral scenes and military designs, to name some examples. The design on a card often related to its bearer. As Frank Staff points out: "not everyone wanted made-to-order cards, but many people liked to show their individual interests by using cards which showed their professions or occupations." (Staff 1966: 12) Significantly: "Visiting cards were published and sold in sets, printed or engraved as a rule on stout paper or thin card, in the form of sheets, showing eight little pictures to be cut as required." (Staff 1966: 10)

These characteristics of the visiting card, that it showed an image, signified an individual person, was small in size and produced in sets, were all transferred to the *cartes de visite*. Of course a crucial distinction was that the *cartes* employed a photograph that portrayed an individual person but drastically departed from the semiotics of the antecedent picture and signature. Much like visiting cards, *cartes de visite* were produced in sets, which was enabled by an innovative photographic process whereby Disdéri divided "one collodion-coated glass plate into ten rectangles which could be exposed simultaneously or in series" (McCauley 1985: 1). In the context of portrait photography at the time of their invention, when a portrait had necessarily been full-plate in scale, the simple modification of the calling card model with the

addition of a set of photographs offered significant business advantages in its novelty and reduction of cost. The success of the *cartes de visite* as a commercial product is evidenced by the rapid increase in sales of photographs in Paris during the decade following its invention (McCauley 1994: 50-51).

As I have mentioned above, portrait photographs including *cartes de visite* were available to be made for a range of clientele. The *cartes de visite* of Lydia Thompson represent but one case of numerous *cartes* that were made in France, Britain and the United States and portrayed actors, actresses, dancers and performers of the era.[7] As material objects, the examples I examine are *cartes de visite* of Thompson that were made in London, Britain in the late nineteenth-century. Where known, the photographers or photographic firms responsible for making the portraits are as follows: Horatio Nelson King, Clarkington and Company, Heath and Beau and Camille-Léon-Louis Silvy. Of these photographers, Silvy is arguably the most renowned and, from the evidence of a statement from his partner below, could be credited as having introduced the *cartes de visite* to Britain. According to Cecil Beaton, Silvy, whose studio was located on Porchester Terrace in the Bayswater area of the city just north of Kensington Gardens, brought the *cartes de visite* "to its highest peak of exquisiteness" in Britain and "photographed the whole Royal family and all the celebrities of the day, seldom duplicating the backgrounds." (Beaton 1944: 14). Beaton also refers to an article written by a Mr. Adolphe

[7] In the context of the Parisian studios on the Grands Boulevards, McCauley remarks that: "a large part of the celebrity portrait market was devoted to the actors and actresses in the adjacent theatres" (McCauley 1994: 73). While a part of the celebrity portrait market, these "theatre" *cartes*, as I will call them here, specifically portrayed actors and actresses *en rôle* or in contemporary fashionable dress. As products made in studios nearby the theatres, and the cartes are therefore situated in close proximity to the theatre itself.

Beau, who, he suggests, "one must presume, was an assistant of Mr. Silvy", in reminiscence of his time working as a photographer. Beau suggests that: "There were indeed very few photographers in London at the time when with Silvy, I introduced the full-length *cartes-de-visite.*" (Beaton 1944: 17) Beau's statement, as given by Beaton, informs us about the status of *cartes de visite* photography in London. However, given the competition between commercial photographers, we should be cautious with his claim of having introduced the full-length *cartes*. In specifying "the full-length *cartes-de-visite*" he also indicates a clear fact that can be supported by a survey of 1860s *cartes de visite* more generally, which is that the *cartes* was not always full-length but could also portray a person by showing merely their head and shoulders. Indeed, while the *cartes* in my study are full-length, others exist that portray Thompson by her head and shoulders only. Beau's statement was uttered by the same Beau of Heath and Beau, as credited with photographs of some of the Lydia Thompson images (for example, Figure 2). Prior to establishing Heath and Beau, he had worked with Silvy at the Porchester Terrace studios. Therefore, in keeping with her high-profile reputation as a performer, Thompson had her portrait taken at the most renowned and reputable firms of the period.



Figure 2. Heath and Beau, photographer, "Photograph of Lydia Thompson," c. late nineteenth-century. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

With regard to the location of the studios, it should be noted that the metropolitan situation of the London studios differs somewhat from that of the studios in Paris. In Paris, as McCauley has carefully observed, the largest and most renowned studios were situated on the Grands Boulevard of the Right Bank which placed them directly alongside the city's fashion and entertainment venues, including numerous theatres that catered to a range of audiences. This included Disdéri himself who had a studio on the Boulevard des Italiens

between 1854 and 71 (McCauley 1994: 332). In London, the example of Silvy's studio suggests that, at least in the early stages of the *cartes de visite*'s introduction to London, the situation of the prestigious portrait studio was less immediately shaped by entertainment and fashion, and more so defined by industry, arts, science and the private households of the well to do, including the monarch. This is evidenced by periodicals of the period which published addresses at Porchester Terrace as private residences not businesses or theatres, while the area to the south of Kensington Gardens was famously the site of the Great Exhibition of 1862, the International Portrait Gallery and the city's Horticultural Gardens. That said, the fact that Adolphe Beau later set up a studio on Regent Street, where Clarkington and Company and Horatio Nelson King also had studios, toward the city's burgeoning theatre district, suggests that London commercial photographers took after their Parisian counterparts and sought to establish their premises within close proximity to the city's entertainment venues.

The range of images presented here indicates a defining feature of the theatre *cartes de visite* by comparison to others, whether of celebrities or anonymous individuals, namely that actors and actresses posed for portraits in numerous guises ranging from their costumes *en rôle* to contemporary fashionable dress. The photographs of Thompson in everyday fashionable dress portray her holding an open book together with another woman, leaning on a lectern with a closed book under her arm and a small object in her hands, resting her elbow on the back of a chair and her hand underneath her chin, pointing directly into a mirror, and standing adjacent to a mirror with her head turned away from it and toward the lens of the camera. The photographs of

Thompson in theatre costume portray her in the role of Robinson Crusoe, which she performed at the Folly Theatre (formerly the Charing Cross Theatre) on a number of evenings in the winter of 1876, and as a ballerina. This latter rôle must be distinguished from the first in the sense that Thompson did not perform onstage as a ballerina, rather here she is posing as one. These are but a selection of examples of *cartes* that portray Thompson. In accordance with the characteristic process of producing *cartes de visite*, these individual *cartes* portraits would have originally been part of a series of images that were exposed within one sitting. A series would therefore portray an individual in more or less the same dress, or costume, and setting with slight variations in certain elements. For example, two photographs taken by Horatio Nelson King are clearly of the same series (Figure 3 and Figure 4). They are distinguished by the different positions of the eyelids and hands, and the slight variation in frame and exposure time.



Figure 3. King, Horatio Nelson, photographer, "Photograph of Lydia Thompson," c. late nineteenth-century. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 4. King, Horatio Nelson, photographer, “Photograph of Lydia Thompson,” c. late nineteenth-century. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

I now turn attention to the original production of the actual image content. In the case of the ballet print, I referred to the general consensus that the image was the result of the lithographer’s effort to render the ballet dancer as she appeared live on stage. Similar can be said in the case of fashion plates, since they were made as a direct illustration of an actual garment that could be worn. Of course, there is a distinct gap between the image rendered and the actuality of the ballet dancer on the stage and the fashionably dressed woman on the street or in her parlour or boudoir. The lithographer’s pen could, and

did, produce an idealised and fixed impression of such lived experience. Nevertheless, as a justification for the production of the image in the first instance, the direct connection to the actual ballet and fashions stands. There is evidence to suggest that the photographer of the theatre *cartes de visite* operated with a similar rationale. Adolphe Beau's comments in the article quoted by Beaton provide a crucial clue. Beau is quoted as having stated the following about the process of taking the photographs:

> It is a very remarkable fact that most actors, when finding themselves in broad daylight, seemed, as it were, quite *dépaysés* and to have lost the actual remembrance of their exact poses and expressions before the footlights, and I had often to quote the words to promote the attitude.
>
> (Beaton 1944: 18)

Beau's reference to the actor's pose and expression "before the footlights" as the object of the sitting indicates that, as a part of his working process, he ideally sought that the actor would emulate his or her stage role in the photography studio. It is important to recognise that the role of the photographer and the lithographer as the idealising re-creator of an actual original form (ballet, fashion, theatre) places their work in a position that is second-hand. Therefore, they cannot be claimed as the authors of their creations, though they are surely the artists that skilfully rendered it in another form.

Yet there is a key difference between the photographic and the lithographic image here: the photograph implicates an individual's physical body in its production, in this case that of the actor. Beau's admission of difficulty in achieving his ideal emphasises that the actor's bodily pose and expression in the studio was incongruous with that en/acted within the habitual environment of the stage, or, to extrapolate, the home or street. The observation that most actors appeared "quite *dépaysés* and to have lost the actual remembrance of their exact poses and expressions before the footlights" shows that the actor's body appeared unpractised in the environment of the photography studio and as the object of the camera's gaze. At the time these circumstances were certainly novel, possibly even outright alien, to most people not only to actors. Therefore, while the lithographer can idealise an unruly, awkward body with his pen, the photographer must direct it by his own means. As a strategy for directing the actor's body in the photography studio, Beau's comment that he "had often to quote the words to promote the attitude" reveals a subtle and enduring point concerning the production of the photographic *cartes de visite* images, that is, *their production by means of quotation*. By this photographer's account, it is implicit that the "words" he had to quote were specifically the words of a play-text, so that the actor would recall his gestures, poses and expressions and emulate them in the studio. It is interesting that the photographer would have uttered the quotation/s out of a desire to achieve and capture a certain ideal attitude in a photograph. The fact that the circumstances involve a commercial photographer and an actor suggests that here this desire is professional rather than personal. Further, his phrase carries an extended meaning in the sense that it indicates that the image

is a quotation from a text; however, I must crucially emphasise that *it is not nor can it be the complete text itself*.

To summarise, then, Adolphe Beau's comments inform us of a chain of three key points concerning the original production of the theatre *cartes de visite* portrait. First, the photographer took an approach that viewed the onstage role as an ideal model for the actor's pose and expression in the photography studio. Second, often the actor could not simply reproduce his or her onstage craft for the camera, instead appearing out of habit or practice. I have suggested that this outcome could be explained by the sheer novelty of the environment created by the photography studio and the camera in the nineteenth-century. Third, the photographer produced the image, or at least the attitude of the actor's body, by means of quotation from a text.

It is necessary to consider the degree of input that the sitter had in the production of the image. In the absence of any explanations from the sitters themselves, it is difficult to specifically show what input, if any, they had. Beau's comments suggest that he had the expectation that the actor would strike an exact pose signified by the quoted text; the observation quoted above that the actor appeared *dépaysés* indicates the difficulty or awkwardness the actor may have experienced in making an input or taking an authorial role in the staging of the photograph.

I have attended to the production of the image from the point of view of the lithographer and photographer. This has involved taking notice of the image's direct, if idealistic, production with reference to the original forms of the ballet, fashion and theatre. Here I conclude this section with comparisons between the image content of the ballet prints, fashion plates and *cartes de*

visite themselves. Theatre *cartes de visite* that portray an actor or actress in a specific *rôle* that they are known to have performed onstage in a theatrical production are most often unique to themselves. However, surviving examples of other individual cartes show that actresses also posed in costumes and settings that do not refer to an onstage *rôle*. When we view these images here it is possible to notice that they show clear visual similarities to earlier ballet prints and fashion plates. A *cartes de visite* portrait of Thompson posing in a tutu with a lyre is almost an exact replication of the composition of a ballet print made in the 1840s (Figure 5; Figure 6).



Figure 5. Alexandre Lacauchie, "Une danseuse Italienne dans La Fille de Marbre," from the series *Quadrille des 4 parties du monde,* lithograph, 1840s. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 6. “Photograph of Lydia Thompson,” c. late nineteenth-century. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Do these visual similarities or replications have a bearing on the original production of these *cartes de visite* images? I am by no means the first to notice such connections. McCauley (1985) has rightly related Disdéri’s *cartes de visite* portraits of the Russian dancer Marthe Muravieva to Romantic ballet prints. Her example is slightly different from the Lydia Thompson cartes since Muravieva was in fact a trained dancer whereas Thompson was not. Nevertheless her examination of the Muravieva cartes attends to the visual connection between the *carte de visite* and earlier sorts of prints, namely of course the ballet print. The first point to note is that, in relating these cartes to the ballet print, she draws conclusions that would seem to contradict my above finding that the photographer sought to produce a portrait that entailed the

sitter's emulation of the physical body onstage, and affirm the argument that earlier prints (specifically the ballet prints) directly influenced the original production of the *cartes de visite*. She states that: "the tradition of ballet within which Disdéri was working was not that of its development on the stage, but rather that of the two-dimensional images of it" (McCauley 1985: 109). In distinguishing between the field of fixed two-dimensional image-making and the onstage performance of ballet as two distinct traditions, her rationale for this statement assumes that the comparatively static and limited nature of the photographed attitudes must override any productive connection the *cartes* may have to ballet practice. Here I quote her analysis at length because it illustrates the complications that can arise in observing the visual connections across different sorts of fixed images in relation to the live form of the ballet or theatre performance:

> what strikes the modern viewer most about Disdéri's series of eight photographs of the Russian dancer Marthe Muravieva is how static and stylized her five poses are. The mid-air jeté was beyond the technical means of the camera and collodion plate, but the arabesque, plié and many other attitudes would have been possible. They were rejected by the photographer because he had never actually registered them perceptually … For thirty years lithographs had shown ballerinas almost exclusively in fourth or fifth position … The ballerina herself, if asked to strike a pose before the camera, would naturally choose an attitude that was stable, physically undemanding, and similar to those she had seen

> in other visual images. After a false start in the lower left hand corner, Disdéri discovered the happier device of having the leg trail into the background, which happened to be a lithographic favorite. Introducing such physical suggestions of coy innocence as a drawn-in chin, an under-the-brow glance, a tilted head, and modest, crossed arms, Disdéri moulds Muravieva into the fairies and Romantic ballet heroines that he had seen depicted in his youth.
>
> (McCauley 1985: 109)

For McCauley, the Muravieva we see in the photograph is not the three-dimensional physical Muravieva who would have performed onstage but Muravieva as a two-dimensional figure; further still, such a transformation is attributed not only to our present day viewing but also to Disdéri himself as the photographer who originally produced the image, and more implicitly to Muravieva as the sitter. While there are certainly visual connections between the Muravieva cartes and the ballet print (Figure 5 serves as a good example here), it is unclear why this observation should then necessitate such a clear-cut distinction between the production of the *cartes*, and also implicitly the ballet prints, and the original form of the ballet. As I have shown above, the production of a *carte* portrait with reference to the original theatre production was a process marked by the seemingly unanticipated discordance between the spaces of the stage and the studio. The photographer's resort to extracting and uttering quotations from the text in order for the actor to recall his poses and

expressions from the onstage production certainly would have resulted in a limited portrayal of his role, but it did not entail its separation from it. In this knowledge we cannot rule out the possibility that the *cartes* portraits of Muravieva were produced by a similar means. For instance, in the photography studio, the strategy of the sitter posing in a stable attitude could nonetheless operate as a form of quotation from the actual ballet performance and its traditions. At the same time, it can be seen to reference the nascent conventions of its antecedent, the ballet print. Because the notion that Disdéri "moulded" Muravieva into a two-dimensional figure has the effect of closing off a more multivalent understanding of this material and its production, I would rather pursue an approach that takes both the actual ballet and its two-dimensional depictions into view.

Yet the examples I bring under examination do not show a trained ballet dancer. In Figure 6 Lydia Thompson poses as a ballet dancer, but she had no actual ballet training or performance that she danced onstage to quote from. In which case, I cannot hypothesise that the *cartes* were originally produced with direct reference to one of her onstage roles. Instead they must be hypothetically positioned as a reference to the earlier ballet prints, and the generic notion of the Romantic ballet itself. The further examples of Thompson posed in everyday fashionable dress must also be hypothetically positioned in reference to the fashion plates, and the generic notion of the everyday life of a fashionable middle-class woman. Contrary to McCauley's point-of-view, I would conclude that there is not the evidence to support a claim that the earlier ballet prints and fashion plates were a direct visual influence on the original

production of the *cartes de visite*. However, it is important to keep these hypothesised references open to the analysis of the material itself.

I.V. The Lady Clementina Hawarden Photographs and the Countess di Castiglione Photographs

Here I provide information on the original provenance of Lady Clementina Hawarden's photographs of her daughters and Pierre-Louis Pierson's photographs of the Countess di Castiglione as material objects. Both sets of photographs were first produced in the late 1850s and early 1860s.

As an authoritative source of information on the history of Hawarden's photographs, Virginia Dodier's research is my key reference in this section on her work. Because a private amateur photographer (Hawarden herself) took these photographs and they are not a product of a professional industry, their original production is distinct from the other nineteenth-century images in my project. Lady Clementina Hawarden (née Fleming) (1822-1865) began taking photographs around 1857 at the age of 35 and continued to do so until her death in 1865. She produced at least 775 photographs in her lifetime (Dodier 1999: 10). Today she is credited as a pioneer Victorian photographer, and historical narratives tend to situate her work in the context of her contemporaries such as Julia Margaret Cameron, O. G. Rejlander and Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll). She used the collodion method to produce her photographs, which emerged in 1851, again out of international experimentation and the spirit of competition (Frederick Scott Archer and Gustave Le Gray have both been credited as independent inventors). Her

method also likely involved a degree of her own technical experimentation, as Dodier observes:

> Photographic chemicals could be purchased ready-made from pharmacists or photographic suppliers, or prepared with the aid of published formulas. In 1863 the *Photographic News* wrote that Hawarden used 'a highly bromized collodion: a very strong iron developer, sometimes containing as much as fifty grains to the ounce' – probably her own formula, devised through trial and error.
>
> (Dodier 1999: 23)

Hawarden would have been responsible for the overall technical production of the photographs, from the preparation of the chemicals and the photograph plate to the decisions of when to remove and replace the lens cap. Dodier remarks that: "Hawarden probably printed her own photographs as well, as her prints are marked by the inconsistencies and idiosyncrasies of amateur production." (Dodier 1999: 24) It should be noted that at the time photographs were printed onto ordinary writing sheets that had been treated with albumen, a solution of distilled egg whites (Dodier 1999: 23). The Hawarden photographs are therefore flimsy objects that, certainly by contrast to today's photographic prints, could be easily torn – and indeed many of them were at a later period.

At a time when photographic equipment was expensive, Hawarden was in a position to personally take photographs and, crucially for her own

distinctive work, experiment with a new and technically volatile medium because she was financially able. Despite her distinguished background, her personal financial situation was not especially one of affluence since her family's estate in Scotland, Cumbernauld, was left solely to her brother after her father's death in 1840 (Dodier 1999: 16). However, as 4th Viscount Hawarden and inheritor of Dundrum estate in County Tipperary, Ireland by 1856, her husband was wealthy. Thus: "Her interest in photography may have preceded her first pictures by several years, but it was her husband's inheritance that afforded the money, time, and work space necessary for photography in that era." (Dodier 1999: 21)

Hawarden began by taking photographs in the grounds of the Dundrum estate. These comprise landscapes and views, scenes of men at work and peasant life. Dodier identifies the latter as her "first costume photographs" since they show members of the Hawarden family posing as peasants (Dodier 1999: 30). In 1859, when the family moved to 5 Princes Gardens, South Kensington, London, Hawarden began taking photographs inside her new house. She used two interconnected north-facing and south-facing rooms on the second floor, and their respective terrace and balcony, as a studio (Dodier 1999: 33). These photographs are mostly of her eldest daughters, Isabella Grace ("Trotty") and Clementina ("Chukky"). Less frequent among them are photographs of her younger daughter (Florence Elizabeth, "Bo"), a family friend, an unidentified woman, dogs, and an empty room. The photographs of her daughters, which have since attracted the most attention from historians and critics, show the young women posing in costumes and fashions of the day, often positioned with a everyday object and by an item of furniture. Some

costumes are clearly eighteenth-century in style, whereas others are more ambiguous and makeshift, comprising household objects such as a broom and undergarments such as a chemise.

Of all the images I analyse and discuss, these photographs are the most ambiguous in terms of the original context of their reception. They are not mass-produced commercial images and it is not possible to definitively and clearly relate them to a distinct market, be that that of the Romantic ballet, fashions or portrait photographs. Instead they are a mother's photographs of her daughters, friends and acquaintances. Since we know that Hawarden exhibited her work on just two occasions over the course of approximately ten years of taking photographs, once in 1863 and again in 1864, we can conclude that they were kept in private for most of this time. There is little evidence of Hawarden's nascent photographic period other than the photographs themselves. It would seem that, in the early years of their inception (for at least five years), they constituted a personal project, entailing her extraordinary experimentation with a new medium on the quite ordinary subject of her family and friends. However, reviews of the exhibitions provide helpful evidence of how critics responded to her photographs. In the following paragraphs I firstly relate the photographs to other images that were contemporaneous with the period in which they were made. I then move on to discuss what we know from the exhibition of the photographs in the 1860s.

Hawarden's photographs pertain to two specific *categories* of photographs that were in existence in the mid nineteenth-century: first, the portrait photograph, and second, the genre photograph. Photographs in these categories could be commercial and/or artistic in their production. I raise them

here in order to position Hawarden's work using the framework that was available for photographs in the mid nineteenth-century. It is important to emphasise, however, that I am not claiming that the photographs were definitively classified as portrait photographs or genre photographs. The extent to which they relate to these categories also depends on the examples in question.

In the late 1850s and 1860s portrait photographs were a booming commercial enterprise. In fact, the portrait photograph was such a commercial success that it brought professional strain and consternation for photographers who sought artistic integrity in their work such as Félix Nadar (McCauley 1994: 105-148). The connections between Hawarden's photographs and the portrait photograph are as follows. First, they are photographs taken of specific persons, namely Isabella Grace and Clementina Hawarden. Second, they portray those persons in a variety of dresses, costumes and poses. With respect to these crude elements of their composition, the photographs resemble the period's portraits of actresses and female performers, which were distributed commercially as *cartes de visite*. At the same time, Hawarden's photographs must be differentiated from these institutionalised portraits. As Elizabeth Anne McCauley writes with regard to the period's commercial portrait photography:

> Portrait photography, a leisure product that fed off personal vanity, was just one more amusement [on the commercial streets]. Furthermore, a large part of the celebrity portrait market was devoted to the actors and actresses in the adjacent theaters, and portrait sittings themselves were often theatrical performances in

> which middle-class citizens assumed the trappings of the rich and famous.
>
> (McCauley 1994: 73)

Given their own wealthy social status, the daughters were not so much assuming the trappings of the rich and famous as they were assuming the trappings of the theatre itself. Nevertheless, on the basis of what is known about photographic practice elsewhere at the time, I would conjecture that the later indoor photographs might be positioned in their original context as a form of theatrical portraiture, conducted as a mother's personal project with her daughters.

The genre scene photograph is less well researched in the context of commercial photography; indeed it is only mentioned very briefly in McCauley's research as one of a list of subjects of photographs that were available to purchase in Paris during the early decades of the nineteenth-century (McCauley 1994: 50). This is possibly due to the portrait photograph's dominance in the market of the middle of the century when commercial photography was at its peak. There are, however, clear visual comparisons between Hawarden's photographs and the genre scene in photography. The *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth Century Photography* defines "Genre" as follows:

> As a category of subject matter in painting, genre refers to incidental scenes of everyday life. In photography, the term further suggests the artificial re-creation of such scenes for the camera

> (rather than the more direct recording of actual subject matter as in documentary or snapshot photography). Often associated with Victorian art photography, genre photography typically involves the staging of narrative tableau, using paid and amateur models to enact familiar themes.
>
> (Hannavy 2007: 575)

The connection between Hawarden's photographs and the genre scene has been previously acknowledged, but only implicitly and in so far as the photographs relate to the concept of art photography, subject pictures and the staging of narrative tableau. For example, the established literature has situated her work alongside that of O. G. Rejlander and Lewis Carroll. In his lifetime, O. G. Rejlander was a contemporary and friend of Hawarden's (he wrote her obituary). However, his work was also firmly situated at the time as professional art photography, and distinct from Hawarden's in its subject matter. As an example of genre photography it showed images of Victorian street children. Carroll also favoured this subject; his child models lived lives as members of lower and upper classes and so, depending on the example, his photographs can be understood as artificial recreations and a sort of documentary recording of the street child (see Mavor 1996: 35-42). Dodier has likened Hawarden's photographs to subject pictures and costume tableaux. Yet, as I noted in the previous section to this chapter, the association between a genre scene photograph and a tableau is slippery since the latter invokes forms that are distinctively *live*: in the nineteenth-century a *tableaux vivant*

designated “a particular theatrical production in which mime, recitative and music were combined”, while “tableaux” was also a sort of parlour game. The recourse to art photography and tableaux therefore ignores the primary concept of the genre photograph itself and thus the specificity of Hawarden’s photographs’ pertinence to this sort of photography. It is also worth noting that, in the decades to come, as photographic equipment became more portable and affordable, photography would be encouraged among middle-class women. By the Edwardian era, the garden was a frequent setting for this new leisure pursuit. Hawarden’s early photographs in the grounds of the Dundrum estate are likely harbingers of this later phenomenon.

Yet, during her lifetime her photographs were not confined to the privacy of the Hawarden household, and Hawarden herself was evidently a photographer with an accomplished craft. After five years of taking photographs, she exhibited her work twice in 1863 and 1864 and sold her work once in 1864. She died suddenly of pneumonia the following year. Her time as a photographer spanned a brief seven years so it is important not to underestimate those two years in which she made her work known to an audience outside her immediate social circle.

On the two occasions she exhibited her photographs, she did so with the Photographic Society of London. At the time the society included amateur and professional members and its exhibition was held at the South Kensington Museum. Dodier points out that Hawarden did not give her photographs titles; but: “In the Photographic Society of London exhibition catalogs, her entries are listed as ‘Photographic Studies’ and ‘Studies from Life,’ both generic terms at that time for art photographs.” (Dodier 1999: 12) It is not clear to what extent

Hawarden initiated the use of these terms to label the photographs for the exhibition, or whether the society assigned them. However, the terminology offers clues as to how these photographs were positioned at the time. Photographers adopted the term "study" from an artist's traditional working process in order to indicate that their work was not merely the result of a technical proficiency with the scientific apparatus of a camera, and the term "from life" indicated that the image was not a photograph after an original artwork (as was sometimes the case), but taken of actual people and their surroundings.

Reviews of Hawarden's work at the exhibition keep close to the positions granted by this terminology. There is evidence that viewers did not wholly subscribe to the photographs as a successful contribution to art photography. Dodier cites a review in response to the 1863 exhibit, which speculated that: "'If Lady Hawarden's 'studies' had been presented as 'portraits,' … [she may] have been entitled to the medal for that branch of the art.'" (Dodier 1999: 44) The review therefore inclines more towards the "from life" aspect of the photographs, persuaded by the notion that these images are of actual persons, than the more academic status of the "study". As I mentioned above, the portrait photograph was an everyday object at the time, and Hawarden's photographs share in its conventional use of indoor settings, props and costumes. However, in 1964 a particular photograph (unfortunately it is not known precisely which) was also recognised as showing artistic compositional skill. The quality of the light in the photographs was especially mentioned; it is also worth noting that there is reference to a "female figure", not a "woman" or

the name of one of Hawarden's daughters. The review described the photograph as follows:

> It consists of a graceful female figure in rich drapery, standing beside a window, the full light from which falls upon one side of the drapery without producing chalkiness or destroying detail; whilst the deep shadow produced by the intense direct light on the other side of the figure is so exquisitely transparent that no detail is lost or any approach to blackness apparent.
>
> (Dodier 1999: 88)

These reviews provide evidence that, in the context of an official photography exhibition, Hawarden's photographs were originally responded to at first as if they were in fact portraits – taken "from life", as Dodier observes (1999: 44). Then the review a year later suggests they were exemplary of the skill required to produce a well-lit, cogent photograph. Based on this evidence, they did not therefore *explicitly* provoke beyond the conventional, definitional boundaries that had already been set for photographs at the time. Rather, the provocation they incited is marked more so by gaps and silences, and the 1863 reviewer's resort to stipulating what the photographs ought to have been.

As I have briefly mentioned, at around the time Lady Hawarden was taking her photographs, commercial firms offered photographic services to the members of the public on the street. Of the early firms in Second Empire Paris, the most iconic was Mayers and Pierson since it was patronised by Emperor

Napoleon III and visited by the Empress Eugénie (Apraxime 2000: 24). The firm was established in 1855 by the Mayers brothers, Léopold Ernest and Louis Frédéric, and Pierre-Louis Pierson, and situated with an entrance on boulevard des Capucines, "one of the most prestigious shopping streets in Paris" (Apraxime 2000: 24). It was here that Virginia, Countess di Castiglione (née Oldoini) (1837-1899) commissioned her first photographs in July 1856 (Apraxime 2000: 17).

Unlike Lady Hawarden, the Countess was not a photographer. In her lifetime, she was renowned for her beauty, which she displayed in society to flagrant effect, and her correspondences with key political figures in the Kingdom of Sardinia and Piedmont and Second Empire France. A defining moment was her recruitment by Camillo di Cavour, then Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia and Piedmont, who was working toward establishing the unification of Italy. In preparation for the Congress of Paris, he sought her "to add glamour to the Italian contingent, to insinuate herself into the imperial circle, and to encourage the emperor's willingness to promote [his] designs [for the cause for unification]." (Apraxime 1999: 15) Like many aristocratic women of her time (whether they were so by genuine descent or self-invention), she exerted political influence by establishing herself as the mistress of a powerful man, in this case, Napoleon III.

Hawarden and Castiglione held in common an aristocratic descent, a wealthy marriage, and an evident interest – passion, even – in producing highly staged photographs. However, while there are no confirmed photographs of Hawarden herself, the Countess posed on numerous occasions so that there

exists an entire corpus of her self-portrait photographs.[8] Both women were also mothers whose children posed in their photographs, though for the Countess this was the case to a lesser extent than Hawarden. On the 9th March 1855, Castiglione gave birth to a son, Giorgio (1855-1879). One photograph shows him with his mother (and his nurse), a later series show him at approximately nine years, his long hair spread out across his shoulders, and in another series he is shown aged around twelve, his hair cropped to his ears and kissing his mother's hand or lounging on pillows. For these photographs to be made, the Countess would have had to travel the streets of Paris, at least in the early years the short distance from her home address on the first floor of 10, rue de Castiglione (adjacent to the Jardins de Tuileries), to the boulevard de Capucines in order to meet her photographer, Pierre-Louis Pierson.

As the place where these photographs originated as material objects, it is important to take into consideration both the general context of the firm as one commercial business among many in Paris at the time and as a studio where many other photographs were taken, as well as the specificity of the Countess' photographs themselves. As I have observed in previous sections, portrait photography was an established practice in the mid nineteenth-century. Here I continue to refer to Elizabeth Anne McCauley's research. Although the information that specifically relates to Mayer and Pierson is sporadic, here her work provides a useful overview of the photographic industry in Paris during this period. Among the businesses on the Right Bank was Mayers and Pierson who shared the boulevard des Capucines with three to four other businesses, including the famous Nadar whose studio opened there in 1861 (McCauley

[8] There is one photograph that could be of Hawarden, but it could also be of her sister Anne, since they both looked alike (Dodier 1999: 36).

1994: 66-73; 142). “Mayer was charged 10,000 francs per year for his rooms on the boulevard de Capucines” compared with another firm, Baldus, who were charged a tenth of the amount in the year 1856 (McCauley 1994: 72). Mayers and Pierson specialised in producing portraits for the social elite: “High Finance (Fould, Rothschild), the professions, rich foreigners, including Italians, Russians and Spanish” not to mention the Empress herself (Apraxime 1999: 25).

What differentiates these self-portraits of the Countess di Castiglione from the countless others that were produced at Mayers and Pierson? First, there is the great quantity of them, all of which portray the same person (with the exception of those that include Giorgio). Pierre Apraxime identifies that the photographs were produced “within three distinct periods”:

> The first portraits were made during her initial stay in Paris, from 1856 to 1858. […] A section group of images, the largest, dates from between 1861 and 1867. […] After 1867 the Countess’s interest in photography waned and she called on Pierson on only one or two occasions. Then, after a long silence broken by a single session in about 1885, the Countess, who was by this time suffering from severe mental illness, revived the earlier association, returning in 1893, 1894 and 1895 to ‘Papa Pierson,’ as she affectionately called him.
>
> (Apraxime 1999: 27-28)

Apraxime hints that the cause of the fluctuations in the countess' visits to Mayers and Pierson was her own idiosyncratic behaviour and psychology. Such reasons are difficult to prove without the countess' own admission, whereas evidence provided by McCauley's research strongly suggests that the pattern of the countess' visitations was symptomatic of more general trends in the Parisian photographic industry. A graphic representation of the number of registered Parisian commercial studios (1848-71) shows a steep increase between the years 1862 and 1864 (McCauley 1994: 51). After 1968 the numbers began to level off "when 365 'artistes photographes' and their studios were registered" (McCauley 1994: 50). A graph of the number of photographs registered for public sale between 1852 and 1871 shows that the numbers sharply increased between the years 1862 and 1864, after which the numbers then decrease (McCauley 1994: 51). This increase in productivity of studios and photographs corresponds to the Countess' most productive years at Mayers and Pierson, and the time in which she stopped visiting.

I.VI. Postcards

The final sort of evidence I examine is the Edwardian photographic postcard that portrays women. I focus on two particular sub categories of this subject. The first portrays women in a domestic garden setting and wearing everyday Edwardian dress (see Appendix B: Figure 13 and Figure 14). The second portrays women in an Orientalist costume and/or setting (Figure 1). In what follows I provide information on the original production of this material, and its connections to and distinctions from the earlier imagery.

While this material does serve as a form of photographic portrait, unlike the *cartes de visite* it was not the visual image that originally distinguished the postcard format as an innovation. Rather, the first postcard emerged in 1869 out of debates in Germany and Austria concerning the insufficiencies of postal communication by letter (Staff 1979: 44-46). In 1865, Dr. Heinrich von Stephan, its earliest proponent, identified that, in his own words: "The present form of the letter does not […] yet allow of sufficient simplicity and brevity for a large class of communications." (Staff 1979: 44) In 1869, the Austrian economist Dr. Emanuel Herrmann observed that ordinary correspondences, which were approximately one third of the mail, were a "financial burden to the State" (Staff 1979: 83). Alternately framed as having economical benefits for the individual correspondent and the State, the postcard therefore developed from rational arguments for its necessity. In order to be actualised the arguments also required validation from an institutionalised authority, that is, the State post office, which Herrmann's case received in September 1869 (Frank 1979: 83).

It followed that the actual postcard itself was characteristically small in size, open (that is, not contained in an envelope) and sent by means of the postal service. Issued on the 1st October 1870, the first postcards in the United Kingdom were "made in two sizes on thin buff card, approximately 4 ¾ by 3 ½ inches and 4 ¾ by 3 inches." (Staff 1979: 47-48). "Printed in lilac along the top were the words POST CARD above the Royal Arms, under which was the instruction: THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN THIS SIDE. … The back of the card was for the message." (Staff 1979: 48) In the 1880s postcards with images on them were published in Europe. I would emphasise that these

early images tended to show national symbols. The early picture postcards Staff mentions are all examples of this observation: Swiss postcards showed national costumes, alpine scenes and a famous mountain-top hotel (Rigi-Kulm); visitors to the 1889 World's Fair in Paris could purchase postcards showing views of the Eiffel Tower, and in Britain a postcard was issued on the occasion of the 1891 Royal Naval Exhibition that showed a sketch of the top of Eddystone Lighthouse, a model of which had been built on the exhibition grounds (Staff 1879: 54-54). Occasional commemorative pictorial cards such as this example were an exception in Britain over the course of the first couple of decades of postcard production. It was not until the 1st September 1894 that the Post Office authorised the private printing of postcards (Staff 1879: 57). Until January 1902 the format of these privately printed pictorial cards only allowed the message to be written on the recto (front) of the card alongside the picture itself. Scholars have named these early pictorial cards "the turn-of-the-century format" (Gillen 2013: 6). After that date, the verso (back) of the card was divided into two sections, one for the address and one for the message, thereby freeing up the front of the card for the presentation of the image only. Postcards of this Edwardian format, which has remained unchanged to the present day, were published and posted in vast quantities far surpassing the *cartes de visite*: "Evidence from the Postmaster General's annual reports reveals that during the reign of Edward VII (1901-1910) the total number of postcards posted in Britain was 5,920,933,334, almost six billion, getting on for 200 cards per person." (Gillen 2013: 7)

The Edwardian postcard was therefore a small open format double-faceted card that showed an image that had (usually) not been interfered with

on the recto, and spaces designed for handwriting a message and postage on the verso. Such postcards ushered in further distinctive features. On one hand these features concerned the means of communication. First, they offered the opportunity for spontaneous, speedy and affordable correspondence on a mass scale (Gillen 2013). Second, such communication was conducted by means of an actual material object that presented the message openly. Third, although heavily regulated by the Post Office, they offered an opportunity for private individuals to directly communicate by such means without mediation by a third party. Since the first point had a precedent in the telegram and the second in the carrier pigeon post this third point is most unique to the innovation of the postcard.

On the other hand the postcards' distinctive features concerned the content of the communication. The duality of the image and the handwritten message is certainly a remarkable and unprecedented feature of the postcard. The image itself could be photographic or pictorial and tended to show the following subjects; I have noted examples in brackets: a place (as in the case of the view card), an advertisement (for Pear's soap, an exhibition or theatrical production), an innovation (the telephone), royalty and patriotism (as in the case of commemorating a Coronation), propaganda (the Suffrage Movement) or a traditional greeting (Valentine's and Christmas). I would emphasise that these subjects are not simply anything and everything. On the contrary, they are specifically subjects that pertain to collectivity. The form of collectivity differs according to the subject and example. A postcard that shows a view of a place pertains to the collectivity of a specific locale and so on. For ease of reading I have organised the postcard subjects and the pertaining form of

collectivity into a table, including examples taken from Staff's study (Appendix A).

Owing to the space available, by the object's very design, the messages written on these cards would have to be brief. A glance at the verso of a small number of used postcards can suggest certain conventions in the writing that evidence brevity. For example, four used postcards in my small collection show an initial to signify the individual addressee rather than a full name. However, because the messages are handwritten by individuals and therefore have scope for innumerous variation, it is not possible to make general observations about the messages themselves without analysing a wider sample of postcard messages. Such a project has been the focus of literacy studies scholars whose research investigates Edwardian postcard messages in the context of writing and communicative practices (Gillen 2013). I am not drawing extensively on such evidence. However it is nonetheless important to observe key findings concerning the original production of the postcards' brief and rapid correspondence, namely the emergence of a near synchronous mode of communication that was available to the mass of the population (Gillen 2013).

I should now attend more specifically to the examples in question. I have noted that I am focussing on Edwardian photographic postcards that portray women. In the context in which they were made, the postcards' portrayal of women emerged in two key subject areas: the family or individual portrait and the actress portrait. In themselves these subjects do not especially differentiate the postcards from the *cartes de visite*; although the *cartes* tend to show individual rather than group portraits. What marks the postcard images out

from other forms of portrait photographs is to be found in the content of the photographic portrayal itself. The postcards of the era show that a frequently employed setting for the affixed portrait photograph of both a family and an individual woman was the domestic garden, which often included partial views of the exterior of a house. On the other hand, actress portraits continued to be staged in the photography studio, and the actresses themselves continued to pose in their onstage roles. Yet what is distinctive is that the costumes and settings shown by these portraits tend to allude to a vague sense of a distant geographic location. Sheer skirts, brasseries, waist sashes, and beaded or metal accessories are suggestive of the Orient as imagined in western culture. Long white robes with fringing are suggestive of ancient Greece. Situated in the wider context of Edwardian postcard production wherein, as I have shown, the depicted subjects pertain to collectivity, these photographs are views of a place as well as portraits of individual women and actresses. Therefore, the Edwardian postcard is distinctive for its collective portrayal of women.

Chapter II

Arrangements and Histories: A Literature Review

Introduction: Archive Material

Recently theatre and performance scholars have emphasised the importance of taking an objectcentric as opposed to anthropocentric approach to the investigation of material objects (Schweitzer and Zerdy 2014). In the vein of this objectcentrism, studies in this field also make the case for the approaching archive materials by attending carefully to their arrangement/s (Gale and Featherstone 2011; Dorney 2014; Baugh 2005). There are various specific reasons for, and means of implementing, this approach, which depend on the particular material in question and the context of its investigation. To begin with, I need to frame the arguments with a brief consideration of the more general reasons as to why the arrangements of archive materials interests those working in the discipline of theatre and performance, and how I see my investigation in this respect.

There is a certain tension between the preservative order demanded by archive materials and the transient nature of theatre and performance as art forms. This tension relates to a binary of materiality/ephemerality in theatre and performance scholarship (Kershaw and Nicolson 2011). A key source in the development of criticism that attends to the tension between order and transience, materiality and ephemerality is Derrida's famous essay on the topic of archives. Derrida (1998) begins his essay with the principles that are named by the very word 'archive'. He writes:

> *Arkhe,* we recall, names at once the *commencement* and the *commandment.* This name apparently coordinates two principles in one: the principle according to nature or history, *there* were things *commence* – physical, historical, or ontological principle – but also the principle according to the law, *there* where men and gods *command, there* where authority, social order are exercised, *in this place* from which *order* is given – nomological principle.
>
> (Derrida 1998: 1)

It is suggestive that the archives' naming of both the commencement and the commandment captures an authoritative beginning in itself. In the context of theatre and performance scholarship the beginning, represented by an archive of theatre and performance materials, is therefore potentially at odds with, or distinct from, that initiated by the original piece of theatre or performance those materials ostensibly evidence. Yet the staging of theatre and performance has left (and continues to leave) behind a trail of materials of different sorts, much of which is arranged to form archives. It is crucial, then, that theatre and performance scholars who are concerned with such material engage with the question of its archival arrangement in order to develop a methodology that maintains critical awareness of the complex relationship between the archive, namely the arrangement of its materials, and theatre and performance. The point is not that this relationship is dichotomous, but that it demands critical attention.

My interest in attending to the arrangement of archive materials through the critical lens of current theatre and performance scholarship concerns the set of images whose origins I outlined in the previous chapter. Critics and historians have examined the images through a paradigm of theatre and performance that primarily treats the *conditions* of their production and circulation in society as *transient and mobile.* The reasons for this treatment lie in a certain anthropocentric approach to the image content and the sorts of material under investigation. Much of this material portrays actresses, performers or dancers. In this regard, studies employ the images as secondary evidence of theatre and performance. In the studies that examine this material as primary evidence, the different sorts of images are approached as representations of women, or, more specifically, as examples of the woman-as-image, that were produced and circulated in the society of the period.[9] Significantly, some of the most influential theories concerning female gender in western society employ terminology and concepts derived from theatre and performance, namely Joan Rivière's theory of womanliness as a masquerade and Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity (Rivière 1986; Butler 1999). In this approach, which puts the material in a secondary position to the image, the different sorts of material are viewed as if in a *transitory* state of production and circulation in their societies. As such, the images are employed as evidence of how modern femininity was historically shaped in western culture and society as a sort of performance that was produced, imagined and

[9] The "woman-as-image" is a term introduced by Griselda Pollock (1987) and later employed by Abigail Solomon-Godeau (1996) that aims to specify woman *as* a signifier and critique the notion that one may study "images *of* women", since the latter implies that there may be "good" and "bad" representations of women (Pollock 1987: 133). In my analyses, I heed Pollock's caution and use the term "woman-as-image".

observed by men and, or, women. Crucially, this approach to the analysis of the material does employ an arrangement of images as evidence but that arrangement is treated very broadly as a series of representations of women/women at a particular societal and historical moment *not* as a specific arrangement of archive material.

This anthropocentric approach to the examination of this set of images and their production and circulation in society tends to neglect the arrangements of the material and the specific contexts in which they appear. I argue that the dominant methodology and indeed rationale for the examination of this material is therefore fundamentally flawed because it does not engage and reflect critically on the pivotal problem of the material *as* an arrangement, and therefore *as* an archive. The resultant historical narratives are arguably inadequate and potentially dangerous in their treatment of the arrangement of images as a performance that was shaped by and defined women and, or, men in the past, yet whose means of arrangement and preservation exists today. In my view, the danger lies in treating material that shapes our concepts of gender and sexuality in western culture and society exclusively as a product of the past when it is also a product of the present, since we choose to archive this material by presenting it as an arrangement. In neglecting the arrangements of the images as archive materials, we neglect our means to critically reflect on and indeed understand why it is that we continue to preserve material that objectifies the woman's body by presenting it as an archive. Further still, as I show below, there are a number of weaknesses in the dominant methodology with regards to its historical contextualisation of the material. Let me stress that I am not suggesting that the investigation of this set of images is divorced from

notions of theatricality or performance; though I am arguing that it must be examined as distinct from historical theatre and performance productions. Rather I argue that the arrangements of the images and their specific contexts must be emphasised and examined in a critical discourse with notions of theatricality and performance.

The Structure of This Chapter

With fundamental attention to the arrangement of the material images as an archive and the specific contexts in which different arrangements appear, the present chapter is structured into two sections. The first section reviews the studies that analyse the different sorts of material images. In this review I am principally concerned with observing and critiquing the historiographical implications of these studies' anthropocentric attention to the images, that is, their focus on the images' depiction of woman as if she were or could be a subject or object in society. The second section is chiefly concerned with developing the methodology I propose as a means of examining what material, aesthetic and ideological conventions determine the relationship between an observer and an image in a given historical moment.

II.I. A Review of the Established Literature on the Images

I have stated that the established literature examining the material images in question takes an anthropocentric approach that argues their production and circulation by men and women in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The above brief introductory review examined the tension and fundamental distinctions between the nature of archives as repositories for materials and the disciplines of theatre and performance. It argued why it is necessary to attend first and foremost to the arrangement of the material images, as opposed to treating them as if they were secondary evidence or illustration of theatre and/or performance in a society. In following section I provide a literature review that critiques the arguments in the established literature, with quotations, and situates them within a particular critical, theoretical and historical context. Because I am fundamentally questioning the choice to attend to the material images that depict women, and argue for a subjectless critique of the production and circulation of woman as a concept, my approach to the analysis of the material images differs radically from those I review here. By firstly drawing attention to how these studies present an arrangement of the images, that is, by identifying under what terms the images are archived, I aim to explore the societal, historical and political narrative of their arguments.

My means of conducting this review therefore takes a number of different steps. First, I show that the authors primarily attend to the visual characteristics of the material images, and therefore arrange them as an archive according to these characteristics. Second, I situate this visual emphasis within a particular contemporary critical and theoretical context. Third, I explore the historiographical implications of this approach, with particular attention to the society it describes in its gendered and sexed narration of the concepts of time and space. Fourth, I identify key problems in the societal and historical narrative offered in the established literature. Fifth, I draw on insights from postcolonial studies and gay and lesbian studies in order to contexualise and

justify the identified problems with highly pertinent points of criticism made by authors working in these fields. My attention to the problems concerning gender and sexuality in the societal and historical narrative of the established literature on the images, as well as to the pertinent literature in the fields of postcolonial studies and gay and lesbian studies, underpins the development of my argument as a queer critique. As Eng, Halberstam and Muñoz observe:

> Given its commitment to interrogating the social processes that not only produced and recognized but also normalized and sustained identity, the political promise of the term [queer] resided specifically in its broad critique of multiple social antagonisms, including race, gender, class, nationality, and religion, in addition to sexuality.
>
> (Eng, Halberstam and Muñoz 2005: 1)

II.I.I. Visual Arrangements: Theme, Motif and Symbol

The studies that employ these images as primary evidence in historical arguments attend to their *visual* arrangement, that is, their organisation as an archive according to certain visual characteristics. These visual characteristics are categorised as themes, motifs and symbols.

In her analysis of early nineteenth century French lithographs, Abigail Solomon-Godeau (1996) identifies a number of these characteristics. She

draws on the example of Achille Devéria's 1828 *Le Roman du jour* (The Fashionable Novel). In lieu of the image itself, let me provide a brief description. The lithograph depicts two young women en dishabille and seated on a sofa; one woman has bare breasts and is gazing at a book, the other reclines across her companion's knees and gazes at the viewer. Solomon-Godeau identifies a motif in this image, which she outlines as follows: "This combination of elements – eroticized femininity, book, seductive gaze, and modern decor – is frequently encountered throughout the century; obviously it was a popular motif." (Solomon-Godeau 1996: 125) What precisely defines "eroticized femininity" in its implied delineation from the "book" and the "seductive gaze" is somewhat unclear. What may be noted, however, is that "femininity" is directly associated in her analysis with the female nude, which is in turn said to signify eroticism and sexuality (Solomon-Godeau 1996: 116). Indeed most of the lithograph images in Solomon-Godeau's article depict women as nude or semi-nude.

Yet scholars' interest in the themes and motifs apparent in nineteenth-century mass-produced imagery's depiction of women does not depend on the woman's nudity. Sharon Marcus (2009) has focussed on Victorian fashion plates, most of which were originally drawn and printed in France. Importantly, while the fashion plates also put the woman's body on display, albeit clothed, they also often specifically show two women, one of whom often gazes directly at the other. Marcus (2009) attends to what she names as the homoeroticism engendered by the images' depiction of a female gaze. Here the emphasis is therefore on thematisation of the female gaze and its structuring and intensification of eroticism: the gaze of one depicted woman at another, as

well as the gaze solicited and mediated by the optical instruments that are often featured in the plates as accessories.

Further to printed lithographic imagery, the composite visual motif of the displayed woman's body and its themes are also identified in photographic imagery. Studies have attended to mid nineteenth-century *cartes de visite* photographs that portray female performers. It is worth noting here that the performers portrayed by these images were specifically "actresses at minor theatres, dance-hall girls and music-hall singers", though some such as Lydia Thompson and Adah Isaacs Menken attained notoriety and fame (Senelick 1991: 7). Laurence Senelick (1991) stresses the corporeal display offered by these images' portrayal of the performers *en rôle*. In another study of these images, Maria-Elena Buszek (2006) is interested in their arrangement alongside those that portray the same performers (her examples are Thompson and Menken) wearing contemporary Victorian dress and posed in domestic settings signified by furnishings such as chairs and desks. Further still, she considers the possibility of these *cartes*' arrangement in albums alongside other sorts of cartes images such as family portraits and actress *cartes* portraying tragediennes (for example, Adelaide Ristori).

Of the imagery made in the nineteenth-century, the composite motif of the displayed woman's body and its themes is not limited to commercial *cartes de visite* photographs of stage actresses. It is also identified in photographs of the Countess di Castiglione and Lady Clementina Hawarden. In their depiction of an individual woman in various costumes and poses, Pierre Apraxine (2000) highlights the arrangement of the photographs of Castiglione as "a series of skilfully directed roles" (Apraxine 2000: 12). Therefore, while Castiglione was

not a stage actress her photographs nonetheless evoke the thematised setting of the theatre. In her examination of the Castiglione photographs, Solomon-Godeau (1986) attends to their corporeal display of the Countess' legs as well as their depiction of "the feminine as a form of theater, of masquerade" (Solomon-Godeau 1986: 77).

Recounting how she approached the task of cataloguing the photographs of Lady Hawarden, Virginia Dodier explicitly recalls how she identified their arrangements:

> Gradually I found that far from being a random assortment, many of them could be grouped in sets of images which showed slight variations. Making educated guesses about their original context and arrangement, I identified many separate series.
>
> (Dodier 1999: 11)

Dodier is therefore careful to acknowledge the importance to attending to the photographs according to their original context and arrangement; although the point I stress here is that she does so by attending to their visual arrangement. Her study names these series as "first photographs", which are the photographs taken outdoors of the family estate, Dundrum in County Tipperary, and as "portraits", "domestic scenes" and "costume tableux" (Dodier 1999: 35-54). A further series that is not examined in her study but which is identified in the online museum catalogue is the "Orientalist" series. Carol Mavor (1999) has also attended to the visual arrangement of the Hawarden photographs. Her

analysis concentrates on the photographs that were taken in Hawarden's home studio in South Kensington, in turn foregrounding their depiction of the private domestic scene. Regarding the images of this scene, she observes that:

> Hawarden's oeuvre focuses almost entirely on her lovely adolescent daughters (Isabella Grace, Clementina, Florence Elizabeth), her collection of pretty objects (an Indian travelling cabinet, a cheval glass, a Gothic-style desk, a small wooden chair with a padded floral-patterned seat, a shell-covered box, a silver goblet, a tambourine, a concertina, a curvaceous vase), and closets of fancy dress (the breeches and tights of a page, the elaborate dress and headdress of Mary, Queen of Scots, the black lace of a Spanish dancer, the skirt and broom of Cinderella, a riding habit, the Orientalized dress of a concubine …).
>
> (Mavor 1999: xvi-xvii)

In examining the photographs, Mavor is especially interested in the "erotic visibility" of the images thereby attending to the theme of eroticised appearance and looking in the depiction of women (Mavor 1999: xxii).

Lastly, studies examining postcards of the Edwardian era foreground those that depict women according to certain visual conventions. Interestingly, these studies attend especially to symbolism in the images' depiction of women. Veronica Kelly (2004) contrasts commercial postcards of Edwardian female actresses with the earlier *cartes de visite* examined by Senelick and

Buszek. She notices that these later postcards are "less overtly sexualised" in their codings (Kelly 2004: 101). She observes further that: "The actor card might show a performer in identifiable costume, but frequently they are presented detached from specific theatrical context." (Kelly 2004: 103) Rather than offering to the viewer the explicit corporeal display of an actress *en rôle,* her analysis specifies that the postcards instead present a capricious form of symbolism. This symbolism is comprised through the actress's depiction in varied and glamorous scenarios. In addition, postcards are hand-coloured and tinselled without relevance to the original costume worn by the actress in the image. Rebecca Preston (2009) has also highlighted the symbolism of Edwardian postcards' depiction of women. By contrast to the varied and contextually detached caprice of the actress postcards in Kelly's study, she specifically attends to the symbolism of postcards that portray women, who are unidentified or named actresses, in domestic gardens. While these postcard photographs depict women in varied poses and with small objects such as garden tools, books, infants and each other, they are all explicitly taken in the thematic, symbolic setting of a domestic garden. See Appendix B. for examples of Edwardian postcards that portray a woman/women in a domestic garden.

II.I.II. A Contemporary Critical and Theoretical Context for the Emphasis on the Images' Visual Arrangement

Many studies therefore attend to the arrangement of this material according to certain visual symbols, themes and motifs. How and why are we to make sense of these visual arrangements of images?

The dominant methodology primarily treats these arranged images as representations. Importantly, postmodern theory and debate of the 1980s and 90s (when this material began to receive critical attention) largely influences this emphasis on the image as a representation. In depicting women through an extravagance of corporeal display, costumes, settings and props or small objects, the varied and yet nonetheless limited range of symbols, themes and motifs described above and visualised by these images are pertinent to postmodernism's concern with surface appearances, artifice and parody. More specifically, the images pertain to feminist postmodern theory concerned with elucidating the conceptual and historical as opposed to essential construction of femininity. If femininity, including that represented by these images, is conceptual and historical then the question is who and/or what shapes that concept, and how and indeed when?

Before surveying the historical arguments that respond to this question in the established literature, it is helpful to briefly contextualise its pertinence to feminist performance in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The studies that examine the nineteenth and early twentieth-century images are contemporaneous with the image-based work of late twentieth-century performance artists such as Cindy Sherman, Gillian Wearing, Sophie Calle and Hannah Wilke, who deliberately employ their own bodies in the photographic staging of multiple female personas and scenarios. Indeed, Pierre Apraxine (2000) explicitly contextualises the photographs of the Countess di Castiglione with the work of these later artists. He writes of the Countess:

> When events reduced her to a walk-on part, she took refuge behind a series of skilfully directed roles, using the photographic image to corroborate, sustain and publicize the legend. … Today, after more than a century has passed, we can better appreciate the originality of this attempt. Like Castiglione, artists today are attracted by photography not because they view a photograph as an irrefutable statement of reality but because they regard the medium as a malleable tool in the service of the imagination.
>
> (Apraxine 2000: 12)

Apraxine makes the analogy between the photographs of the Countess and the contemporary artworks not in order to suggest that they are the direct progenitors of the artwork produced in 80s and 90s. Rather he does so in order to assign Castiglione's photographs an originality and appropriateness where they were once considered indistinguishable from the mass of other portrait photographs taken in the commercial premises of the Mayers and Pierson studio or, conversely, eccentric and downright disturbing in their seemingly obsessive documentation of the self-image (Apraxine 2000: 11-13). Of course the Castiglione photographs differ from the others under examination insofar as they may be classified as self-portraits. However, the point I want to emphasise here is that, in the cultural, critical and theoretical context of the 1980s and 90s, femininity is not only elucidated theoretically as an imaginary concept, it is also positioned as a series of gendered roles that may be consciously performed and manipulated by a woman herself. It is significant that this contemporary

context explicitly justifies critical attendance to the nineteenth-century images because it in turn prompts and justifies the hypothesis that the earlier images' production and circulation is directly pertinent to the question of female agency.

The authors of the studies that attend to the visual arrangement of the images in question examine the material as evidence of the antecedent shaping of femininity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Crucially, in focussing on the images as representations, these studies situate them in the context of a societal and historical moment by arguing that they were produced and circulated by men and/or women.

For Abigail Solomon-Godeau (1996; 1986), femininity, as represented by the photographs of the Countess di Castiglione and the French lithographs of her analyses, is a social and psychosexual concept shaped through a confluence of certain fetishisms on the woman's body. These fetishisms comprise the commodity fetish of Marxist theory, the reifying properties of an object's possession by an individual consumer, and the psychic fetish of traditional psychoanalytic theory, the object that signifies the drama of sexual difference by warding off the castration anxiety posed by the female body to the male. Solomon-Godeau (1996; 1986) points out that the commodity fetish is pertinent to the imagery in two possible senses: first, many of the images (in this case, lithographs, but also cartes-de-visite and postcards) were actually commercially available for purchase by a consumer; second, the visual themes and motifs solicit the viewer's imaginative possession of the setting in which the woman is depicted. The psychic fetish is also emphasised as pertinent to the images in two possible senses: first, the displayed woman's body (signifier of

sexual difference) is presented to the viewer as a possession; second, the theatricality of the thematised settings, the various feminine costumes and the conventional visual repertoire of gestures evokes the traditional psychoanalyst Joan Rivière's theory of womanliness as masquerade, an extrapolation of psychic fetishism that posits women's complicity in warding off castration anxiety by performing womanliness. Solomon-Godeau's analysis of the Castiglione photographs also considers the fetishising properties of the photograph: "a commemorative trace of an absent object, the still picture of a frozen look, a screen for the projective play of the spectator's consciousness." (Solomon-Godeau 1986: 67-68)

What I want to emphasise and indeed problematise is that her analyses go so far as to hypothetically attribute the subjectivities of actual men and women of the nineteenth-century to the production of these fetishisms and their shaping of femininity. For example, in her analysis of Devéria's lithograph, *Le Roman du jour* (whose themes and motifs I summarised above) Solomon-Godeau suggests that the image was made with the intention of principally attracting a male consumer. She writes:

> While narrative is relatively minimal, an important aspect of that narrative is the solicitous look at the viewer, presumed male by artist, lithographer, printer, and publisher. … Although it would be wrong to entirely discount a female consumer or viewer (and there were certainly both), it is nonetheless fair to say that *Le Roman du jour*'s address is deliberately pitched to the male consumer who is interpolated by the blonde woman's look.

(Solomon-Godeau 1996: 123)

If the image's address, specifically the look of the depicted woman directly at the viewer, is "deliberately pitched to the male consumer" then we must in turn presume that it is "deliberately pitched" by Devéria and, as Solomon-Godeau puts it, "his brethren" (Solomon-Godeau 1996: 125). Hence the study makes a somewhat implicit but nonetheless powerful historical argument that a male artist produced the image of femininity *for* men. Speaking of the lithographs of which *Le Roman du jour* is an example, Solomon-Godeau then describes what these images offer to the male consumer as fetish objects:

> Compliant, chic, titillating, these icons of femininity are significant because they are the first mass-produced commodities designed to purvey 'the feminine' and because they offer to the purchaser more than the fantasy of possession of the woman (or women). In other words, what is equally on offer is the fantasy of possession of the world the print depicts – *mondaine* but private, fashionable but not oppressively aristocratic, 'realistic,' and thus of this world.

(Solomon-Godeau 1996: 123-125)

In this analysis, then, femininity was historically shaped in the nineteenth-century by fetishisms, which were namely produced by men for men.

The possible involvement of female subjectivity in the historical shaping of femininity is investigated in Solomon-Godeau's analysis of the Countess di Castiglione photographs. Here the photographs are found to evidence the following argument: in spite of her efforts, the Countess is denied female subjectivity and self-representation by "the power of patriarchy to register its desire within the designated space of the feminine." (Solomon-Godeau 1986: 67) That is to say, in the images' depiction of a woman through the conventions of eroticised femininity and corporeal display, especially of her legs, the convergence of fetishisms on her body underwrites any claim the Countess may have staked in the images for herself as an individual woman whose corporeal gestures, possessions, imagination and passions (or obsessions) they ostensibly document and portray.

Other studies that have attended to the visual arrangements of the images' codes, themes and motifs have placed more positive emphasis on the female viewpoint. In his analysis of theatre *cartes de visite*, Senelick (1991) agrees with Solomon-Godeau's finding that femininity was shaped by fetishisms in the nineteenth-century. While I am specifically concerned with the images, as context to Senelick's argument, I must note that in nineteenth-century society the shaping of femininity by a confluence of fetishisms invokes associations with the very real professions of prostitution and acting, since both entail the corporeal display of women. Where Solomon-Godeau focusses on the supremacy of male dominance over the woman in this context, Senelick also considers the potential impact of the images on the subjectivities of actual women in their society. He writes:

> The new studio rhetoric of attitudes and ornaments assumed by actresses and demi-mondaines helped distinguish them from 'decent' women, and in so doing advertised the *illusion* that they controlled their own body and its pleasures.
>
> (Senelick 1991: 7; my emphasis)

Hence, he argues:

> Photography thereby reinforced the traditional division of female sexuality into respectable woman and woman devoted to man's enjoyment, and the wide diffusion of images contributed to the regulation of female behaviour. But it also provided opportunity, within narrow bounds, for self-assertion. Card portraits, like prostitution, could further an actress' career, so that poses in photographs, like those in brothel showrooms, violated socially acceptable stances for women not only in the exposure of limbs and undergarments, but in the cool, even impudent gaze at the viewer.
>
> (Senelick 1991: 7-8)

Therefore, like Solomon-Godeau, Senelick sees the social impact of the images as largely serving to control female sexuality and behaviour, but he also locates a marginally subversive potential that depends on the subtlety of the pose in

relation to the visual conventions, which is personal to the interests of the individual woman.

Regarding the same sort of material, but with the inclusion of photographic *cartes de visite* that portray the actress in a domestic setting, Marie-Elena Buszek (2006) takes the subversive potential of the images for women in mid nineteenth-century society further. Senelick (1991) and Solomon-Godeau (1996; 1986) see the producer and consumer of femininity as predominantly male. On the other hand, Buszek considers the ways in which they were also female. She cites the actress' awareness of her social status as a woman and further attends to the possibility of the *cartes de visite* photographs' arrangement in women's parlour albums alongside others of actresses in domestic settings as well as more traditional portraits of family members. By direct contrast to Senelick's argument, viewed in such circumstances the images' portrayal of an actress in both theatrical *and* domestic settings is argued to have destabilised traditional binary roles for women, an effect that Buszek argues was the actress' intention in posing for the images. It is important to observe here that, although this argument draws on the *possibility* of the images' material arrangement in an album, there is no physical original album or arrangement to speak of. Rather, the argument is based on attention to the images' visual arrangement according to the themes of theatricality and domesticity.

The role of female subjectivity in the historical shaping of femininity is the even more intense focus of studies that have attended to the visual arrangement of the themes and motifs presented by the fashion plates and Lady Hawarden's photographs. In attending to the visual corporeal display of

women depicted by fashion plate images, Sharon Marcus (2009) emphasises that these images were often produced by female artists and consumed by women in Victorian society. She writes: "Produced by women, for women, fashion plates solicited a female gaze for images that put women, their bodies, and the objects that adorned them on display." (Marcus 2009: 119) But, according to this analysis, the women who looked at these images were not merely looking at inert passive bodies on display. As I have noted above, Marcus is especially interested in the fashion plates' depiction of homoerotic looking between women. As such the female gaze of the fashion plates' viewer, an actual Victorian woman among many, is positioned as the real life counterpart to the imaginary gazes of the women depicted in the imagery: "Fashion plates were images of women designed for female viewers, and that homoerotic structure of looking is intensified by the content and structure of the images themselves." (Marcus 2009: 121) Hence there is an analogy between the gaze/s of the women depicted by the image and the gaze of the female viewer at the fashion plate. For Marcus, then, the fashion plates testify to the argument that Victorian women were actively engaged in the historical shaping of femininity by participating in a cultural and societal structure of homoerotic looking.

Carol Mavor (1999) has also investigated this structure of looking between women in Victorian culture and society. According to Mavor (1999), Hawarden produced the femininity depicted by the visual themes and motifs of Hawarden's photographs. Further, she views that femininity as intimately representative of the specifically female relationships shared between Hawarden and her daughters. She suggests: "One might say that Hawarden

documented a female world of love between mother and daughter and between daughters as sisters." (Mavor 1999: xxii)

In the studies of the Edwardian postcard images, female subjectivity is argued to have historically shaped femininity through the visual symbolism of the image. In attending to the symbolism of the actress postcard, specifically in their detachment of the actress' figure from the theatre context, Kelly (2004) argues the postcards are distinguished from earlier *cartes de visite* on account of their presentation of "a fantasy of glamour and distinction, and a free-floating sense of a pleasingly constructed and arresting personality." (Kelly 2004: 103) Her analysis acknowledges the male construction of this representation of femininity, alluding to its fetishised production in the industrialised, consumer-orientated context of a modern early twentieth-century society. But she also emphasises that:

> This cultural idealization of the feminine divinity was a willed creation as much of women – whether as theatre audience, photographic studio labourers, or subjects flexing their new consumer power in the mass market – as of Svengali-like male managers, as women worldwide eagerly adapted and consolidated the image of the theatre star as the modern icon of subjectivity.
>
> (Kelly 2004: 113)

Rebecca Preston (2009) highlights that the production of representations of women in Edwardian Britain spread to become a practice of the middle-class

domestic household. In her analysis of postcards that portray women in their gardens, actresses and non-actresses alike, she argues that middle-class Edwardian women employed the photographic postcard to produce symbolic representations of femininity that may have contributed to their emancipation. She writes:

> domestic postcard photography and culture assisted in the recognition of all women as active subjects in the early twentieth century, while their presence in the garden annexed a symbolically complex space for the performance of women's new social and political identities.
>
> (Preston 2009: 797)

Neither home nor theatre, the garden is presented as a symbolically liminal setting in the representation of femininity.

Before I move on to the further steps in this literature review, here I summarise points demonstrated thus far. First, I have shown that the studies arrange the images according to their visual characteristics. In doing so these studies helpfully identify the visual motifs, themes and symbols. In summarising the range of these visual characteristics across different sorts of material images I have drawn attention to points of comparison and divergence between the examples. Second, I have situated the studies' emphasis on the visual arrangements within the contemporary cultural, critical and theoretical context of the 1980s and 90s, when the material was brought to critical

attention. I have explained why the images are pertinent to this period's critical interest in visual representations and performative femininity. I have also outlined the studies' contribution to these contemporary interests by arguing how the material images were involved in the antecedent shaping of femininity in the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century. I take two key findings forward from the established literature: first, the identification of the images' visual symbols, themes and motifs, and second, the critical attention to how the images historically shaped femininity as an imaginary construct. However, what I challenge is the tendency in the literature to explain the images' shaping of femininity as a product of the subjectivities of men and women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the following sections I firstly explore the historiographical implications of this dominant mode of analysis. I then identify what I view to be the problems in its historical narrative.

II.I.III. Time and Space: Historiographical Implications

These studies have rightly analysed the images in order to investigate the ways in which femininity was shaped in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They have drawn critical attention to material that had previously been neglected and thought trivial or arbitrary. By attending to the visual arrangements of the images, they have made it clear that the material is coded and that its widespread production and circulation in its society gives shape to woman and femininity as a societal and historical concept.

In surveying this literature, I call into question the efficacy of an argument that explains this material's historical shaping of femininity as a product of male and/or female subjectivity. I am not convinced that we can

confidently and helpfully claim that men and, or, women produced and consumed these images in a historical society. My suspicions are raised on account of the dominant methodology and its privileging of visual representation over the material itself. I am not suggesting that the studies in the established literature entirely bypass the materiality of the images: they do not. Rather I seek to clarify how a methodology that focusses primarily on the images' visual arrangements specifically informs our understanding of their production and circulation in a society and the historical shaping of femininity. In doing so, I explain why I consider a focus on the material in terms of its visual arrangements an inadequate approach to the analysis of this particular set of images. In the following section I survey how this dominant approach affects how the material is situated in the context of a particular societal and historical moment, that is, as images which circulated among the members of that society.

As I observed above, these studies emerged in response to postmodernist theory, which chiefly understands reality in terms of its representation by signs and texts. In this case the signs and texts are constructed from the images' visual symbols, themes and motifs. Just as one may traditionally approach a painting or the text in a novel, the task of situating this text in a society raises an approach that defines the materiality of the images themselves according to the question of *who* produced and circulated them. In a heteronormative society where gender is binary and organised according to a hierarchy, it follows that the question of who produced and circulated this text pertains to men and women. So, as I have illustrated above, in aiming to explain the historical shaping of femininity, the above studies situate these codes within a society of

men and women. In other words, the codes are understood in terms of how they would have been produced, viewed and read and therefore circulated by men and/or women in western societies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Such a gendered and sexed societal context invokes a traditional theoretical model whereby everyday life is informed by two different viewpoints which entail particular conceptions of what it is to be a subject in time and space. As Naomi Schor puts it:

> Two widely shared but diametrically opposed views inform what theory we have on the everyday: one, which we might call the feminine or feminist, though it is not necessarily held by women or self-described feminists, links the everyday with the daily rituals of private life carried out within the domestic sphere traditionally presided over by women; the other, the masculine or masculinist, sites the everyday in the public spaces and spheres dominated especially, but not exclusively, in modern Western bourgeois societies by men. According to the one, the everyday is made up of the countless repetitive gestures and small practices that fall under the heading of what the existentialists called the contingent. According to the other, the everyday is made up of the chance encounters of the streets: the hero is not the housewife but the *flâneur*.
>
> (Schor 1992: 188)

The text of the images is argued to have direct consequences for female and male subjectivities insofar as it is produced and circulated within the private, domestic sphere and/or the public, civic sphere.

With an emphasis on the male viewpoint, and indeed the rendering of the image by a male artist, Solomon-Godeau (1996) describes the lithographs in the civic sphere as materials that were purveyed in shops alongside other sorts that depict women such as "pinups, images of demimondaines and other female celebrities, fashion plates, [and] titillating erotica" (Solomon-Godeau 1996: 116). As such, she suggests that: "It is as though the real absence of women as actors in the bourgeois civil sphere was filled by fantasies – or constellations of fantasies – about femininity." (Solomon-Godeau 1996: 117) Further, in a point that demonstrates how the images explicitly portray *women in the public sphere*, Solomon-Godeau observes their depiction of sexualised hierarchical characterisations of working women in the city:

> The *lorette,* for example (thus named by Nestor Roqueplan, after the new quarter of Paris developing around Notre Dame de Lorette supposedly populated by prostitutes) was imagined as a pretty working-class woman who, unlike the *grisette* [another feminine type], sold her favors.
>
> (Solomon-Godeau 1996: 141)

Such characterisations also included theatrical types such as "the *rat* (the young dancers in the Opéra corps de ballet …)" (Solomon-Godeau 1996: 142). In this context, then, the fantasies of femininity pertain to the bodies of women in the streets and on the stage as well as to the precise corporeal display presented by the images themselves. Therefore, the images are contextualised in the male-governed public sphere where women are fetishised objects of desire and not subjects. It should be emphasised, then, that this argument's explanation of the shaping of femininity as the product of a confluence of fetishisms at a particular moment in time sites that system of production in a public sphere. Here the woman is a commodity on the market that augments desire for other commodities. However, it is also takes into account the concomitant privacy of the fantasy: the opportunity to take possession of the imaginary woman and its psychic production as a means of warding off anxieties to do with a threat of loss and difference. These operational faculties of the images are thus situated within the broad societal and historical moment of the burgeoning commodity culture of nineteenth-century industrial capitalism. Accordingly, Solomon-Godeau argues that "the range of fantasies about femininity that occupy such a conspicuous place within cultural production operate to contain – or exceed – complex and ambivalent responses to large-scale social transformations." (Solomon-Godeau 1996: 142)

The number of studies (Marcus 2009; Senelick 1991; Buszek 2006; Mavor 1999; Kelly 2004; Preston 2009) that contextualise the images by focussing on the female viewpoint describe their production and circulation in the public, civil sphere and/or the private, domestic sphere. Here the images are argued to have had consequences for female subjectivity to the extent that they

broke or actively shaped *social norms* within those spheres. For example, Senelick argues that, despite what Solomon-Godeau identifies as the commoditisation of the woman's body in the public sphere, actresses could marginally assert themselves by striking bodily poses that violated the norms of portrayals of other public figures such as "those of royal, political, military, ecclesiastical and mercantile dignitaries." (Senelick 1991: 2) In reference to a series of cartes-de-visite portraits of minor actresses, he writes that:

> Poses that had been stiff, formal, austere and chaste gave way to extravagant and eccentric posturing. Actors could ogle the camera over their shoulders, do the splits on the floor, scale ladders and chairs and otherwise thumb their noses at the spectator.
>
> (Senelick 1991: 2)

Buszek (2006) argues that such means of self-assertion on the part of the actress was not only confined to the public sphere but also entered the private, domestic sphere, since *cartes de visite* were viewed in parlour albums by bourgeois women in their homes. Therefore, insofar as actual women were in their homes looking at series of images of other women posed extravagantly in various costumes as well as in domestic settings, as opposed to merely performing their dutiful roles as wives and mothers, the images are argued to have violated social norms in the private sphere too.

In the main the production and circulation of the images in separate spheres also forms the shape of the historical arguments in the analyses of the

fashion plates, photographs and postcards. It is worth pointing out that, where the fashion plates and photographs are situated as having been viewed and consumed in the private sphere but are portrayals of public figures and celebrities, the postcards are circulated in the public sphere of the postal system.

II.I.IV. Ambiguity, Generalisations and Contradictions in the Dominant Historical Arguments

In the following section I identify the key problems with this mode of analysing the images' production and circulation in their societies. The previous chapter on the provenance of the material images demonstrated that we mostly know when and how the images were originally made and by whom. However, the above survey suggests that the historical argument that the images were produced and circulated by men and women in the public and private spheres of their societies selects its theory primarily on the basis of our present day reading and identification of their visual arrangements. To put it explicitly, I therefore contend that we cannot claim with epistemological and ontological certainty that women and men in the past viewed, read and identified with these visual arrangements. What does surely emerge in the historical arguments and their gendered spatial and temporal contextualisation of the images is a certain ambiguity between the cultural sign and its referent, between Woman and a woman.

A good example of this ambiguity is to be found in the currency of a definition the pinup image across two separate studies. Solomon-Godeau's

definition of the prototypical pinup helpfully delineates this sort of image from those examined here. She writes:

> By pinup, I am referring to an image type that could be relatively deluxe … or relatively crude … but in either case was predicated on the relative isolation of its feminine motif through the reduction or outright elimination of narrative, literary or mythological allusion. … this decontextualization, reduction or distillation of the image of femininity to a subject in and of itself had a venerable lineage with immediate precursors in the rococo.
>
> (Solomon-Godeau 1996: 131)

This definition would differentiate the pinup from the sorts of images in question on the basis that the latter do show allusions to narrative, literature and myth. Whether or not one finds this to be an adequate definition of the pinup, there are two crucial points to highlight from this quotation: the first is that the term "subject" refers to the subject that is ostensibly depicted by the image, which is itself a representation, and second, that that the image of femininity is a fantasy explained, as I have shown, in Solomon-Godeau's analysis as a product of a confluence of fetishisms in the society of the nineteenth-century. Buszek (2006) employs this definition in her study of the pinup as a genre where she analyses *cartes de visite* that portray minor actresses. Here the definition of the pinup as a type of image of femininity is presented with the insertion of the term "representational": the

"decontextualization, reduction, or distillation of the image of femininity to a [representational] subject in and of itself" (Buszek 2006: 11). As such the image of femininity is treated as a representation *of* actual women in its society. It may be observed that this reading of images that depict women is precisely what Solomon-Godeau seeks to critique, since she states the need, following Griselda Pollock, for attendance to the woman-as-image as opposed to images *of* women (Solomon-Godeau 1996: 114; 128; Pollock 1987). But my aim in highlighting this important difference in the definition of the prototypical pinup is not to simply classify it as a misinterpretation or misrepresentation. Rather, at this stage, I want to emphasise its clear illustration of the ambiguity between the sign and the referent when the production and circulation of the images is contextualised within and explained by a past society of men and women. Situated in this social and historical context, the woman may be specified as imaginary but she is also a visual subject whose visibility may nonetheless be convincingly read as pertaining to actual women.

It is not only the ambiguity of the dominant historical arguments that demands critical attention but also the ensuing generalisations and contradictions concerning male and female subjectivity. In taking the view that men and, or, women produced and circulated the images in their original societies the studies tend to generalise male and female subjectivities around the conventions of the images' visual symbols, themes and motifs. For example, the analysis that focuses on the male viewpoint implies that men of the nineteenth-century were sexually attracted to women (Solomon-Godeau 1996). On the other hand, the studies that focus on the female viewpoint tend to

suggest that women were cannily exploiting, or otherwise simply identifying with, the libidinal male gaze. Contradictions also emerge from these generalisations in the sense that the argument that men primarily produced the images of femininity is contradicted by the opposite claim made from the female viewpoint. For example, Buszek's argument that women's production and circulation of *cartes de visite* portraying actresses actively destabilised the normative roles of "true" private woman and "vulgar" public women is contradicted by Senelick's argument that the same *cartes de visite* in fact *reinforced* those binary roles for women.

Lastly, in this survey of the established literature and its historical arguments, it is helpful to take a look at studies that have employed these sorts of materials as secondary evidence. Studies that draw on the images as a secondary source material also attend to the visual arrangements. However, they focus less on the production and circulation of the images themselves in space. Rather the approach to the material is more concentrated on the image as a representation. It may be observed that there is nevertheless a tendency to contextualise the image as if it represents the subjectivities and identities of men and/or women in its original society. For example, as I noted in my introduction, Emily Apter (1996) has attended to Orientalism in women's performance of fin-de-siècle Paris. Though her study does not exactly refer to its material as an "image" or even "imagistic", it does focus on the Orientalist stereotype which entails the presentation of the woman's body in a vaguely oriental costume and setting (for example, see Figure 1). Further, her study presents what looks to be a *cartes de visite* portraying Sarah Bernhardt in the title role of Victor Sardou's production of *Cléopâtre* (1891) as secondary

evidence of the Orientalist stereotype in the performance of the period. Apter (1996) is specifically interested in the performativity of the orientalist stereotype as an enacted pose that, as she argues, both unsettled and appointed identity in fin-de-siècle society. Her argument explicitly attributes the production of this phenomenon to the women who are argued to have enacted Orientalism onstage and sees this stereotype as a feminist means of subtly "outing" a sapphic lesbian sexuality. She writes:

> Orientalist stereotypes were used as means of partially or semi-covertly outing sapphic love. Colette's outing of her erotic partnership with the Marquise de Belboeuf in *Rêve d'Egypte* may be seen, in this regard, as of a piece with Mikhail Fokhine's choreographed renditions of *Cléopâtre* … and *Schéhérazade* in 1908 and 1910 respectively for the Ballet Russes. … What is particularly interesting in the case of Rubenstein and Colette is the use of Orientalism as an erotic cipher, a genre of theatricality in which acting 'Oriental' becomes a form of outing, and outing is revealed to be thoroughly consonant with putting on an act
>
> (Apter 1996: 19-20)

As such her argument ascribes female performers such as Colette and Ida Rubinstein a particular female subjectivity, sexuality and indeed political agency in their societies. Hence she concludes: "Simultaneously subversive and hegemonic, unfixing and status quo, stereotypes render sexual identity

politics legible through adhesive, situationally motivated fictions of culture." (Apter 1996: 31)

I agree with the thrust of Apter's argument, that is, its emphasis on the fictive performativity of the Orientalist stereotype in the culture of the fin-de-siècle. However, I find the historical argument that women intentionally enacted the Orientalist stereotype in order to out lesbian identity problematic insofar as it implies that the image of a female performer in Orientalist costume and setting generally signifies an historical lesbian identity and subjectivity.

My survey has highlighted the dominant approach to the analysis of the material in question, which focusses principally on its visual arrangements and situates its production and circulation in a society of men and women. I have drawn attention to what I view as the crucial problems with this mode of analysis and its historical narrative, namely that it tends to result in ambiguity, generalisations and contradictions concerning the subjectivities and identities of women and men. The aim of the following section is to provide sufficient critical, theoretical and historical context to justify why and how I attend to these problems.

II.I.V. Established Means of Addressing the Problems from Postcolonial and Gay and Lesbian Studies

Importantly, ambiguities, contradictions and generalisations such as these have been identified and addressed elsewhere by scholars who specify the complexities of how lived identities and subjectivities have historically shaped femininity. Anne McClintock's authoritative study of imperialism, race, gender

and sexuality in the nineteenth century is helpful here. McClintock stresses a critical awareness of women's complicity in the progressive ideology of industrial imperialism, what she names as "gender power" (McClintock 1995: 8). She cautions: "white women were not the hapless onlookers of empire but were ambiguously complicit both as colonizers and colonized, privileged and restricted, acted upon and acting." (McClintock 1995: 6) Her study also stresses the need to critique two further points: first, a tendency in Eurocentric feminist literature to treat women and men universally and transhistorically thereby positing the existence of "woman" as a singular category; and secondly, a tendency to couple gender to sexuality thereby isolating representations of femininity from masculinity (McClintock 1995: 7-11). Moreover, she identifies and names the contradiction of the woman who is both true and vulgar as a historical and societal phenomenon in the nineteenth century. Since the dominant historical arguments on the images' production and circulation position the woman ambiguously as *both* subject and object, generalises female and male subjectivity, and contains the contradiction of the true *and* vulgar woman, it is clear that these points of critique are pertinent to the material under examination; yet they are neglected in the dominant approach to its analysis.

In a separate study situated within the field of gay and lesbian studies, Laura Doan (2001) challenges the tendency to approach photographic portraits as evidence of a subject's existence at a particular societal and historical moment. Moreover, she highlights the eventuality that this generalising tendency is the outcome of our contemporary readings of such images, and that it tends to stabilise contemporary definitions of identities. Her study is

specifically concerned with the photographic portraits of Radclyffe Hall, Una Troubridge, Mary Allen, and the artist Gluck, which employ a different set of codes in their depiction of women and femininity and were made in 1920s, but the principles of its argument also pertain to the material in question and its historical narrative. For example, she critiques the historians that view the images in her study as representations of "butch", so-called mannish lesbians, writing that:

> these examples of the critical analysis of lesbian visibility and identities in the early twentieth century inevitably focus on what we – as contemporary viewers – see when we look at such photographs. And, as a result, contextual specificity … is conspicuous by its absence.
>
> (Doan 2001: 165)

Doan is crucially aware that such photographs are not only artefacts of a historical period; they are also preserved objects that can provoke the imagination of their viewers and readers in the present. If unacknowledged and bypassed without critique then the latter can in turn affect a historical narrative. Doan quotes Jack (Judith) Halberstam as emphasising the vital point that:

> 'neither … John (Radclyffe) Hall, Colonel Barker, Robert (Mary) Allen, the women in Havelock Ellis's case histories nor their lovers would have identified as lesbians.' When contemporary critics

> ‘describe them unproblematically as such … [there is a tendency to] stabilize contemporary definitions of lesbianism.’
>
> (Doan 2001: 166)

That is to say, historical affirmations of contemporary readings of images that portray these women can fix and stabilise our concepts and definitions of lesbian identity.

It is indeed conspicuous that the studies examining the earlier conventional images of femininity do not problematise the tendency to simply treat them as evidence of subjects in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Only Carol Mavor (1999) acknowledges that the images, specifically the photographs of Lady Hawarden, prompt her to fantasy. However, in my view, she does not sufficiently problematise her contemporary readings of the photographs, not least her use of lesbian and queer terminology to refer to their subjects. She views the thematised homoeroticism in the photographs as the product of Hawarden’s imagination, which centres on the “queerness” of her daughters’ feminine adolescence. She relates this “queerness” to her own fantasies in response to the images. The contemporary readings are therefore contextualised as if in a transhistorical fantasy with Hawarden and her daughters themselves. Importantly, however, this fantasy is shaped by the visual themes and motifs of the images. It is therefore very much focussed on the visual conventions of the woman’s body, and the costumes and objects that are depicted in the photographs. For example, Mavor writes:

> Thereby, for me and anyone less pampered (psychologically, materially) than the Hawarden girls (that certainly would be almost everyone), Hawarden's queerness is not available as lived experience, but rather as the fantasy of, the desire for, adolescence as incommensurable beauty.
>
> (Mavor 1999: xxxi)

To an extent, then, her study specifies that the images are *not* evidence of the factual existence of lesbianism. Indeed she goes so far as to assert: "Hawarden was not a homosexual woman" (Mavor 1999: xxii). But this specification does not critique how the contemporary reading of the images, which yokes their visual themes and motifs of femininity to queerness and lesbian sexuality, affects their historicisation. Rather, as a negation, it merely serves to reductively imply that a homosexual woman is defined by a woman's physical engagement in a sexual act with another woman, which the images certainly do not evidence. At the same time, in the context Mavor provides for the photographs, their visualisation of homoeroticism between women is simply defined as the "queerness" of a transhistorical female imagination, an imagination that is shaped by the feminine conventions of the image and whose subject is the adolescent girl. Therefore, what concerns me about the reading of the images as "queer" and "sapphic" in a context that explains their production in terms of a generalised transhistorical female imagination is that it risks the stabilisation of a contemporary definition of the queer "femme", namely as subject whose object signifies a lack. The queerness of femininity formulates

conscious, embodied, lived subjectivities for women who may or may not identify as lesbian, and much of the effort in claiming this subject position is in enabling its diversity (Volcano and Dahl 2008). As such it seems to me that a generalised explanation of women's production of queer femininity as a transhistorical fantasy warrants a degree of caution.

Epistemologically, McClintock (1995) and Doan (2001) are concerned with examining the diverse and complex lived subjectivities and agency of men and women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In critiquing the historical arguments in the established literature that directly relate the material images under investigation to the subjectivities of men and women, I heed the identified cautions that they raise through this effort. However, both McClintock (1995) and Doan (2001) diversify and nuance their subjects by attending to various sources of evidence. I emphasise the images that depict women as particular materials we interact with as observers, and moreover as materials whose choice is governed by the principles of exemplarity and idiosyncrasy, and whose readings are determined by certain material, aesthetic and ideological conventions. Therefore, epistemologically, the methodology I propose for their analysis does not treat them as evidence of lived, conscious subjects, whether historical or contemporary. In the following section I focus more intensely on the literature that foremost attends carefully to what I delineated in my introduction as scenographic concerns: questions of materiality, temporality, scale and how the body is positioned in space.

II.II. A Review of the Scenographic Literature

II.II.I. Insights From Theatre and Performance Scholarship

Studies in the field of theatre and performance that have approached archive materials by attending critically to their arrangement tease out historiographical insights that are pertinent to the materials under investigation. In discussing his approach to writing a history of theatre and performance, Christopher Baugh (2005) remarks on the playfulness and pleasure of constructing an arrangement of archive materials to make the solemn point that, in the production of a written history, there can be "no final archive, no definitive arrangement" (Baugh 2005: xv). He cautions: "We must beware the temptation to try and tell the final truth" (Baugh 2005: xv). He therefore carefully acknowledges his reflexive critical position as a researcher who has chosen to focus his investigation on *a* particular arrangement of material, rightly stating that: "Constructing a new history of theatre and performance must always involve caution, power and responsibility." (Baugh 2005: xvii)

In her autobiographical study of the archivist Gabrielle Enthoven, whose work and collection of performing arts material led to the establishment of the Theatre and Performance Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum, Kate Dorney (2014) brings the arrangement of archive materials to attention for a different reason. She emphasises Enthoven's original acquisitions and means of arranging the materials of her collection so that historians may better understand how to engage with the archive today.

To explain how and why I take these arguments forward, I should note that these studies' different emphases on the arrangement of archive material relate to the particular sorts of material and the specific contexts of the investigation. Baugh (2005) is concerned with twentieth-century technologies of performance, whereas Dorney (2014) is concerned with the performing arts' material in Enthoven's collection. It makes sense that Baugh (2005) is keen to stress that his selection and arrangement of material is inevitably partial, since he writes a history whose scope includes materials he omits. Likewise Dorney (2014) emphasises Enthoven's original means of arranging her materials because she is concerned with historical origins of the archives of V&A's Theatre and Performance Department.

With regard to the particular material of my investigation and its context, I take these studies' arguments forward in a different vein. For me, attention to the original arrangements of the archive materials in question does not mean attending to a historical subject's active means of arranging them. Rather it means closely attending to *the* original arrangements themselves. Examples of the original arrangements under investigation are a fashion plate in a Victorian women's magazine, *cartes de visite* in their original album and photographs of an actress in an Edwardian theatre brochure. Moreover, like Baugh (2005), I also stress an awareness that an arrangement of material is indefinite, and of the position of pleasure, power and responsibility the arranging of archive material bestows. However, for me, these points are not merely pertinent as general cautions concerning the researcher and historian's position of authority, though they are also that. I view them as a fundamental condition of the sorts of material under investigation, and its ongoing circulation in its society. While

the material that forms an arrangement is incomplete or indefinite, it is nevertheless worth pointing out that it is *sufficient* to constitute *an* archive. Therefore, in the investigation of this material, I employ a methodology that attends to its original arrangements but also has a means of critiquing its *ongoing* circulation of a position of pleasure, power and, if the subject is aware and cautious, responsibility. In this respect, in addition to the original arrangements I also attend to arrangements of material that I would argue are not original to the period when the material was made. I characterise these contemporary arrangements in terms of how the material is arranged according to its visual conventions, as illustrated in the above review of the established analyses.

II.II.II. The Cultural, Societal and Historical Context of This Thesis

In the investigation of this material I have so far proposed a methodology that attends critically to both materiality and ephemerality, and in doing so focuses on both original and contemporary arrangements. I have specified that I focus on the original arrangements themselves as opposed to their arrangement *by* a historical subject. I have also specified that I focus on contemporary arrangements as a fundamental condition of the sorts of material under investigation. My argument for this approach is supported by the particular cultural, societal and historical context in which I situate this material. This context is principally informed by established knowledge of three modes of cultural production in nineteenth-century society that are highly pertinent to the material under investigation yet are neglected or bypassed in the dominant

historical arguments: first, the cultural critique of trivial material, second, mass techniques of observation, and third, theatricality. I argue this established knowledge is important and helpful here because its extrapolation can elucidate the norms of how nineteenth-century society specifically engaged in and with the production of these sorts of material. Crucially, these norms or conventions are historically situated, gendered and involve relations of power. However, they do not straightforwardly attribute the production of the material in its original society to *a* gendered subject.

In situating the material in this context, my approach and rationale therefore differs in a fundamental respect from that of Baugh (2005), Dorney (2014) et al., which is in the treatment of archive material as evidence of *a* singular history. It also differs fundamentally from that of the dominant historical arguments on the particular sorts of material under investigation, and indeed the dominant historical arguments on other pertinent sorts of materials such as Victorian women's albums, and mass-made graphic and photographic imagery that portrays women through different sets of codes as New Women, "butch" or masculine lesbians, servants, or indeed other subjects, including men (see Roberts 2002; Doan 2001; McClintock 1995). To stress, I am *not* concerned with the lived experience, identities and work of historical subjects (whether male or female or queer), and I do not view this material as historical evidence in the traditional sense of primary and secondary source material. However, I am not suggesting that the material under investigation is somehow devoid of the context of a particular societal and historical moment. In the following paragraphs I outline and explain how I situate this material historically by extrapolating the established knowledge of certain modes of

cultural production in the nineteenth-century that are pertinent to this material. In doing so I detail my rationale and methodology for the analyses to follow.

By comparison to traditional forms of art and culture, these sorts of materials, namely mass-made commercial graphic and photographic imagery, are what Naomi Schor termed in her study of postcards, "disdained archival materials" (Schor 1992: 192). The disdainful treatment of this everyday material is not arbitrary. Rather we see its evidence across time periods and forums: from Baudelaire in his *The Painter of Modern Life* to comments from male journalists in the early twentieth-century to Walter Benjamin's notes in his "Materials for 'Arcades'" (Baudelaire 2010; Schor 1992; Benjamin 1999). Significantly, this treatment of the material tends to also impart it a feminine gender. For example, Baudelaire draws on fashion plates that specifically depict women, and Schor observes a comment from a journalist, written in 1907 which claimed that: "'The Postcard has always been a feminine vice.'" (Schor 1992: 188) In providing a rationale for the investigation of such supposedly trivial material, many studies, notably including Schor (1992), take an anthropocentric approach to its feminine cultural and social status. That is to say, the production and circulation of the material is contextualised primarily in terms of human time and space. I outlined this approach in the previous review in terms of how the images are contextualised in a society where everyday life is defined according to the regimes of a male public sphere or a female private sphere. Here I should like to point out that it tends to elevate the material from its trivial material status to a position of significance justified by its supposed pertinence to the lives and identities of men and women in its original societies. Susan Stewart's work on the narratives of objects is an exception: she

emphatically identifies the material of her study as feminine and trivial (or non-authoritative) without assuming that it then operates in society according to human time and space. She writes:

> If authority is invested in domains such as the marketplace, the university, or the state, it is necessary that exaggeration, fantasy, and fictiveness in general be socially placed within the domains of anti- and nonauthority: the feminine, the childish, the mad, the senile, for example.
>
> (Stewart 2007: xiii)

Stewart's work is expressly concerned with how the conventions of descriptions and certain social classifications of everyday material objects, such as the 'souvenir' and the 'collection', s*pecifically mediate* time and space through the production of certain narratives. As such, her work is concerned with the narratives that *mediate us as subjects* in everyday life. Interestingly, this question of the mediated subject is also a question of alienation, since its production "both invents and distances its object" (Stewart 2007: ix). Her elucidation of the narratives of the description, the 'souvenir' and the 'collection' provides apt tools for the examination of the material images under investigation. This is especially the case considering my emphasis on the specific arrangements of the material images: a fashion plate in a Victorian magazine is accompanied by a close description, an Edwardian image

portraying an actress is enclosed in a souvenir brochure, and photographs portraying the Countess di Castiglione constitute a collection, for example.

While Stewart situates her study within the economic context of capitalism, she does not provide a specific historical context for this everyday material realm. In thinking about what this context may be, I return to Schor's interest in the trivial and the feminine. By contrast to her study of postcards, Schor (1987) takes a more readerly and objectcentric approach in her examination of texts of literary and art criticism. She namely investigates the aesthetics of the detail as a hallmark of realism. But it is her work's fundamental insistence on attending to the historical and indeed ideological gendered trivialisation of the detail that I find especially helpful. She challenges critics' tendency to valorise the detail in western culture, instead emphasising that the history of the detail is one of femininity and denigration:

> To focus on the detail and more particularly on the detail as *negativity* is to become aware […] of its participation in a larger semantic network, bounded on one side by the *ornamental,* with its traditional connotations of effeminacy and decadence, and on the other, by the *everyday,* whose 'prosiness' is rooted in the domestic sphere of social life presided over by women.
>
> (Schor 1987: xlii)

I should like to stress the specification in this quotation of the detail's participation in a "larger semantic network". This specification illustrates

where I find Schor's work on literary texts stronger and more helpful than her work on certain images as materials (the postcards). In examining texts she raises the connection between the detail and the feminine domestic sphere, but indicates that the point is not that the detail is of a special pertinence to the lives and identities of actual feminine subjects (as if lived in their homes). Rather, it is a part of a phallocentric language or system of codification which ideologically makes it so. For example, in her reading of Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Discourses on Art* she highlights the criticism that the male artist's task was to sublimate the raw material chaos of Nature, which is explicitly gendered as feminine.

There is not the scope or the groundwork in my investigation to fully explore how the material under investigation may be situated in a history of aesthetic theory, with regards to realism and classicism for example. (Though, in Chapter 4, I do offer some observations on connections that readings of the images hold to arguments concerning realist painting of the fin-de-siècle.) However, I argue that Schor's demonstration of a history of a patriarchal mode of criticism that ideologically trivialises the detail as feminine provides a crucially rich yet neglected context for the sorts of material under investigation, and indeed their arrangements. I would argue that we see strong indications of the continuation of this history in the commentary I noted above from Baudelaire, the journalist, and Benjamin. What I hypothesise, then, is that this material participates in the semantic network that Schor identifies, and therefore induces or prompts in its society a powerful attention, in the sense of viewing and reading, to the triviality of the detail as the feminine. In this regard, my choice to focus on different sorts of everyday materials whose

images specifically portray women is not based on the hypothesis that it is evidence of the lives and identities of women and/or men in the societies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Rather I focus on these particular arrangements of material and their depiction of women in an effort to investigate what I hypothesise as their inducement or prompt towards a certain mode of attention, whose conventions, whether performed in iterations or consciously flouted, are based on the ideological denigration of the detail as the feminine.

Therefore, it is important not to lose sight of the gendering of the material in its culture and society. But, in an extrapolation of Schor's focus on the gendered aesthetics of the detail *as* negativity, I argue that its *trivialised feminine status as material must not be retroactively elevated to the level of the human*, at least not without caution.[10]

If, as I have hypothesised, this material prompts a certain mode of attention then why and in what context should this mode of attention come into operation? In responding to this question, I am not concerned with the history of aesthetic theory per se. More specifically with regard to the dominant historical arguments on the material in question, I not interested in making any claims relating to the psychology and intentions of historical subjects. Because this material is a mass-made means of presenting and circulating images in a society, whose earlier sorts originate in the nineteenth-century, I suggest it is helpful to turn to what we specifically know about vision and visuality in that historical moment. Jonathan Crary's authoritative study on the subject is

[10] See the introduction to Benjamin, J. (1988) for a further argumentation of why, in dealing with the social hierarchy of the gender binary, it is important not to retroactively elevate or valorise the female/feminine.

illuminating when we consider its findings' pertinence to the material under investigation. In examining "vision and its historical construction" through the emergence of certain models and techniques in the first half of the nineteenth-century, Crary (1992) stresses the need to comprehend the radical break and reorganisation of vision that occurred during this period (Crary 1992: 1). The crux of this reorganisation of vision lies in what he outlines as its ongoing abstraction whereby "visual images no longer have any reference to the position of an observer in a 'real,' optically perceived world." (Crary 1992: 2) According to Crary, rather than refer to an observer in a 'real' world, modern visual images are engaged in a vision that operates namely on the body of the individual and on social power (Crary 1992: 3). This vision involved a particular repositioning of the individual as observer. Significantly, particularly with regard to the material presently under investigation and the question of its pertinence to onstage theatre and performance, the early nineteenth-century techniques of observation reorganised the relationship between the viewer and the object in a way that is fundamentally distinct from that of theatre and performance. For example, in his analysis of the effects of the stereoscope Crary specifies that:

> The stereoscope as a means of representation was inherently *obscene,* in the most literal sense. It shattered the *scenic* relationship between viewer and object that was intrinsic to the fundamentally theatrical setup of the camera obscura. The very functioning of the stereoscope depended … on the visual priority

> of the object closest to the viewer and on the absence of any mediation between eye and image.
>
> (Crary 1992: 127)

The consequences of this vision and reorganisation of the position of the observer should not be underestimated. He writes:

> It is a question of a vision achieved at great cost that claimed for the eye a vantage point uncluttered by the weight of historical codes and conventions of seeing, a position from which vision can function without the imperative of composing its contents onto a reified 'real' world. It was a question of an eye that sought to avoid the repetitiveness of the formulaic and conventional even as the effort to see afresh and anew entailed its own pattern of repetition and conventions. And thus the 'pure perception,' the sheer optical attentiveness of modernism increasingly had to exclude or submerge that which would obstruct its functioning: language, historical memory, and sexuality.
>
> (Crary 1992: 96)

The historical insights provided by Crary's study have fundamental implications for examining the material under investigation, especially when we consider a coinciding participation in the feminine aesthetics of the detail.

How might engaging with the arrangements of these images induce a mode of attention that operates in accordance with the abstracted, embodied vision Crary describes? Could the demeaned feminine aesthetic of the material perform "the pattern of repetition and conventions" entailed by this vision despite its "effort to see afresh and anew"? Does this material position the observer in an obscene as opposed to a scenic relation to the object? The investigation of these questions, which the current investigation can only offer in a preliminary form, could radically challenge received assumptions regarding what the production and circulation of material images that depict women, and indeed their historical shaping of femininity, did and continues to do in their society. For example, it is possible that the production and circulation of the material pertains fundamentally to the status of *the individual as observer* and *not* to the observed, that is, to the depicted woman/women.

In contextualising the material historically, I need to briefly turn to the question of theatricality, since much of this material has its origins in theatre and performance insofar as it portrays actress, dancers and performers. How might this material be situated in the broader context of theatre and performance in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? As I indicated above, the dominant historical narratives tend to approach this material through a broad paradigm of theatre and performance that emphasises the mobility or ephemerality of a feminine subjectivity from an anthropocentric point of view. However, Nina Auerbach (1990) demonstrates through her examination of literary texts by authors as diverse as Thomas Carlyle and Oscar Wilde that the theatre, performance and theatricality were a reviled source of fascination to nineteenth-century Victorian society. Interestingly, she argues that, in this

societal and historical moment, theatricality is better defined by its negativity to the *sincerity* of Victorian values: "Reverent Victorians shunned theatricality as the ultimate, deceitful mobility. It connotes not only lies, but a fluidity of character that decomposes the uniform integrity of the self." (Auerbach 1990: 4) That is, Victorians denigrated theatre and theatricality as a threat to their belief in a true, authentic and stable self. Further still, according to Auerbach's research, this anti-theatrical belief in the authenticity of the self is a direct response to the loss of humanized time and space; she argues that it was generated as "compensation" when "nineteenth-century geologists posited an infinity so vast that it consumed the human scale." (Auerbach 1990: 3) When science drew attention to the physical vastness of the universe, Thomas Carlyle et al. expounded the infinity of man through a belief in his life. "Birth acquired the authority of lost Edenic origins; death gained the conclusiveness attributed to the Last Judgment." (Auerbach 1990: 3) Here the emphasis or focal point in culture is not so much on the sublimation of brute nature, as suggested by evidence pertaining to the previous century, but on the authenticity of the nature of man.

I would argue that Auerbach's findings are consistent with the gendered trivialisation of the aesthetics of the detail, and the nineteenth-century model of vision and visuality that Crary identifies. In attending to a diverse range of materials, these studies strongly describe *a societal and historical moment where culture and its production are intensely and fundamentally focussed on the notion of the individual as a source of knowledge and truth*. They do this by highlighting and historicising specific conventions with regard to material (its arrangements, its techniques, its positioning of the body), aesthetics (detail,

nature) and ideology (gender, truth, progress). Notably each study also takes a historiographical approach that reads *against the grain* of these conventions, and as such they are brought into relief.

Having identified this historical context, and previous historiographical approaches to its study, what also interests me is the question of whether these material, aesthetic and ideological conventions produced and circulated the material in question, and whether they continue to do so today. In raising this two-part question, I need to provide a social framework that would define or give shape to this process of production and circulation. In other words, in asking whether these conventions produce and circulate this material, I must provide a means of explaining how they would in turn shape a *subject position* in their societies. Like the dominant historical narratives of the material under investigation, many of the studies I have mentioned above in developing my methodology investigate materials that are authored, and in that sense the conventions are produced and circulated by the author of the material concerned. However, I am chiefly concerned with mass-made, commercial everyday materials whose authorship in their societies is highly ambiguous. Therefore, my approach is closer to that of Stewart, in her focus on the narratives of everyday material objects, and Crary, when he examines technologies such as the stereoscope, in the sense that I am concerned with the interaction between the material and its viewer-possessor. Because I am concerned with particular arrangements of material, namely the images that depict women through a certain set of codes, I view this interaction as constitutive of a genre.

Jack Zipes (1979;2002) on the fairy tale provides an apt guide, and counterpoint, in order to explain what I mean by a "genre" here. The historical development of the fairy tale as a genre occurred much earlier in the sixteenth century. However, there are striking connections between the material of Zipes' research and the imagery of the typical female figure. I will first outline these connections. I will then outline Zipes' approach to the genre, of which I provide a critique. I will then explain how the "genre" relates to my account of the imagery.

First, the fairy tale is an appropriative and commoditised genre emergent from a process whereby writers reworked the oral performance of the folk tale as a literary document. Zipes writes:

> What is most interesting about the historical development of the folk tale is the manner in which was appropriated in its entirety by the aristocratic and bourgeois writers in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the expansion of publishing to become a new literary genre which one could rightly call the fairy tale.
>
> (Zipes 1979: 7)

The appropriation of the performance of folk tale and its rendering as the literary fairy tale is linked to the imagery of the typical female figure as material objects which, as I would argue, were appropriative of theatrical, literary, mythical and narrative cultural forms. Further, the aristocratic and bourgeois

classes were also the producers and consumers of the imagery. Second, the fairy tale is composed of typical motifs and figures which were adapted in the reconfiguration of values and ideology from the sixteenth century onwards:

> As a literary text which experimented with and expanded upon the stock motifs, figures and plots of the folk tale, the fairy tale reflected a change in values and ideological conflicts in the transitional period from feudalism to early capitalism.
>
> (Zipes 1979: 7)

I would link this point to the imagery's typical presentation of the female figure, costumes, mise-en-scène and motifs, and their ideological effect in the interaction with a viewer-possessor. Third, the emergence of the fairy tale reflected a certain tension between the cultural forms of the imagination and a rationalistic zeitgeist, particularly in the nineteenth century. Zipes argues: "the bourgeois public gradually accommodated and instrumentalized fantastic art production to compensate for some of the ill effects of capitalist regulation and rationalization." (Zipes 1979: 13-14) I would relate this point to the imagery's capacity to serve as a pleasurable means of "appeasing" a desire for origins.

In sufficiently broad terms for the moment, Zipes' research accounts for the fairy tale as a standardised material of fantasy that generates certain effects in a *past historical context*. It also emphasises the role of the specific author of a tale: for example, Charles Perrault's *Little Red Riding Hood* (1697). These are two key points that distinguish Zipes' approach from my account of the

imagery, and I will return to them when I tease out his treatment of the genre. First, I need to provide the full working definition of genre, which Zipes cites from Fredric Jameson:

> Genres are essentially literary *institutions,* or social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a particular cultural artifact. The speech acts of daily life are themselves marked with indications and signals (intonation, gesturality, contextual deitics and pragmatics) which ensure their appropriate reception. In the mediated situations of a more complicated social life – and the emergence of writing has often been paradigmatic of such situations – perceptual signals must be replaced with conventions if the text in question is not to be abandoned to a drifting multiplicity of uses (as *meanings* must, according to Wittgenstein be described). Still, as texts free themselves more and more from an immediate performance situation, it becomes ever more difficult to enforce a given generic rule on their readers. No small part of the art of writing, indeed, is absorbed by this (impossible) attempt to devise a foolproof mechanism for the automatic exclusion of undesirable responses to a given literary utterance.
>
> (Jameson 2002: 92-93)

Let me firstly respond to this quotation by summarising Zipes' reading and application of Jameson's account of genre. From Jameson, we see that what the genre refers us to is the proper use of a cultural artefact. Zipes elaborates this specification of a "proper use" with concern to the act of writing itself, and its conventional resolution to "a more complicated social life". Hence, Zipes explains: "For Jameson the individual literary work is a *symbolic act,* 'which is grasped as the imaginary resolution of real contradiction.'" (Zipes 2006: 3) Such a symbolic act is understood to be always aesthetic and ideological:

> Jameson sees ideology not as something 'which informs or invests symbolic production; rather the aesthetic act itself is ideological, and the production of aesthetic or narrative form is seen as an ideological act in its own right, with the function of inventing imaginary or formal 'solutions' to unresolvable contradictions.'
>
> (Zipes 2006: 2-3)

What this line of reasoning necessarily also entails, then, is a prospective writer's process of reading, which then produces the symbolic act in contribution to, and intervention in, the genre. Therefore Zipes observes that Jamesons' definition "immediately perceives the process of writing as part of a social process, as a kind of intervention in a continuous discourse, debate, and conflict about power and social relations." (Zipes 2006: 2) What this allows Zipes to do is to relate a particular fairy tale as a symbolic act (*Little Red Riding Hood* by Perrault, to continue the example) to the author of that fairy tale and to

the historical context of the period in which s/he wrote the work. Thus, the fairy tale can be positioned and analysed according to a particular historical period in time, and as an aesthetic and ideological intervention at that time and on the part of the author. This is the basic methodology of Zipes' research on the fairy tale as a genre.

The problem with Zipes' approach is that it effaces certain key elements in Jameson's account of the genre, which would not place so much emphasis, and indeed agency, on the author of a literary work and would rather focus attention on the means of genre criticism. Jameson identifies two well-established approaches to genre criticism: the semantic "aim[s] to describe the essence or meaning of a given genre by way of a reconstruction of an imaginary entity ... which is something like the generalized existential experience behind the individual texts." (Jameson 2002: 94) The other approach is the syntactic or structural which "proposes … to analyze the mechanisms and structure of a genre such as comedy, and to determine its laws and limits." (Jameson 2002: 94) This approach "aim[s] less at discovering the meaning of the generic mechanism or process than at constructing its model." (Jameson 2002: 94) Jameson wants to establish a dialectic between these two approaches in order to produce a more nuanced and historically reflexive model of genre criticism. With regard to Zipes' attention to the author of the fairy tale as the initiator of the literary work as a "symbolic act" in the broad context of the historical past, what concerns me is that he might well be reconstructing the "imaginary entity" in the vein of the "semantic approach" to genre criticism which Jameson finds inadequate.

My investigation attends to the interaction between the material images and an observer. In investigating this material and its presentation of the

woman-as-image as a genre, I am interested in how the interaction with the material produces certain readings, which in turn produce and reinforce woman as an imaginary concept. Following the above definition of genre, with concern to the "attempt to devise a foolproof mechanism for the automatic exclusion of undesirable responses to a given literary utterance", Jameson makes the further remark: "It is not merely the performance situation, but the generic contract and institution itself which falls casualty to the gradual penetration of a market system and money economy." (Jameson 2002: 93) It follows that the genre's specification of a "proper use" tends to falter in its production and circulation according to the economies of the market.

As I see it, the economy of the images under investigation is not a monetary economy; rather it operates according to the aesthetic, material and ideological conventions I identify in this thesis. Jameson (2002) is referring to literary genres, and the context of his definition involves works of literature not images and not everyday material objects. Yet I find this definition a helpful means of theorising the interaction with the material. It is important that he specifically uses the term "writer" not "author". In the context of my investigation, the writer is not the writer of a literary text *per se*. Rather the writer specifies *a reading* of the images in a particular arrangement. In accordance with the above definition, the reading is made in contract or as an institution with a public in order to specify the "proper use" of the arrangement of images as "a particular cultural artefact". I therefore analyse the *readings* of the images in their different arrangements in order to investigate whether they are produced and circulated by the aesthetic and ideological conventions indicated above. The strong advantage of this method is that it can explain how

the production and circulation of the images in their societies shaped, and possibly continues to shape, a particular subject position *without* assuming the truth or epistemological certainty of that subject position. Consequently, it can render the subject available to critique, nuance and agency.

So far I have focussed on preparing an outline of how I view the structural aspects of the material's production and circulation. However, this process cannot be entirely structural. If the material operates on the body of the viewer-possessor, and shapes them as a subject, then it would follow that it has an affect. Since many of the historical studies whose insights I employ in my methodology were published, critics have increasingly tended to emphasise affect, as well as materiality. The emphatic attention to affect is a relatively recent imperative in cultural criticism and scholarship, and in some quarters of literary criticism it seems to me that it tends to entail a close examination whose historical context is fundamentally shaped by the privileged position of *an* individual historical subject rather than by established knowledge of a particular societal and historical moment. I would argue that recent methods, which seem to me to be gaining in influence, such as erotohistoriography (Freeman 2010), while pertinent to my investigation with regard to an interest in the attention to detail and eroticism of certain materials, are therefore not immediately suitable as a means of investigating the particular materials in question.

In my investigation of the conventions of the material, in the vein of earlier strategies adopted in queer studies, I attend to the material's pleasures. My attendance to the pleasures of the material is also a means of reading the grain or texture of the genre and its conventions, namely so that we might

better read against it. Importantly, the question of the pleasures of this material in particular is not without its pertinence to the historical moment when they were made. Laura Frost (2013) argues that the availability of mass pleasures at the turn-of-the-century was integral to the emergence of avant-garde modernist literature and its emphasis on what she identifies and demonstrates in her study as "unpleasure". In other words, the modernist avant-garde (Huxley, Joyce, Stein et al.) were writing against the grain of pleasure in their culture. It is also worth mentioning Barthes' work on 'the pleasures of the text' here (Barthes 1975). So what might be the pleasures of the genre in question? Is it possible to speak of the "unpleasures" of this material, of its perversities; or are its pleasures strictly conventional? In posing these questions I do not mean to suggest that the distinction between pleasure and "unpleasure" is ironclad. Rather, I aim to set up a means of analysing this material which can enable consideration of the possibilities of both.

Chapter III

Original Arrangements and Historical Readings

Introduction

In this chapter I examine examples of material images that depict women in typical costumes and settings where they appear in their original arrangements. I have chosen to attend to three such examples: first, a mid nineteenth-century fashion plate and its arrangement in an issue of a renowned Victorian women's magazine named *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*; second, the set of studio photographs that portray the Countess di Castiglione and their arrangement as a collection (as I show below, there is evidence to suggest that the photographs were arranged as a collection in their original context); third, photographs that portray the Edwardian dancer Maud Allan and their arrangement in a souvenir brochure. In each section, I introduce the material with specific critical context that demonstrates how and in what sense these material images were brought to the attention of an observer in their societies. Where there is the available evidence to do so, I provide critical context that is of the original period when the images were made. I then attend more closely to the original arrangements of the images themselves. The readings that are produced in the interaction with the image/s in their original arrangement are a crucial element of my analysis: the description that accompanies the fashion plate in the magazine, and the autobiographical writings that accompany the studio photographs of the countess as a collection and the photographs of Maud Allan as a souvenir. I argue that these readings can evidence the material,

aesthetic and ideological conventions that determine the interaction with the images in a given historical moment. In terms of the material evidence, I have chosen these specific examples on the basis that *both* elements of the original arrangement – the image and the reading – are excellently preserved and accessible to the researcher. In terms of my argument, I have chosen these specific examples because they range across different material arrangements from the nineteenth century to the early twentieth-century and can therefore demonstrate the different ways in which the material images and their conventions mediated their observer as a subject in a given historical moment.

III.I Fashion Plates and Costume Plates or Ballet Prints

In *The Painter of Modern Life* (1863), around the time when fashion plates were published in women's magazines, Charles Baudelaire states: "I have here in front of me a series of fashion plates, the earliest dating from the Revolution, the most recent from the Consulate or thereabouts." (Baudelaire 2010: 2) This statement suggests the fashion plates in question are of the old regime; they are not contemporary to the period of the Second Empire in which he is speaking. He observes the trivialisation of this material and what he views to be its merits: "These costumes, which many thoughtless people, the sort of people who are grave without true gravity, find highly amusing, have a double kind of charm, artistic and historical." (Baudelaire 2010: 2) He then goes on to imagine that: "One of these days perhaps some theatre or other will put on a play where we shall see a revival of the fashions … The past, whilst retaining its ghostly

piquancy, will recapture the light and the movement of life, and become present." (Baudelaire 2010: 3)

Writing nearly a hundred years after Baudelaire, in her history of fashion plates Vyvyan Holland (1955) makes the following differentiation between a fashion plate and a costume plate. "A fashion-plate may be said to be a drawing made for the purpose of showing people the right kind of clothes for them to wear to be abreast of the moment" (Holland 1955: 21). On the other hand, the costume plate "is intended to show national or theatrical costume, or to put past fashions on record" (Holland 1955: 22). Significantly, Holland further differentiates the fashion plate and the costume plate in terms of how they narrate the past, present and future: "In fact the fashion-plate speaks for the present or the future, whereas the costume-plate speaks for the past." (Holland 1955: 22) In concluding her study, following a discussion of how one may go about collecting plates as a hobby, she remarks: "But, on the whole, I think that the main delight in collecting fashion-plates and fashion magazines is that they take you, not into the far-distant past, but into the immediate past of your recent forebears." (Holland 1955: 174)

As authors from different countries writing at very different periods in time (though it may be observed that both are writing a decade or so after a significant social and political upheaval), Baudelaire and Holland form an unlikely milieu. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Holland makes no mention of Baudelaire's comments in her study. Yet both are concerned with fashion plates that specifically depict women not men. Baudelaire specifically comments that: "The women who wore these dresses looked more or less like one or the other according to the degree of poetry or vulgarity evident in their

faces." (Baudelaire 2010: 3) Moreover, both respond to fashion plates with vague conceptions of the past and present that follow similar narrative patterns. For Baudelaire in the mid nineteenth-century contemplating fashion plates from an era that was definitively distinct from, but nonetheless only six or so decades previous to, that of the time of his writing invokes the presence of the past. Writing in 1955, Holland suggests that costume plates invoke the distant past, whereas fashion plates invoke a presence or "the more immediate past of your recent forebears" (Holland 1955: 175).

I am interested in the tension between the vague claims to the past and the present or the future that these comments suggest is prompted by the juxtaposition of fashion plates and costume plates, or, as in Baudelaire's case, the treatment of fashion plates *as* costume plates. I seek to question what material, aesthetic and ideological conventions produced the fashion plate in its historical context that would help to explain, or at least make some sense of, these critics' vague allusions to the presence of the past, and its pleasures or delights. What is particular to the societal and historical moment of the nineteenth-century about the fashion plate's capacity to make the past present or to invoke an immediate past? And how might this history pertain to the notion that the costume plate "speaks to the [distant] past"?

Here I draw attention to the fashion plates in their original arrangements in women's magazines, or periodicals as they are also known. I focus on examples from one of the better-known English magazines, *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* (1852-1877), which from 1860 presented its readers with coloured plates imported from Paris (Holland 1955: 100). I have chosen examples from this magazine because the contents of its issues (or

numbers), including the plates themselves, are excellently preserved and catalogued according to their original arrangement in the magazine, and are easily accessible through online collections. This has made it possible for me to survey many examples within the time constraints of my project. Further still, in addition to preserving the plates, the archive shows that the *Englishwomen's Domestic Magazine* also, though it seems less frequently, included costume plates. The costume plate and the fashion plate therefore appeared within the context of the magazine, though not necessarily in the same issue. This makes it possible to investigate the fashion plate in the context of an original arrangement that also alludes to the costume plate.

Importantly, fashion plates and illustrations in magazines were often accompanied by a description. Holland (1955) presents a range of plates and their descriptions taken from periodicals dating from between 1794 and 1864. Those presented here date from the 1860s. These points indicate that the presentation of the image and its description in the magazine was the case throughout most of the nineteenth-century. Marcus (2007) does not attend to the descriptions in her analysis of fashion plates, and for Holland they are set apart from the plates as mere amusements:

> Quite apart from its fashion-plates, the reports of fashions and foibles in *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* make the most entertaining reading. For instance, in a detailed description of a bride's trousseau in 1861, seventeen varieties of petticoats are listed and eight sorts of drawers and pantalettes.

(Holland 1955: 103)

Since the fashion plates were, from the viewpoint posed by Holland's definition given above, visual instructions to a female public on what to wear in a given moment, the descriptions may otherwise be contextualised in their original society as the text that would function to indicate to a prospective buyer, or home dress-maker, the design of the garment so that it could be rendered in actuality. Indeed, many descriptions were followed by the contact details of a dressmaker. To take a different approach, in my analysis the trivial and repetitive description is treated as a historical reading of the fashion plate that can evidence the conventions that produced and were socially contracted by these images' appearance in the magazine in the mid nineteenth-century. I focus my analysis on the plate and its descriptive reading, but also include some mention of the poems that were included in the magazines alongside the fashion items as a means of supporting my findings. I do not attempt to make my own readings of the plates.



Figure 7. Fashion plate, *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine,* April 1868.

The above fashion plate and its description were included in the April 1868 issue of *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* (Figure 7). Here I have aimed to present the description in a format that is as close as possible to the original. Because it is a description of a material image, which I am presenting here as historical evidence, I have included the full description rather than extracted quotations.

DESCRIPTION OF OUR FASHION PLATE.

BRIDE'S TOILET. – Under-dress of poult de soie, very ample at the back, with a long train. Low bodice. The high tunic dress is of tulle, trimmed with satin cross-strips and insertion of Valenciennes lace.

> Coiffure à la Russe, with waved bandeaux on the forehead, and long frizzed curls. Tulle veil, open on the side, and fastened with a diadem of orange-blossoms and lilac.
>
> BRIDESMAID'S TOILET. – Marie Antoinette dress of silk, cut slantways, and ornamented with satin braids. The fichu, with ends forming a waistband, is trimmed with two small flowers of the same material, edged with white satin braid. Plain tight sleeves. White tulle bonnet, with a tulle scarf tied under the chignon. Diadem of myosotis and lilies. The strings are arranged so as to form a cockade on one side, and fastened with a bunch of lilies.
>
> COSTUME FOR A LITTLE GIRL SEVEN YEARS OLD. – Poplin dress trimmed with satin cross-strips. The tunic is crossed on the side, and forms two points in front and one at the back, each being terminated with a satin ball. Pleated chemisette; velvet toquet, with a white satin brim, and a humming-bird with a long tail.

What are we to make of this description as a historical reading of the fashion plate? I should like to begin by very briefly putting the plate and its description to one side in order to consider what descriptions *do* in a culture. Susan Stewart (2007) writes that the economy of the description is "shaped by generic conventions and not by aspects of the material world itself." (Stewart 2007: 26) She continues:

> While our awe of nature may be born in the face of her infinite and perfect detail, our awe of culture relies upon a hierarchical organization of information, an organization which is shared by social members and which differs cross-culturally and historically.

> Not our choice of subject, but our choice of aspect and the hierarchical organization of detail, will be emergent in and will reciprocally effect the prevailing social construction of reality. As genres approach 'realism,' their organization of information must clearly resemble the organization of information in everyday life. Realistic genres do not mirror everyday life; they mirror its hierarchization of information.
>
> (Stewart 2007: 26)

This passage from Stewart highlights the point that to describe something does not mean to objectively state aspects of the material world, of brute nature. In describing something we participate in generic conventions that organise the detail of brute nature as information in accordance with a certain hierarchy that is shared and shaped among members of a society.

But here it is important to keep in mind that what is under investigation is not exactly a description, as one might find in a work of literature. Rather I am concerned with a description of an image, of which there are many others. The description must therefore operate according to the vision of the observer of the image, which in this case is a fashion plate. As such, "the choice of aspect" that Stewart mentions in the above quotation is *constrained* by the image as it appeared within the context of the magazine. In terms of the conventions of the fashion plate, it is clear that the feminine aesthetics of the detail are *visually* presented to the viewer in hierarchically organised, "realist" form of the fashionable female figures. The question at hand is what historical conventions

produce and circulate this image in its interaction with a viewer in its society. In examining the description as a historical reading of the fashion plate, I would argue the conventions that produced the image are shaped by the nineteenth-century ideology of the true self. I make this argument not because the description makes this ideal in nineteenth-century society explicit. Rather the ideology is indicated by this material because, by making repetitive, detailed and lengthy prose descriptions which in the absence of the actual referent are virtual rather than definitive, the text articulates in its relation to the image what Stewart phrases as "a structure of desire that both invents and distances its object and thereby inscribes again and again the [nostalgic] gap between signifier and signified that is the place of generation for the symbolic." (Stewart 2007: ix) The inscription of a gap between signifier and signified within the context of a Victorian woman's magazine is ideological and historical because its affect of nostalgia, that is, of generating a personal belief in origins, strongly corresponds to what we know about Victorian society's normative beliefs from scholars such as Auerbach (1990). What is more, as a historical reading of the fashion plate, the repetitive and exaggerated description suggests the material image's mediation of the observer as a desiring subject in the mid nineteenth-century.

My argument that the ideology of the true self and the feminine aesthetics of nature produced this material in its original society is further supported, and indeed made more explicit, by the literature that appeared alongside the fashion items in the magazines. For example, on the same page of the April 1868 issue of the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, adjacent to above description, there appeared an anonymous poem

entitled, “The Mystery of Nature”. The opening stanza of the poem proclaims:

> The works of God are fair for naught
> Unless our eyes, in seeing,
> See hidden in the thing the thought
> That animates its being.

In first somewhat blasphemously questioning the “works of God”, this verse moves on to suggest a fetishisation of nature that reclaims the sacred for men. The following verses show that this fetishism is directed toward the idea of the infinitude inside man, as illuminated in Auerbach (1990). For example, the poem ends as follows:

> So, since the universe began,
> And till it shall be ended,
> The soul of Nature, soul of man,
> And soul of God are blended.

In light of this evidence and its analysis it would follow that, if actual Victorian women were gazing at images in their magazines that depicted fashionable women, it was not out of a libidinal homoerotic desire that was sanctioned by the men around them, as Marcus (2007) argues, but out of a belief in their own authenticity. I would argue that this belief is one of the pleasures of the fashion plate in its original context. Perhaps unsurprisingly in a patriarchal society,

however, as subjects the women were not positioned with the authority of Carlyle's virtuous hero, but as women whose origins as individuals are always out of reach.

Lastly in the present analysis, I turn my attention to the more covert effects of the production of the fashion plate in its original context and society. Thinking about what we know from Crary (1992) regarding how vision operated in the nineteenth-century, that is, on the body of the observer, then there is further cause to examine the descriptions of fashion plates. Implicit in the reading of the fashion plate, and its new formation of the subject through the observer's mediation, is the collapse between subject and object that Crary identifies elsewhere in nineteenth-century technologies such as the stereoscope. In referring to these technologies as setting up apparatuses of knowledge about the body that constitute social power, he states: "These apparatuses are the outcome of a complex remaking of the individual as observer into something calculable and regularizable and of human vision into something measurable and thus exchangeable." (Crary 1992: 17) In organising hierarchical detail into information, the descriptive readings of the plates show that what is being measured and exchanged in the production of the image is vision *not* the woman, and that what is being calculated is the individual as observer.

If this knowledge about the body of the observer constitutes social power, it falls to the writerly authority of the critic and the collector to try to claim that power from his position within the academy, hence Baudelaire's invocation of his fashion plates. Baudelaire elevates his fashion plates from their trivial, feminine status: he finds them "very often beautiful and wittily drawn" but "in them" he also finds "the moral attitude and aesthetic value of the time."

(Baudelaire 2010: 2) In reading the fashion plates from their elevated position, he states: "The women who wore these dresses looked more or less like one or the other, according to the degree of poetry or vulgarity evident in their faces. The living substance gave suppleness to what appears too stiff to us." (Baudelaire 2010: 3) In descriptively reading the women depicted by the images according to the alikeness of the face, his statement indicates the contradiction of the woman who is both true and vulgar. Here it is helpful to return to Stewart's comments on the description. She makes the observation that: "where writing is concomitant with authority, the validity of written description will be held to transcend any contradictions everyday experience may present. In this otherness from the everyday, every text bears the potential of a sacred text." (Stewart 2007: 26) Therefore the first point to make is that Baudelaire's interest in the fashion plates as a means of invoking the presence of the past indicates the convention in nineteenth century society of the ideology of the true or authentic self. Yet, it may be concluded that the 'realistic' and hierarchical contradiction of the woman who is both poetic (that is, true) and vulgar appears as the conventional mask that disguises and transcends an everyday contradiction in the experience of social power: that in becoming his own agent man, as in a human being, is subject to effects of technology that are outside his control.

III.II.'La Divine Comtesse'

The dominant historical arguments on the photographs of the Countess di Castiglione portray her as a woman who was narcissistically attached to and invested in her image (Solomon-Godeau 1986; Apraxine 2000). These

arguments make claims on the individual psychology and identity of a woman who lived between 1837 and 1899, and do so to contradictory effect. I seek to provide a historical analysis of the photographs and autobiographical and biographical writings that does not position the countess herself as a subject of knowledge. Rather I survey the material, aesthetic and ideological conventions that arguably produced and circulated this material in its original society with the affect of pleasure.

The photographs of the Countess di Castiglione were produced at the studio of Mayer and Pierson in different series between 1856 and 1895. My emphasis on the original arrangements of the material would suggest that I attend to these different series in turn. However, the scope of my project where I attend to a number of different sorts of materials, and my historiographical emphasis on the *readings* of the images as well as the images themselves makes certain demands and limitations. In what follows I prioritise attendance to the arrangement of the images as *a collection* that is a product of that period in the late half of the nineteenth-century, and an instance of the woman as image. I refer to autobiographical and biographical writings on the Countess as historical *readings* of the collection. Though somewhat brief, then, the aim of my historical analysis of the Countess di Castiglione photographs and writings is to draw attention to what are in my view certain fundamental yet otherwise neglected points concerning their conventions in a societal and historical context.

The first of which, in approaching the images as archive materials, is to highlight the collection as a particular sort of arrangement of objects, which, as Susan Stewart's work demonstrates, generates a particular narrative. This

narrative entails three key elements: ahistoricism, authenticity, and authority. Stewart writes that:

> The collection does not displace attention to the past; rather, the past is at the service of the collection … the past lends authenticity to the collection. The collection seeks a form of self-enclosure which is possible because of its ahistoricism. The collection replaces history with *classification*, with order beyond the realm of temporality.
>
> (Stewart 2007: 151)

This classification of objects, as Stewart also specifies, is representative of a collection, but it is not representational in the sense that an object may refer to the 'real' world perceived by the viewer-possessor who apprehends it.

> The collection presents a hermetic world: to have a representative collection is to have both the minimum and the complete number of elements necessary for an autonomous world – a world which … has banished repetition and achieved authority.
>
> (Stewart 2007: 152)

This capacity of the collection to mediate attention to the past and destroy context in the name of a hermetic focus on the individual self is crucial to

understanding the production and circulation of the photographs of the Countess di Castiglione. It indicates that the woman they portray cannot be known in a historical sense, and is not the subject of knowledge. Rather, the collection of photographs manipulates time and context with the effect of focussing attention on the authenticity and authority of the individual. It is not a question of *who* that individual *was*. The point is not that the Countess and/or Pierson, or even Count Robert de Montesquiou, produced and collected her photographs. As Stewart writes of Noah's Ark, "the archetypal collection": "Whose labour made the ark is not the question: the question is what is inside." (Stewart 2007: 152) What is inside the collection constitutes the whole that grants it authority and, significantly, its status as 'new' as opposed to of the past: "each element within the collection is representative and works in combination toward the creation of a new whole that is the context of the collection itself." (Stewart 2007: 152-153) With regards to the photographs in question, we may say that the 'new whole' *is* the woman-as-image, as composed from the elements in different series. The classification of these series may be original, as in the later photographs contained in a booklet marked *Série des roses* (Apraxine 2000: 49). Or, the classification of the series may be contemporary: for example, in cataloguing the collection, Apraxine organises the photographs according to thematised series such as "mises-en-scène," "the wiles of fashion," "twilight," and "relics" (Apraxine 2000: 98-159). The question of the precise system of classification aside, the most important point to take forward at this stage is that the photographs are arranged as a collection, and that collection contains its own authoritative context; that context is authenticated by the past, which is not the same as

directing attention *to* the past. Therefore, in coming to investigate the collection of the photographs of the Countess di Castiglione, what we are coming to study is the contents of the collection itself.

It is not possible to say that the collection and its contents are historical. However, the Countess di Castiglione photographs were made in the mid-to-late nineteenth-century, and it is certainly possible to notice that the collection's *narrative structure* operates according to material, aesthetic and ideological conventions that are *of* the nineteenth-century. The material arrangement of the collection itself, in generating a hermetic world that devolves on the individual, sharply recalls the emergence in the nineteenth-century of a vision that was abstracted from any 'real world' referent (Crary 1992). Further still, the collection's authentication by the past, in order to focus attention on the authority of the individual, is consistent with the nineteenth-century ideology of the authentic or true self, the belief in man's true nature and the dangerous threat that theatricality posed to its unsettling (Auerbach 1990). But did these conventions specifically produce the photographs of the Countess di Castiglione? To respond to this question I need to examine both the images, that is, the contents of the collection, and the biographical and autobiographical writings on the Countess, which I treat as *historical readings* of the collection as a particular instance of the woman-as-image.

Importantly, the collection under investigation consists of visual images and employs a particular set of feminine codes. As Stewart's work would suggest, these images and their codes are classifiable. There are photographs that depict the Countess in various dramatised character roles, such as *The Queen of Hearts, The Queen of Etruia,* and *Anne Boleyn.* In *The Marquise*

Mathilde (1861-66) the Countess poses in the wings to the scene of a party, as if to present her body solely for the gaze of the viewer. Other images, those Apraxine classifies under the heading "the wiles of fashion", show her dressed in fashionable gowns. Yet, while fashionable, it may be observed that her gowns and hairstyles are more appropriate to the extravagantly embellished and romantic fashions of the eighteenth-century than the mid nineteenth-century. Like the women in Baudelaire's fashion plates, as an image the Countess is anachronistic to the period in which she appeared. This point is interesting because it strongly suggests that these images' aesthetic production in the nineteenth-century was historically displacing their viewer's attention to the past while they garnered authority in the present, as Stewart (2007) elucidates of the narrative of the collection more generally.

This particular collection provides its visual feminine aesthetic with a *face* in the recognisable, as opposed to anonymous, and *same* form of the Countess di Castiglione. In surveying this collection with our eyes, we do not see many photographs of different women, but many "portrait" photographs of the same woman depicted in a range of classifiable scenarios. Stewart writes elsewhere in her study when she discusses narratives of the imaginary body that:

> The body of a woman, particularly constituted by the mirror and thus particular subject to an existence constrained by the nexus of external images, is spoken by her face, by the articulation of anothers' reading. … The face is what belongs to the other; it is unavailable to the woman herself.

(Stewart 2007: 125)

Putting aside the question of the face and the precise reading/s of the woman's body for a moment, this quotation helps to situate the photographs that depict the Countess posing before a mirror in the context of the collection itself. On one hand, these photographs portray *a* woman who is especially concerned with her appearance, with looking in the mirror. On the other hand, in the context of the collection, these photographs explicitly indicate that the woman's body is constituted by external images, and is therefore available for reading. As such, I would argue these photographs in the collection act as a prompt towards anothers' reading of the woman's body from the classes of images in the collection, namely the theatrical images and the fashionable images mentioned above.

From the autobiographical and biographical writings, I argue there are two historical readings of the Countess di Castiglione photographs. The first concerns the flourishing or productive origin of the Countess' beauty, and the second concerns the waning of her beauty. It is worth noting that this pattern of production and waning, life and death, does not correspond to the chronology of the Countess' actual life span, which suggests that it is ideological rather than strictly biographical. Abigail Solomon-Godeau observes that:

> Writing in her journal near the age of sixty, the Countess di Castiglione considered her youthful beauty: 'The Eternal Father did not realize what He had created the day he brought her into the

> world; He formed her so superbly that when it was done He lost His head at the contemplation of this marvellous work.'
>
> (Solomon-Godeau 1986: 69)

According to Solomon-Godeau, who approaches the Countess' photographs as self-portraits, this quotation indicates the Countess' narcissism and her objectification, indeed capitulation, to patriarchal desire:

> The extravagant narcissism of the countess's self-appraisal is somewhat startling, but less so than the objectification to which it attests, evidenced both by the use of the third-person singular and by her designation of herself as a work ('maravigliosa opera').
>
> (Solomon-Godeau 1986: 69)

Rather than viewing this text as a self-appraisal, I view it as reading of the collection of photographs, the woman-as-image, that is contracted and produced by the conventions of the period. The text may be "somewhat startling" to contemporary readers. However, as a reading of the woman-as-image that was produced c.1897, some decades after this particular woman-as-image had gone into production, it may be observed that it signifies a modern, individualistic creation myth that employs the male third-person singular "He" as the deified subject and the woman, signified by the female third-person singular "her", as objectified yet sublimated nature in generating the era's

ideology of a one true and authentic self. It is important to note that, while gendered, the subject and object of this text are emphatically *not* human. The beauty of the Countess, as depicted by her status as an image, elevates her to the divine status of an object whose authoritative subject is defined by his belief in the authenticity of his own origin.

As Auerbach points out in her study, the Victorian's belief in the true self also carried the subversive threat of that self's demise, as represented by theatricality and death. With regards to the above text, the threat to the true self is indicated by the severe statement, "He lost His head at the contemplation of this marvellous work." (Solomon-Godeau 1986: 69) For biographers, who also shared a venerable fascination with the Countess' beauty, this threat is more subtly narrated through a concomitant fascination with the Countess' waning beauty. A series of photographs entitled *Series des roses* in the collection depict the Countess in her later years. But it is in what I would describe as a later *historical reading* of the images, from the early twentieth-century, that the more morbid fascination with the image of the Countess is especially pronounced. Michele Falzone Del Barbarò cites a description of the Countess given by Guido Gozzano in 1912:

> 'In the evening of her life she withdrew from the world, sealed the doors of her dwelling, and lived there as a prisoner. Alone with passing time, amid the lifeless drapery, she watched the years go by, without friends, without mirrors, concealing from the world and from the court the unbearable shame of her decline.'

(Del Barbarò 2000: 90)

From a straight biographical point of view, Gozzano is describing, with flourishes of imagination, the Countess' reclusive years toward the end of her life, which she mostly spent in her final apartment at 14, rue Cambon, Paris. Yet, as a historical reading of the woman-as-image, within the interiorised, self-enclosed context of the collection, the text suggests the "decline", not of the Countess, but of the subject who pursues a belief in his own origins.

III.III. 'Faint Flickerings'

This section on the historical readings focuses on materials that preserve the original arrangements of images that portray Maud Allan, the Edwardian dancer. I examine a souvenir or commemorative booklet, which includes images of Allan and essays on her "art". The reader will notice that the title of this section lends itself to the title of my thesis. This phrase "faint flickerings" was originally used in a very brief review of one of Allan's later performances. This review is contained as a press cutting in the Victoria and Albert Museum's biographical file on Allan. It states:

> Faint Flickerings. – Miss Allan remains the once high priestess of beauty in rhythm. She suggests poetry, and I suppose a certain sort of mysticism in her movements and poses. At any rate, she is giving a very beautiful performance at the Ambassadors.

In its use of phrases such as "At any rate", "I suppose" and the proclamation that "Allan *remains* the *once* high priestess of beauty in rhythm" (my emphasis), this review suggests a societal *disavowal* of the ideology of the true self which, as I have been arguing, determines an observer's interaction with the woman-as-image. I have chosen its phrase "faint flickerings" to title my thesis for two key reasons. First, in a general sense it alludes to the tensions between materiality and ephemerality that I have explored through developing my critique of the material images that depict women. Second, as a historical reading of the woman's body on display, it implicitly encapsulates the key thematic issues I address in my argument: the denigration of the feminine and the trivial, the disavowal of the observer's ideological production of the image, and the abstraction of the subject as an observer through the mediation of everyday images.

In the following analysis I investigate what specific material, aesthetic and ideological conventions determine the interaction with images that portray Allan in the Edwardian period and may therefore help to explain why this reading or, perhaps more correctly, caption, "faint flickerings," manages to implicitly encapsulate such crucial issues with such brevity.

First, to give some context to Allan's performances in an analysis where I am specifically concerned with images, it is worth noting that her work does not fall within the formal categories of the histories of dance. Photographs of Allan posed in Grecian robes and orientalist costumes show that her work was similar to that of Isadora Duncan, Loïe Fuller and Ruth St Denis in terms of visual style. However, she is not properly historicised as one of the avant-garde progenitors of modern dance. One means of clearly defining her distinction

from these other dancers is to be found in her attitude towards schooling. Duncan, Fuller and St Denis had dance schools that would enable them to develop their techniques and exert their influence in public (see Duncan 1995; Garelick 2007; Cooper Albright 2007). But Allan was explicitly opposed to the practice. A press article reports on a lecture she delivered at the O.P. Club of St. Paul's School in London. Significantly, it is titled "Religious Ideals in Dancing. Miss Maud Allan on Soul-Expression by Motion". She is quoted as saying that:

> Of course, by dancing I mean natural dancing, not the torturing and tortured contortions of schools, but the movement evoked by, and which seek to give expression to, the imperious commands of one's own nature, movements which interpret the force and even the philosophy of our own individual emotions.

In the context of early twentieth-century Edwardian society, this claim illustrates her active complicity with the ideals of her time, the emphasis on the nature of the individual. But it also suggests that her commitment to this ideal was invested in, and disavowed as, the caprices of her dancing, of her body in motion.

As this press report would suggest, Allan was a celebrity. That is to say, she was famous and attracted the attention of the press and the public. Press cuttings from her biographical file at the Victoria and Albert Museum evidence that she posed for society magazines such as *Tatler*, and performed in popular theatres across Europe. But she was not avant-garde, nor was she a dance or

music hall star, or a burlesque performer, or an actress. With regards to her art *form*, then, it may be said that Allan's work defied the genres of the performing arts in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. However, that is not to say she defied the conventions of her society. Of the many female performers of the period, I am particularly interested in Allan because the material traces of her performances, including the essays on her art, point more so to her production and circulation *as an image* in her society than her artistry and techniques as a dancer.

As suggested above, the V&A's biographical files on Allan contain different sorts of materials, including the souvenir booklets. Many of the other materials are cuttings of photographs, illustrations and copy from newspapers and magazines, some of which are named and dated, whereas others are not. I have therefore chosen to focus on the booklet because it preserves the images in their original arrangement while also containing text, which I treat as historical readings of the images.

The booklet on Allan in question is entitled, "Maud Allan and Her Art". On the first page it presents a photograph of Allan posed in Edwardian dress, her hand reaching towards her face in a pensive pose (Figure 8). Allan writes the article that directly follows this photograph, which is titled "My Aims and My Ideals". This article is offered to the reader with the intention of explaining her aims and ideals "once and for all". In a reiteration of the above point concerning her attitude towards dance schooling, she writes: "To begin with, I wish to say that my dancing has nothing to do with the dancing of the ballet school, which, exquisitely beautiful as it is at its highest, is evolved out of a

studied and conventional technique." In the sentences that follow she goes on to assert that:

> Absolute spontaneity is the first principle of my method. I do not, as many people suppose, profess merely to dance 'in time to' the music, and to express its rhythm. … Music is the tonal expression of all feeling and emotion; of Nature in all her moods and phases; and my dancing in so far as it realizes my intention, is an expression in visible motion of those feelings which have inspired the composition.

She reiterates on the next page:

> I am trying to give a natural form of expression to all I feel concerning music and all the world of nature around me. … Music is the expression of what goes on within your soul and the soul of nature.

As a statement of intent, Allan stresses in her essay that, for her, dancing to music is a natural expression of the soul, and of feeling. As a historical reading of her image, her remarks indicate its production and circulation according to the feminine aesthetic of detail and the ideology of the authentic self. More precisely, by employing strained phrases such as "once and for all", "I am trying to", "as many people suppose", throughout her essay Allan *strives* to convey the authenticity of her body *as* the soul of the individual and the soul of

nature. Significantly, in her study of this ideology and its anti-theatricality in Victorian literature, Auerbach points out that by the mid nineteenth-century theatre had become respectable and that much metaphorical, transformative play such as cross-dressing and human-to-animal transmogrification in pantomime had been suppressed (Auerbach 1990: 15). She writes: "Transformation scenes are victories of mutability over the Nature-revering stillness of sincerity." (Auerbach 1990: 15) But by the mid nineteenth-century: "To make itself agreeable in an age that shunned astonishing changes, pantomime began to tell the old, safe stories over and over in the old way." (Auerbach 1990: 15) In the light of this point regarding the mid nineteenth-century, in harnessing the soul and nature to motion and music, the above historical reading of the image suggests that Edwardian society's investment in the ideology of the authentic self and shunning of theatricality grew ever more sincere. However, it is important to note, as I alluded to above, that there is a caprice to the reading of the woman's body. Allan's words may be acceptable to Edwardian society, but they do embrace *spontaneous* emotion and feeling as if it were the true nature of the individual.

In this abandonment to an inner reverie, the historical reading recalls what Stewart (2007) identifies as the context of the souvenir:

> The only proper context for the souvenir is the displacement of reverie, the gap between origin/object/subject which fields desire. … the souvenir so long as it remains 'uncollected' is 'lost,' removed from any context of origin and use value in such a way as to 'surprise' and capture its viewer into reverie.

(Stewart 2007: 150)

It is in this reverie of commemorative loss in the interaction with the image that I would argue we locate material, aesthetic and ideological conventions that explain why Allan's performance was read as "faint flickerings".



Figure 8. Portrait from "Maud Allan and her Art", c.1908, Maud Allan biographical file, V&A Theatre and Performance Department. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Chapter IV

Collections and Contemporary Readings

Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the historical readings of the set of images under investigation. Rather than make the argument that these images were produced, circulated and consumed by men and women in their societies, by focusing on their original arrangements and the specific contexts in which they appeared, I demonstrated that they were produced and circulated according to certain material, aesthetic and ideological conventions, namely, the contract of the material object that arranges the images, the contract of the aesthetic of the detail, and the contract of the ideology of the true self. I also offered comments on where this mode of production would have been pleasurable. The present chapter asks whether these conventions may *continue* to produce the images. I want to consider this hypothesis on the grounds that today the images continue to appear to us as collections in the context of the archives of museums such as the Victoria and Albert, or in the context of personal collections such as those of myself, Preston (2009) and Schor (1992). As Stewart points out, the collection "seeks a form of self-enclosure which is possible because of its ahistoricism." (Stewart 2007: 151) The past authenticates the collection; it is not evidenced by it. However, many studies that investigate this material treat collections of the images as historical and in doing so make readings of the collections as a means of historical analysis. For example, in her historical analysis of fashion plates Sharon Marcus (2007) offers readings of a particular

collection of fashion plates; I say particular because the fashion plates in Marcus' study specifically depict women. However, her study contextualises these readings as historical by directly relating them to Victorian women's magazines, as if the women who read those magazines would have made these readings. However, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter, the magazines presented readings of the plates to their readers, which are, as I show below, very different from those made in response to the collection presented in Marcus' study. Moreover, while the plates could hypothetically have been collected and bound into volumes by the Victorian women who read the magazines, they were originally presented as single items in each issue. To examine the fashion plates as a series of collected images therefore demands that we attend to a different arrangement and a different context other than that of the magazines.

So with the ahistoricism of the collection as my crucial departure point, I examine what I argue to be contemporary readings of the different collections of images. The collections under examination are as follows: *cartes de visite* that portray Lydia Thompson; the Lady Clementina Hawarden photographs that portray her daughters, and postcards that portray women in gardens. There are two different sets of readings of these collections. The first is a set of narrative readings that *describe* the women portrayed by the collections of material images. The second is a set of readings that are offered by the established literature (Buszek 2006; Mavor 1999; Preston 2009).

I have chosen to focus on these specific collections because I want to provide an explicit critical intervention in the assumption that these *arrangements* of images generally represent women as agents in their original

societies or evidence the historical existence of a female subject. By comparison to the established literature on the examples in the previous chapter, namely the fashion plates and the Countess di Castiglione photographs, this assumption is especially pronounced in the literature on the *cartes de visite* portraying Lydia Thompson, the Lady Clementina Hawarden photographs and postcards portraying women in gardens. I would argue that this strength of assumption is due to two combined factors which characterise these latter collections. The first concerns the fact that the examples in question are photographs. As Roland Barthes points out, the photographic image is the "perfect analogon" of its object and as such, when approached in common sense, the "photographic message" is "a continuous message" "*without a code*" (Barthes 1977: 17; original emphasis). Therefore, when approached in isolation from the other sorts of material images I identify, each collection continuously denotes the women it ostensibly portrays, whether Lydia Thompson, Hawarden's daughters or an unidentified Edwardian woman. However, as I show, there is a very clear set of conventional feminine visual codes employed across the different sorts material images. The second factor concerns the relative material absence of any historical readings of the collections of material images in question. This marks where these collections diverge from the collection of the Countess di Castiglione photographs.

Drawing on Stewart (2007), I now provide an outline of how the context of the collection elucidates the contemporary readings. First, it specifically explains the system of classification or typification of the woman that this material tends to invoke in its interaction with a viewer *when it is arranged as a collection* as a product of the material arrangement and not as a product of

some other subject or conscious entity. In attending to this system of classification, the context of the collection highlights the *metaphorical* relation that the material and its production hold to everyday life. Stewart writes that:

> The collection is a form of art as play, a form involving the reframing of objects within a world of attention and manipulation of context. Like other art forms, its function is not the restoration of context of origin but rather the creation of a new context, a context standing in a metaphorical, rather than a continuous, relation to the world of everyday life.
>
> (Stewart 2007: 152)

In light of this comment, I argue the contemporary readings of the collections of images that depict women in typical costumes and settings are metaphorical. Therefore, there is a clear and fundamental difference between the metaphorical women and men produced by the images and actual women and men who lived their lives over a hundred years ago. Since these readings are produced through an observer's interaction with the images as a collection, I would argue that they represent a hierarchically organised, 'realist,' metaphorical other to the self of the observer.

The reader may question whether the Hawarden photographs are deserving of such conventional treatment, since they are the product of a dedicated amateur as opposed to a commercial photographer, and therefore show certain qualities in their use of light and composition that differentiate

them from the *cartes de visite* and postcards. My analysis of their contemporary readings concentrates on their depiction of women according to the conventional visual codes. However, I also offer an alternative means of analysing these photographs, which attends to the qualities that differentiate them from the *cartes de visite* and postcards.

I conclude the chapter with a contemporary reading which I have made of a postcard in my collection that depicts the female figure in an Orientalist costume and setting. This reading and its analysis are intended as an intervention in the hierarchical organisation of the woman as a metaphorical other to the self of the observer.

IV.I. Narrative Readings

IV.I.I. Introduction

Sharon Marcus (2007) makes descriptive prose readings of fashion plates that focus on their depiction of homoerotic looking between women. For example:

> An 1879 plate shows a woman on horseback starting intently at another woman whose back is to us and appears to return the rider's gaze; a male figure in the background appears to look toward and reflect the viewer, who watches the two women as they inspect one another … The park setting and the physical distance between the two women code them as passing strangers, intensifying the erotic valence of their mutual scrutiny. The composition suggests that the

> two women are about to move toward one another even as the horse appears to move out of the picture frame; the frontal orientation and precarious seat of the woman riding sidesaddle suggest that she could easily slip off her horse to approach the standing woman, whose dog appears similarly inclined to move into the picture plane toward the woman on horseback.[11]
>
> (Marcus 2007: 121)

Further readings narrate the optical instruments that feature on some fashion plates as devices that shape what Marcus views as the images' content and structure of homoerotic looking. For example:

> In an 1891 plate, the optical instrument becomes a fashion accessory with the power to duplicate the gaze one woman directs at another … The woman on the right looks not at the woman next to her, but at her lorgnette – and the lorgnette looks back. Held by a female hand, angled at a fashionable woman, and floating against an empty background, that lorgnette figures the fashion plate's mobile feminine gaze.[12]
>
> (Marcus 2007: 123)

[11] The ellipses indicate where I have omitted the Figure Number that specifically references the image in Marcus' study.
[12] The ellipses indicate where I have omitted the Figure Number that specifically references the image in Marcus' study.

According to Marcus, these homoerotic readings mirror the homoerotic structure of looking that was configured by the magazines that contained the plates (Marcus 2007: 121). That is, in viewing the magazines, actual Victorian women were gazing at eroticised images of women looking at other women. However, if we understand this text as a contemporary reading made within the ahistorical context of the collection, then we can understand it as a sort of realist fiction produced through the classification that the collection offers to its viewer in its replacement of history (Stewart 2007: 151). Here the homoerotic woman is classified by the reading. Further, as a descriptive reading, it shows the attention to detail that belies its production according to this feminine aesthetic: "the two women are about to move toward one another"; "she could easily slip off her horse to approach the standing woman"; "Held by a female hand" (Marcus 2007: 121-123). This detail is offered as a realist narrative that takes women as its false subject. We are presented with a reassuringly self-enclosed world where women look at each other *as* women, and not, as I would argue, as individuals who are subjected to the complexities of social conventions and technologies in their society. This process of production suggests that what was once more explicitly a means of transcending the contradictions of everyday experience, as I argued in the previous chapter, has been levelled and socially integrated as the realism that contains a social lie, which, in this case, is the lie of a historical publicly sanctioned sexualised homoeroticism between *actual* women (see Stewart 2007: 172).

Narrative readings such as these may be made in response to most of the images under investigation. Abigail Solomon-Godeau (1996) offers such a reading in her analysis of lithographs, which is focused on the eroticisation of

the woman's body as an object of the male gaze. Her reading particularly emphasises the structure of the narrative according to the different elements in the image composition:

> *Le Roman du jour* elicits a narrative reading in several ways. Its mise-en-scène is instantly recognizable; the swathe of curtain, silk-covered sofa, embroidered foot cushion, and carved table declare the print's setting as the bourgeois home. The dishabille of the girls, their ambiguous relation to each other (lovers? sisters? friends?), are narrativized by the presence of the book immediately identifiable to the British consumer, to whom the print was equally addressed, as a 'French' novel. Simultaneously a corrupter of innocent morals and an entrée into worldly knowledge and pleasure, the book thus serves as a narrative 'prompt' to justify the erotic display.
>
> (Solomon-Godeau 1996: 123)

By employing Solomon-Godeau's reading as a template, I have made a number of narrative readings of photographic images in the context of the collection in order to show that these images are classified according to a certain narrative structure and a set of codes that are based on the pose, costume and setting of the image content. In doing so I highlight the structured and controlled fictional realism of their production, despite the fact that they are photographs and therefore bear an indexical relation to their referent. For example, *a* photograph of Lydia Thompson bears an indexical relation to its referent. However, the

contemporary narrative readings of a collection of photographs that portray Thompson in different costumes and settings show their fictionalised production. The aim of this section is not to demonstrate how the readings are ideologically determined, since the focus is on how the narrative reading made from *within* the context of the collection *classifies* women and their relationships through the production of a social fiction. However, the detail in the readings also shows that the conventional aesthetics of the detail determines the interaction with the collections of images. In the narrativised social fiction of women and their relationships this conventional attention to the detail in the observer's interaction with the image is heightened in its eroticism.

IV.I.II. The *Cartes de visite* Portraying Lydia Thompson

I begin with the photographs that declare the typical domestic contextual setting: the inclusion of a chair, and/or sometimes an item of furniture such as a table. In one example, the female figure (of Lydia Thompson) wears a long-skirted dress and bodice, her body imbricated with layers of embroidered material, lace and fringing. She wears jewellery, some rings and what appear to be straps around her wrists. She stands with her arm on an ornate chair made of turned and intricately carved wood. This is the typical motif for narrativising the authenticity and personal intimacy of the scene. The chair acts as a recognisable narrative prompt to justify the display of the woman's body. Here the erotic display is composed of three elements; first, the gaze directed at the viewer, and second, the hand touching the cheek. The third is the enhanced, excessive detail continuously denoted by the photographic image. This

exacting capacity of the photograph to fix the object in tension with the typical narrativisation of the scene renders certain elements indistinct. For example, I am not certain whether those are straps around her wrists. This tension between the narrativised elements and the detail of image generates a powerful erotic component to the photograph.

Another example shows a variation on the recurring woman-with-a-book motif (Figure 4). The female figure (Thompson), again dressed in an embroidered full-skirt, leans her arms on a large book that rests on a lectern. She does not hold the book but rather a small oblong shaped object that resists identification. The erotic display is narrativised by both the lectern and the book. However there is a tension between this unidentified object and the book, as if the object augments the erotic display that the book serves to narrativise and justify.

In another image that shows the woman-with-a-book-motif, two female figures appear to be engaged in an exchange with a book. One figure (Thompson) gazes at the book, the other gazes upwards towards her companion.

There is a photograph of the female figure (Thompson) dressed in a white bridal gown. The gown is a highly recognisable narrative prompt that, in this case, justifies the erotic display of the look with the narrativised context of a wedding.

The series of *cartes de visite* photographs of Thompson also show the highly typical motif of the woman-reflected-in-a-mirror. The mirror serves to justify the erotic display of the woman's body and the eroticism of the gaze by narrativising the domestic setting of the bourgeois interior. However, it also

connotes that the female figure initiates the erotic display by looking in the mirror. In one example, we see in her reflected image that she points a finger at the viewer as if to signal a warning to the viewer.

As well as those that declare their contextual setting as that of the bourgeois interior, there are also those that declare the theatrical contextual setting. These examples continue to draw on typical costumes. In one, we see the female figure dressed in a sailor's costume ("Photograph of Lydia Thompson as Harry Halcyon in The Middy Ashore at the Astley's Theatre", dated 1867). In another, we see her dressed in a cap, tunic, trousers of the sort Poiret would appropriate as "harem trousers" and slippers ("Photograph of Lydia Thompson as Valentine in Magic Toys at St. James Theatre", dated 1859). Let me put aside the point that we know from the gallery notes that these are roles played by Thompson in a theatrical onstage production. As McCauley remarked, a viewer-possessor may not have seen the performance. And we today certainly have not.

As images, to take the example of the female figure in the sailor's costume, we see that the sailor's costume is a narrative prompt. It is also a narrative prompt that is explicitly fictional. This narrative prompt then justifies the erotic display of the woman's body, which, although not explicit, is composed of her gaze.

Furthermore, in the context of the collection, an important point here is that, as photographs that declare the theatrical contextual setting, they justify, not only the erotic display of the woman's body, narrativised by various typical costumes, but the above imagery that shows recognisably the same woman's

body (the same face) in those examples that declare the domestic contextual setting.

A good illustration of this blurring between theatrical role of the actress and the female figure in a domestic setting is a *cartes de visite* photograph entitled “Photograph of Adah Isaacs Menken as Mazeppa with an unidentified woman in Mazeppa at Astley's Theatre” and dated c.1860s (Figure 9). The photograph shows the female figure (Adah Isaacs Menken) in a white athletics outfit alongside another (unidentified) female figure in a full-skirted dress, an embellished blanket draped over her shoulder. The erotic display is composed of the gaze and the embrace: one standing figure’s flirtatious gaze towards her seated companion who gazes at the viewer, and their embrace with their hands clasped together and the one reaching around the other’s waist.



Figure 9. “Photograph of Adah Isaacs Menken as Mazeppa with an unidentified woman in Mazeppa at Astley's Theatre”, c.1860s. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

IV.I.III. The Lady Clementina Hawarden Photographs

Lady Hawarden’s photographs of her daughters are also variously narrativised by both their fabrication and declaration of both a domestic and a theatrical contextual setting, and the employment of recognisable motifs.

We see the woman-with-a-book motif. In one example, two female figures (Clementina Maude, 1847-1901, and Isabella Grace, 1846-1927) pose with their backs to the terrace window, wearing pale summer dress. One figure sits with an open book in her lap, the other stands with her hand on the other’s shoulder, the gaze of each is directed towards the book’s open pages. Thus the terrace window declares the domestic contextual setting of the bourgeois interior, and the book is a recognisable motif that signals the erotic pleasures of “corrupting” knowledge. The erotic display is composed of the models’ gaze, the detail of the photographic image, and the gesture of a hand resting on a shoulder.



Figure 10. Clementina, Lady Hawarden, photographer, "Clementina Maude beside cabinet, 5 Princes Gardens; Photographic Study", c. 1862-1863. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

In another example (Figure 10), the female figure (Clementina Maude) stands with her hands reaching towards a drawer of a cabinet, pulled slightly open; the book perches on top of the cabinet, and above her head. Her gaze is directed at the viewer.

In this collection we often see the woman-reflected-in-a-mirror motif. In one example, the female figure (Clementina) sits in front a cheval mirror, wearing a long, full skirt and a chemise top, her hair fixed to the back of her head with a clasp. The light illuminates her bare shoulder. In the reflection, we can see that one arm is held in a relaxed position over the leg closest to the mirror, and the other arm is held towards her face. Her gaze is directed at the

reflection, her face offset by the balustrade of a terrace. Here, the mirror, terrace, skirting board, and wallpaper declare the domestic setting. The erotic display is composed of the gaze, the photographic detail (not to mention the striking light in this particular example) and the bare shoulder and neck of the woman's body.

In another example, we see the female figure (Clementina) standing by a cheval mirror wearing her undergarments. The mid-length skirt and bodice connote a ballerina's costume.

There are examples that show the female figure reclining with her eyes closed amongst fabrics. Another female figure, in this example she is standing, directs her gaze towards the reclining (seemingly sleeping) figure. The domestic setting is narrativised by the couch, the fabric, and, in this example, we see a jug resting on a shelf (possibly a fireplace) and a circular object fixed to the wall that looks like a light switch (or service bell). The erotic display is, again, composed of the gaze. And also, more specifically, the tension generated from the figure's closed eyes: the viewer's gaze is thus explicitly implicated in the erotic display as if voyeur.

Furthermore, we can see the female figure (who looks to be Isabella) wearing a pale gown and veil, as if a bride. In certain examples, she appears as though she were posing as the Countess di Castiglione herself with her hair in twin ringlets and a facial expression of wry sincerity, her gaze directed at the viewer. It is notable here, as in the Victoria and Albert Museum's annotated notes to the photographs, that many of the costumes are closer in style to the eighteenth-century than the nineteenth-century.

Clearly, these photographs do not reference an onstage, professional theatrical production. However, there are those examples that declare a theatrical context through the costumes and poses of the figures. What needs to be noted, however, is that the "theatrical context" is therefore more precisely a declared context of myth or fairytale. In one example, an apparently male figure (Clementina Maude) stands with his back to the viewer, wearing a long cape. He has his hat raised above his head, as if to greet the female figure (Isabella Grace) standing adjacent wearing eighteenth-century style dress, complete with choker and veil. Her gaze is directed downwards towards direction of the other's navel. It worth observing that this configuration of the figures (with one figure acting out chivalry) is not always displayed with one in male dress, as a knight or page, for example, and the other in the female dress, as a princess; sometimes both are wearing full dresses. We see the female figure as a nun, as a character from fairytale such as Cinderella (complete with broom), as a Gothic enchantress and an Oriental princess. These photographs are all narrativised and recognisable by their costumes, mise-en-scène and prompts in the justification of the erotic display of the woman's body.

IV.II.IV. The Postcards Portraying Women in Gardens

There are many examples of early-twentieth-century Edwardian postcards that show both actresses and non-actresses posing in gardens. Imagery that shows the actress in a garden was not uncommon for the period. However, it is primarily through Preston's research that it has been helpfully brought to attention as a phenomenon of postcard culture (Preston 2009). Here I treat the

postcards of her study as narrativised imagery of the typical female figure. For, although these postcards are set in gardens, they nevertheless employ the recognisable motifs and narrative prompts of a domestic contextual setting.

These postcards do not explicitly show examples that declare a theatrical or mythical contextual setting through costume; the female figures wear typical middle-class Edwardian dress consisting of a long skirt and white blouse, sometimes with elbow-length sleeves. However, it is worth noting details that appear to subtly reference the premise of onstage theatrical display.

In one example, Preston shows us in her study, three female figures stand in a "chorus line" configuration, two with their hands on shoulders, one with her hands on her belt. Their gazes are directed towards the viewer. The eyes of the one with her hands on her belt are half-closed; another appears to wear a branch of leaves as a decoration in her belt.

In the typical examples provided in Preston's study, the majority show the woman-with-a-book motif. The female figure sits with a book in her lap (in one she lies in a hammock), her gaze, again, directed at the viewer. As we have seen, the book justifies the erotic display, and the chair that she sits in lends a domesticating authenticity to the image of the figure.

We also see an example that shows the female figure sitting on the threshold between house and garden on what appears to be a fur rug. Lace curtains and potted houseplants frame the doorway as recognisable narrative prompts that declare a domestic contextual setting. We can see the face of a second female figure in the shadows of house interior. The figures of children and infants are also shown in these images.

Of the postcards of actresses, the example Preston provides shows a "Miss Evie Green". She is posing with her foot on a long-handled garden fork, which acts as a narrative prompt to justify the erotic display of her ankle.

The domestic contextual setting is certainly recognisable in the image content of these postcards. There is also a subtle theatrical narrative. However, there is a distinctive blurring between the contexts. The actress is not an actress but rather a celebrity "at home". At the same time, women pose in the manner that had been modelled by actresses' *cartes de visite* in the mid nineteenth-century, while children are also photographed alongside them in the vein of the (domestic) family portrait. The continuously denoted garden is neither the interior of the home, nor the theatre. It is made of organic materials and yet it is decoratively artificial. The image of the garden therefore provides a convenient, contradictory mise-en-scène for imagery of eroticised femininity that is recognisable by its relation to the domestic household and yet resists declaration of its contextual setting.

IV.II. The Ahistorical Ideological Production of the Images

IV.II.I. Introduction

The narrative readings show that the contemporary readings of the collections of photographic material images fictionalise the social relations between women. These readings are relatively benign insofar as they are understood as being prompted by the collections. Crucially, however, there is further cause to argue that certain contemporary readings of collections of the photographic

images, which attribute the production of the images to actual women who lived in the past, are determined by and continue to reinforce the production of woman-as-image through conventional nineteenth-century ideologies regarding the truth or authenticity of the self. In the following section I examine contemporary analytical readings that are made in response to collections of photographic images situated in what I argue to be a false historical context, and which focus on the images' indexical denotation of an actual woman as the referent. By examining the production of these readings within the hermetic context of the collection (as opposed to the context of public and private space in the nineteenth or early twentieth-century) I want to draw attention to the readings' metaphorical and ideological production of the woman, rather than their analysis of how the images' pertain to a referent. This involves examining how the photographs' indexical and continuous denotation of a woman within the context of the collection prompts an ideological reading.

IV.II.II. The Cartes de Visite Portraying Lydia Thompson

As I discussed in the literature review, in situating the images' production and circulation in the context of the mid ninteenth-century, Buszek (2006) argues that *cartes de visite* that portray Lydia Thompson and Adah Isaacs Menken in various theatrical and domestic contextual settings destabilised the period's binary conceptions of "true" and "public" womanhood. She argues that the female performer was able to manipulate and control the imagery to this effect. Here I examine an extract of her text that picks up on the nineteenth-century

belief that identified the external image with the essence or soul of the photographed subject. She writes:

> Photography was as easily manipulated as the stage performances which were their trade, yet photographs were scrutinized by the public as scientific and objective proof of one's essential personality. To this end, the cartes-de-visite as constructed by its female burlesque patrons held the potential of not only decontaining their diverse character identities, but *concretizing* them – every one of them – as fact, rather than as theatrical fiction. The new range of roles for women in legitimate theatrical spaces – manager, performer, and viewer alike – resulted in what Abigail Solomon-Godeau identifies as a 'shifting, unsecured meaning of the sexualized women drifting between the sturdy fixities of *fille honnête* and *fille publique* … confound[ing] the social need to define that is an inseparable component of the power to name, survey and control' female identity and sexuality.
>
> (Buszek 2006: 63)

Buszek explicitly treats the *cartes de visite* imagery in terms of its objectification. The images are viewed as specific identities that are then "concretised" as an essentialised personality. Importantly, the "concretisation" of the images is linked with *female* identity in a sense that directly relates to the continuously denoted woman in the image: Lydia Thompson. Yet, in spite of

the supposed intentional relation to the images' referent and to a *female* identity, these concretised identities are said to "confound the social need to define" (Buszek 2006: 63). It should be noted that, when Solomon-Godeau identifies what she calls "sexualized women," she is referring to feminine types not female identities (Solomon-Godeau 1996: 102). I argue that if we are to directly associate these feminine types with the female body of the photograph's referent as Buszek does, this does not mean that they confound the need to define the notion of *female* sexuality. By clear contrast, they provide ample terminology to do so.

In contrast to Buszek's argument that these images' production and circulation destabilised female identities, where the reading of the image is directly related to the photograph's referent, I argue that this reading is made within the context of the collection as a response to the photograph's continuous denotation of the woman, who in this case is recognisable by her face as Lydia Thompson. As such, in focusing on the different theatrical and domestic typical scenes as if they concretised but at the same time destabilised female identity it arguably raises the contradiction of the woman who is both true *and* vulgar. If the images as a collection replace history with classification and hold a metaphorical relation to everyday life, then the question is what this contradiction is a metaphor for. I would propose that the contradiction of the woman who is both true and vulgar is a metaphor for the true, living self and its analogy, the death of the self. Because the above reading is produced in response to a collection of images in the present, this would suggest that the ideology of the true self continues to produce these images today.

In light of Stewart (2007), I attend to the point that the image of the woman's body belongs to the other, to the articulation of another's reading (Stewart 2007: 125). I would argue that, in claiming the objectification or concretisation of the imagery, Buszek's text is articulating a reading of the woman's body that serves to socially integrate the new subject invented by the collection of *cartes de visite* (Stewart 2007: 172). It does do by constructing the photograph's continuous denotation of a particular woman, for example, Lydia Thompson, as a fictional imaginary woman. This imaginary woman is a response to the social contract of the genre, which attempts to pleasurably resolve contradictions in the everyday life of an individual. In this light, the argument that the particular burlesque performer manipulated or controlled the imagery in the destablisation of womanhood is a response to the presentation of the woman's body by the *cartes de visite*. This is an articulation of the face that is at the same time an articulation of the socially valued woman's body by the analyst, the reader of the collection of *cartes de visite*.

It is only when the 'authentic' new subject is exposed as such that the *self* of the reader's production of the imagery comes to the fore. Italo Calvino's "The Adventure of a Photographer" (1995) is pertinent here. Calvino (1995) takes the reader on a journey through one man's production of the imagery of the typical female figure under discussion, from the domestic contextual setting to the theatrical contextual setting. His protagonist Antonino Paraggi is sceptical of photography as a bourgeois leisure pursuit but he turns out to be one of its more obsessive proponents. Antonino's newly acquired camera pursues his models Bice and Lydia. He wants to take photographs of them as "posed subjects, in attitudes denoting their social position and their character, as

in the nineteenth-century": the portrait photograph that aims to capture the definition of a person's "true character" (Calvino 1995: 45). Only Bice agrees but Antonino is unsatisfied: "I can't get you", he complains (Calvino 1995: 46). He then changes strategy, deciding to concentrate on her external appearance, her "somewhat nostalgic, somewhat ironic intention … to hark back to the fashions of thirty years earlier." (Calvino 1995: 47) Bice poses for Antonino as a tennis player: "In the ideal postcard in his mind there would have been the net of the tennis court, but you couldn't demand too much, and Antonino made do with a Ping-Pong table." (Calvino 1995: 47) But Antonino is still unsatisfied for it was "like a dream" (Calvino 1995: 48). He decides that she must pose in evening dress. For:

> Only in evening dress would Bice become a photographic subject, with the décolleté that marks the distinct line between the white of the skin and the darkness of the fabric, accentuated by the glitter of jewels, a boundary between the essence of woman, almost atemporal and almost impersonal in her nakedness, and the other abstraction, social this time, the dress, symbol of an equally impersonal role, like the drapery of an allegorical statue.
>
> (Calvino 1995: 49)

But Bice does not pose in evening dress. Antonino approaches her, and begins to unbutton her dress. He then finds "the portrait outside of time and space that he now wanted" and proceeds to take his photographs of Bice, naked: "I've got

you now", he declares (Calvino 1995: 49; 50). Bice leaves Antonino and he follows his desire, photographing the voids marked by her absence – "It was an invisible Bici that he wanted to possess" – and composing his catalogue of "everything in the world that resists photography, that is systematically omitted from the visual field not only by the camera but also by human beings … so as to follow the changes of light and shadow." (Calvino 1995: 51) In the scene of his neglected apartment, Antonino pursues to craft an art out of shadows, tearing up photographs of Bici and then photographing them:

> He … wanted it to be possible to recognize in his photograph the half-crumpled and torn images, and at the same time to feel their unreality as casual, inky shadows, and also at the same time their concreteness as objects charged with meaning, the strength with which they clung to the attention that tried to drive them away.
>
> (Calvino 1995: 52)

In this desire to simultaneously recognise the image, and feel the photographs' unreality as shadows and meaningfulness as objects, eventually, Antonino realises that his course is but to photograph photographs.

Calvino's tale shows that the production of the image of the typical female figure is an imaginary fictional construction of the observer's own unsettled, shifting and contradictory desire in everyday life. The desire to possess and scrutinise the woman's body and the typical world in which she is continuously denoted is pleasurable in the sense that she can be recognised and

named, not as “Bice”, but as the photographic subject, the exaggerated and yet social “woman”. But it is further pleasurable in his pursuit of an imaginary “authenticity”, which then constitutes that observer’s subjectivity.

In his possession of photographs of the woman’s body in a variety of typical feminine guises, Calvino’s protagonist sought to own for himself a photograph “outside of time and space”. Citing J. M. Barrie’s *Peter Pan,* Marina Warner (2012) has written on this sort of imaginary shadow-catching as a condition of the spirit. When Peter Pan loses his shadow (which testifies to the materiality of his bodily existence) it is unruly and excessive until he repossesses it, “still a little creased”, with the assistance of Wendy’s sewing. He then teaches Wendy and her siblings to fly: “to fly, an image of dreams, of out of the body experience, of the other world, of the spirit.” (Warner 2012: 186) And on they fly to Neverland, “a place where the dead live as if they are alive, and nobody grows up, and the laws of time and space are cancelled.” (Warner 2012: 186) So, in light of this, in simply claiming that *cartes de visite* of imagery of the typical female figure are directly associated with, and even concretised as female identity and sexuality, I would caution that we are also seeking a fictional authentic body outside of continuous time and space.

I would like to conclude my problematisation of Buszek’s reading of the collection of theatrical and domestic photographic images of Thompson and Menken by turning to Bram Dijkstra’s work on the misogynistic fantasies of women that were represented by the paintings of the fin-de-siècle. I attend to Dijkstra’s work here and not in the chapter on the historical context to the images because I want to draw attention to the connections between the above reading of the collection of *cartes de visite* images and the fantasies about

women that were represented by the paintings. With Menken and Thompson as examples, in her analysis of the *cartes de visite* Buszek views the actress in the mid nineteenth-century as a woman whose performance and posing of various "theatrical identities" would subvert the dominant roles for women by destabilising the normative female identities. A similar line of argument can also be detected in Roberts (2005) where she relates Sarah Bernhardt's performances to a subversive histrionics. However, Dijkstra tells us of other side to the story, namely that, far from acting to subvert the dominant conceptions of women and their sexuality, the actresses' capriciousness would fall well within the bounds of late nineteenth-century misogyny. This misogyny fantastically related the capacity of the actress to perform various roles to the view that women were inherently creatures who could but merely imitate brute nature. He writes:

> It is by no accident that the years around 1900 were years of triumph for actress everywhere. Women such as Sarah Bernhardt and Elenora Duse became heroines of mythic proportions. But it was not because they were seen as particularly original that the actresses became celebrated. Instead, they were seen as unusually successful in exploiting the imitative bent of 'woman's nature'.
>
> (Dijkstra 1985: 120)

Indeed, Dijkstra moves on to relate this view to the characterisation of the actresses in the literature of the period, such as in Emile Zola's *Nana* "with her

pitiful historionics and delectable body" (Dijkstra 1985: 120). We see examples that recall the various sexualised women, the feminine types, encompassed therein. He explains: "In the eyes of their authors, these fictional women had the characteristic feminine imitative capacity of 'reflecting' the world in which they lived without ever really understanding its deeper meaning, its intellectual dimension." (Dijkstra 1985: 121) An understanding of the ongoing production of such narratives as that of the true and vulgar woman in response to collections of *cartes de visite* imagery may help to disentangle female identity from the hierarchy of its societal fictionalisation.

IV.II.III. The Lady Clementina Hawarden Photographs

The Lady Hawarden photographs are a collection that bears a neglected similarity to *cartes de visite* of low female performers, such as those of Thompson and Menken. The photographs are of the genre in the sense that they are a collection showing a series of images of the female figure in both the declared domestic setting and the declared theatrical setting. That they are privatised possessions made and kept in a household aligns them with the personal appeal of the more commercial, mass-produced examples as souvenirs. Yet the images stage the female figure in excess of the photographic image's insubstantiality and function to justify the presentation of the woman's body. In the domestic examples, the chairs and desks are made of elaborately carved wood, the dresses are layered and embellished, and the figures wear jewellery such as tiaras and necklaces with drop pendants. The book motif and the chests are narrative prompts but only insofar as they too signal erotic appeal. Further,

we see ample examples of those declaring the theatrical setting. Although the photographs do not refer to professional theatrical productions and the female figures are not actresses, we nonetheless see costumes that are typical of those modelled by actresses and dancers. In this, the theatrical examples serve to justify the display of the woman's body in those examples declaring the domestic setting.

However, in spite of Lady Hawarden photographs' clear similarities to the *cartes de visite*, I also need to outline important distinctions. In reverse order, first, the theatrical examples do not show us entirely professional costumes. For example, the characteristic mid-length skirt of the "ballerina" (or *rat*) is an undergarment. Second, the scenic backdrop is not the painted "realistic" composition shown by the theatrical *cartes de visite*, but star-printed wallpaper. Third, lighting. The *cartes de visite* examples tend to show an image that is artificially lit. In contrast, the Hawarden photographs show us images that are subtle and, indeed, experimental in the sense that they employ daylight as a part of the visual composition. For example, the female figure is directly lit, whereas other elements are comparatively in the shade. Fourth, mirrors. The mass-produced examples show the female figure positioned by a mirror wherein her gaze is either directed at the viewer (as mediated by the mirror's reflection) or at the reflection. The Hawarden photographs show a comparatively greater use of mirrors. Furthermore, they also show more variation in the figure's position and gaze by the mirror. For example, her gaze is not directed at the mirror but adjacent to the mirror. Further, there are examples where her eyes are closed yet also reflected in the mirror. Fifth, balustrade and windows. Certain commercial *cartes de visite* examples, mostly those declaring a theatrical contextual setting,

show the female figure positioned next to a balustrade, against which we see a painted scenic backdrop. Examples in the Hawarden collection show the female figure positioned on the *threshold* of a terrace. Sixth, and lastly, poses. Unlike the commercial examples where we mostly see the female figure either standing or seated, the repertoire of poses in the Hawarden collection repeatedly include the female figure reclining on a chaise longue. There are also various photographs that show the female figure displaying a gesture or pose atypical to the mass-produced collection. For example, a hand clasped to a breast, a face pressed to a breast and the figure positioned in comparatively close proximity to the mirror. In light of these distinctions, I would suggest that the Hawarden photographs are not just in excess of the insubstantiality of the photograph's denotation of a referent, they are also in excess of the typical repertoire of scenes presented by the printed imagery of the generic female figure.

Mavor (1999) approaches what I am terming here as an excess of the generic woman-as-image in the Hawarden photographs as 'Hawarden's queerness'. If we understand 'queer' according to the definition I provided in my introduction, this claim suggests that Hawarden was intentionally challenging heteronormative constructions of sex and gender through her authorship of the photographs. Here I will outline how Mavor makes this argument of the photographs.



Figure 11. Clementina, Lady Hawarden, photographer, "Photograph," c. 1862-1863. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

To do so I examine a reading from Mavor's analysis that is made in response to the above image (Figure 11). I select the following reading because it is from the chapter in Mavor's text, entitled 'Sapphic Narcissa,' where she explicitly provides an example as to why the images are queer in her view, as opposed to dominant signifiers of desire or "heterosexist" as she puts it (Mavor 1999: 111). She contrasts Lady Hawarden's photographs with both pornographic stereoscopic photographs and, indeed, an example of the Realist paintings that are the subject of Dijkstra's study: Gustave Courbet's *The Sleepers* (1866) (Mavor 1999: 111). She writes:

> Yet, because of the setting and context of Hawarden's pictures (photographs taken by a mother of her daughters in the home and then only rarely shown in public, in other words, sexualised pictures taken by a woman of women and young girls and kept privately within the domestic sphere), the shadows of Courbet's *Sleepers* and

> pornographic photographs that I see referenced in her work (whether or not intentional) pull heterosexuality into queerness.
>
> (Mavor 1999: 111)

Mavor offers the following reading as an example of this queerness and what she argues as its interrogation of the construction of heterosexuality (Mavor 1999: 112). It is made in response to a photograph of the female figure (Florence) positioned with her head near the other's female figure's (Clementina) breast; both figures are fully clothed (Figure 11). She writes:

> For example, the image of Clementina as Florence's milkmaid unsettles the viewer with an image of a grown girl nearly suckling, certainly sniffing her delicious sister. … A six-pointed star at the center of Clementina's chest punctuates the poignant gesture of one girl's hand on top of another's: rock/paper/(no) scissors. … Through gently flaring nostrils, tickling tongue and bacchant lips that I cannot see but feel in me/on me/through me, Florence begins to exhaust Clementina in me. My eyes are closed in imagination.
>
> Yet, the remembered transparency of Clementina's party dress (part fairy, part queen, part Madonna, part Oriental) makes me open my eyes (again) to squint to attempt to see more, to see what I can only imagine: a violet breast, a rosy-sienna nipple.
>
> (Mavor 1999: 112)

Mavor alludes to certain reasons as to why she views the Lady Hawarden images in contrast to the commercialised examples: the images' privatisation among women in the domestic sphere, this particular images' continuous denotation of "two women", and the pose of "one woman's face and hand pressed to the other woman's breast". But, if 'queer' is a conscious critical position that expressly interrogates heternormativity, it is not clear why this reading particularly constitutes queerness. Indeed, while it does not overtly "concretise" the image as a female identity, in generally organising the production of the image around women, it arguably takes women as a fixed subject.

I should like to outline certain alternative explanations of the reading and its relation to the imagery of the typical female figure. Rather than relating this prompting of their reader's imagination to "Hawarden's [authorial] queerness", I would suggest that the photographs' excessive staging of the imagery of the typical female figure prompts a reading that is akin to Barthes' concept of the blind field, as outlined in *Camera Lucida* (Barthes 1993). With regard to the mass-produced *cartes de visite,* I would argue that, in the interaction with the image (a dominant signifier of desire that has been excessively yet highly typically contextualised and narrativised) there is no *punctum* that would *dynamise* the denoted "woman". Here, there is a dynamic quality to the reading. On one hand, recalling Barthes' blind field, there is a clear fantasy narrative that animates the elements in the image. As Barthes writes: "Last thing about the *punctum*: whether or not it is triggered, it is an addition: it is what I add to the photograph and *what it nonetheless already there.*" (Barthes 2002: 55) The

reading imagines what is not there to be seen and yet is nevertheless prompted by the image's narrativisation: "a violet breast, a rosy-sienna nipple" (Mavor 1991: 112). The photograph is endowed with a blind field: the fantasy of "gently flaring nostrils, tickling tongue and bacchant lips" (Mavor 1991: 112). Further, is the party dress transparent? What party dress? If it is the dress that is shown in the photograph under analysis, there is no transparency to the dress; that is, we do not see through the dress. This blind field constructs the continuously denoted "women" (Clementina and Florence) as an imaginary entity in the observer's interaction with the image.

Mavor pleasurably defines the constructed "woman" as "Sapphic" and as queer. Following my extrapolation of Stewart, I argue this is a fiction that serves to falsely socially integrate the subject invented by the material as a collective authentic body. At the same time, however, the text also performs the iterations of the articulation of the woman's body: the desiring gesture towards origins. I return to this latter point below.

First, I need to comment on the problems with the notion that the photographs constitute "Hawarden's queerness" because they are "sexualised pictures taken by a woman of women and young girls and kept privately within the domestic sphere", as if queerness entailed a same-sex world, or women's sequestration from men. Here, we can explicitly link the misogynistic fantasises circulated by fin-de-siècle paintings, including Gustave Courbet's *Sleepers,* with the fantasy narrative prompted by the Hawarden photographs. Dijkstra writes on the prevalent motif of "the mirror" in paintings such as Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones' "The Mirror of Venus" (1898) and Luis Bonnin's "The Water Mirror" (1901). These works show the figures of women – identical in

appearance as “Woman” – peering at their reflections in the pool of water like so many female Narcissisi. Although the Hawarden photographs are not depictions of women looking at the natural mirror (the pool of water) the notion of the privatised “suprainteriorised” female world invoked in Mavor’s analysis makes this material in Dijkstra’s study worthy of close attention. This is particularly pressing since this reading is also made in connection with the relationship between Hawarden (as a mother) and her daughters, thereby invoking the connection between the mirror, women and (natural) mother. Dijkstra writes of the former examples depicting women looking at the pool of water:

> As earth, earth mother, vulval round, moon, and mirror of nature woman was a simple reflection of the world around her. … She existed in and for what she mirrored, and unless she mirrored the world of man, she mirrored brute nature, the world of woman herself. Thus, paradoxically, as long as woman lived among women, she lived alone, completely self-contained. She mirrored other women and other women mirrored her.
>
> (Dijkstra 1985: 132)

What Dijkstra is saying here is that, in the fantasy of woman’s inherent mimicry of brute nature, when the woman does not exist in man’s image, she was seen to exist among women only. In this, she was reduced, along with other women, to a reflection of nature. And so she could only conceive of herself as Woman,

"the great undifferentiated expression of primal being." (Dijkstra 1985: 132) Thus: "her womanhood was a source of continual fascination to her. To see herself was her only hold on reality … To prevent loss of self she had to continually reassure herself of her existence by looking in that natural mirror." (Dijkstra 1985: 132) Therefore the notion that the Hawarden photographs constitute a suprainteriorised female world of Hawarden and her daughters' relationships bares comparison to the misogynistic fantasy that women "live among women", existing in relation to their own self-contained reflections as Woman. Further, such fantasises of women's self-containment were not limited to the "mirror of nature". As Dijkstra shows, the mirror theme developed such that the undifferentiated Woman also emerged as the autoerotic woman besotted with her own reflection in the looking-glass, a fantasy that would develop connections to notions about lesbian identity. For example, Edouart Manet's "Nana" (1877) and Antoine Magaud's "A Kiss in the Glass" (c.1885). Such imagery was linked to the so-called "rediscovery of women's sexuality" at the turn-of-the-century through the work of the period's sexologists. Dijkstra remarks that Havelock Ellis, writing a paper entitled "Auto-Eroticism, a Psychological Study" in 1898, claimed to have scientifically identified women's autoerotic and narcissistic nature. Here is a quoted extract from Ellis:

> This narcissus-like tendency, of which the normal germ in women is symbolized by the mirror, is found in minor degree in some feminine-minded men, but seems very rarely found in men apart from sexual attraction for other persons, to which attraction it is, of

> course, normally subservient. But occasionally in women it appears to exist by itself, to the exclusion of any attraction for other persons.
>
> (Ellis in Dijkstra 1985: 145)

However, Dijkstra is keen to point out that such themes had already been in put in place, prior to Ellis' observations as an objective scientist, by the art and literature on the feminine condition, including Zola's *Nana*. He points out that this art and literature was responding to the dawning concern that women were not figures of self-sacrifice. Although Dijkstra does not explicitly mention so, such a response is in line with the political activism of women's Suffrage and the New Woman discussed above. Hence, Ellis' diagnosis "had been developed and categorized ... by artists and writers who were themselves responding to the 'betrayal' by women of ideals of behaviour imposed on her during an earlier historical period." (Dijkstra 1985: 146) Whether or not we want to place concern over the "origins" of the autoerotic woman, the point is that she circulated as a feminine condition in painting and literature and was supported with the objective, confirming evidence of science. Further, the autoerotic woman (particularly under the objective scrutiny of the sexologists) extended to a discourse on women's relationships with other women, not only as friends but also as lovers. Importantly, Dijkstra's research yields the insight that:

> it was not until 1900 that the depiction of lesbianism became a popular and, among intellectuals, a popularly accepted theme. This acceptance was largely due to the fact that the assumption that

> women were undifferentiated beings had becomes commonplace by this time.
>
> (Dijkstra 1985: 153)

Thus, women's sexual activity with other women was seen to be an extension of both their autoeroticism and their undifferentiated nature. In other words, as long as women lived among other women, sexual activity between women was confined to a woman's own self-involvement. Significantly, then, the emergence of the undifferentiated Woman was no less a fantasised, dominant response to the evident political challenges to women's limited position in society than the sexualised autoerotic woman.

Therefore I need to return to Mavor's study and the justification of queerness and, by turns, Sapphism, in terms of "sexualised pictures taken by a woman of women and young girls and kept privately within the domestic sphere" (Mavor 1999: 111). The above reading is presented as an example of the "queerness" of *Hawarden's photographs*: the way in which the photographs interrogate the construction of heterosexuality (Mavor 1999: 112). Significantly, however, it is personalised by the reader's own fantasised articulation of the photograph as a *text* which, as I argue, socially integrates the interaction with the imagery as an exaggeration of the authentic body (Stewart 1993: 172). At the same time, in light of Dijkstra's research on the later paintings, the justification of this reading in terms of significance to Hawarden and her daughters as constructed past women reveals *ongoing* dominant fantasies about women's self-containment and autoeroticism. Thus, we see that

the tendency to read the imagery in terms of significance to the historical women today invokes a fantasy narrative about the continuously denoted "woman" or "women" that corresponds to those fin-de-siècle fantasies concerning women's supposed mimicry of nature, whether by the capricious capacities of the female actress, or the undifferentiated, or the autoerotic woman. This point concerning the fantasy narrative on the denoted "woman" as an imaginary entity requires further investigation.

In relating Calvino's tale to Buszek's text on the *cartes de visite*, I remarked that the response to the imagery of the typical female figure that perceives the imagery in terms of the *concretisation* of female identity and sexuality may well simultaneously pursue the fiction of an authentic collective body, outside of time and space. In Calvino's tale, the false social integration of the imagery of the typical female figure emerged once the idealised fixed reflection had been broken: that is, once Bici, the constructed "woman", had left the scene. Yet, much like Narcissus in Ovid's renowned tale, his protagonist Antonino is none the wiser.

Interestingly, according to Dijkstra's analysis, death is what is supposed to befall the undifferentiated Woman should *she break away from* the reflective image:

> As they look at themselves they are filled with the wonder of their existence, yet they remain wistfully aware that are soon as the surface of the pond is violated, as soon as the mirror is broken, they will lose their reflection, their interlacing, collective identity, and will, in effect, die.

(Dijkstra 1985: 133)

In this death, Dijkstra presents two outcomes in the late nineteenth-century cultural convention. On one hand, there is the eventuality that she truly falls in love with a man, thereby departing her self-contained life with women. As he puts it: “In succumbing to love the true woman was, as it were, forced to break her mirror, to forgo her identity, and instead be spiritually absorbed by her man.” (Dijkstra 1985: 133) He then continues:

> If, on the other hand, she recklessly sacrified her self-containment and broke her mirror, succumbing to worldly desire without being given a secure harbour for her selfhood in the identity of a willing lover, mental disorientation and madness were the envitable result.
>
> (Dijkstra 1985: 133)

The undifferentiated Woman and her “imitative bent”, while a fantasy, was the circular, not to mention pleasurable, solace offered when the relation between self and other (in this case man and woman) was under challenge. But it also left women with little room for manoeuvre.

Thus, with regard to the photographic imagery of the typical female figure, as a version of the undifferentiated Woman, the imaginary entity of the continuously denoted “woman” is of significant value to the interaction with the image. For in its personal, ideological interaction with an analyst it also engages

and confounds the self and the social need to define the Other. Lauren Berlant writes: "the minute an object comes under analytic scrutiny, it bobs and weaves, becomes unstable, mysterious, and recalcitrant, seeming more like a fantasy than the palpable object it had first seemed to be when the thinker/lover first risked engagement." (Berlant 2012: 18) So I would argue that not only does this fantasy narrative reinforce the photograph's continuous denotation of a "woman", it also secures the analyst's own unsettled desire. If we are to understand the above outcomes as the logical dramatic convention of the imagery's narrative, then it is perhaps little wonder that the text retains and perpetuates the entirely vague notion of Woman.

In order to investigate this further, I now briefly explore the belief in soul-theft (the myth that the camera steals the soul) and the notion of the image's essence. Because the imagery of the typical female figure is narrativised in justification of the erotic display of *the woman's body*, I do not treat it as directly equivalent with the portrait and ethnographic photographs that were viewed to retain the soul or essence of an individual person (see Warner 2006). However, as Stewart tells us, the woman's body "is spoken by her face, by the articulation of anothers' reading." (Stewart 1993: 125) The apprehension of the face entails a reading that does not belong to the woman herself, and thus there is an essentialised element that has been mythically possessed by the analyst.

Marina Warner's discussion of soul-theft provides a means of teasing out such a process. She writes that the "contemporary myth interestingly reveals enduring strategems of the imagination when the self feels under threat of incomprehension, and their resulting wider cultural expression." (Warner 2012: 197) With regard to the self under threat of incomprehension, I have argued that

the imagery of the typical female figure constructs the continuously denoted "woman" as an imaginary entity that serves to socially integrate the subject in the interaction with the image. Placed in the context of the ongoing relation interaction between the image and the analyst, the myth sheds light on Solomon-Godeau's proposition regarding what she terms "imagery of femininity", and which she situates in the context of the nineteenth-century and capitalism, that:

> to the degree that the concept of the modern world could be viewed as alternately (or simultaneously) seductive and threatening, figures of femininity could be inflected in either direction, mobilized and animated to figure, to 'sublimate,' and to psychologically 'manage' the conflicts and contradictions of industrial capitalism and their effects on psychic and social life.
>
> (Solomon-Godeau 1996: 117)

Furthermore, Warner explains: "The idea of soul-theft by image provokes a feeling of shame in those who hold it because it is not rational, it is not scientific. So it is ascribed to an Other who is primitive – noble and doomed" (Warner 2012: 197). When another's reading apprehends the image of the face, and articulates a reading of the woman's body thereby indicating a degree of possession and thus shame, it follows that the process is attributed to a fantasised notion of Woman, undifferentiated and ahistorical; lest, perhaps, she lose her identity entirely.

The Hawarden photographs do prompt such reductive fantasies about women. However, at the same time Mavor's text also articulates a subversive intervention in the mass-produced imagery of the typical female figure. As a reading of the woman's body, it enacts objectification and in doing so performs the iterations that constitute the desiring gesture towards origins on the part of the analyst. For example, the superfluous exaggeration of her reading points to its taking "part in the fiction of the authentic body" (Stewart 1993: 172). It performs explicit iterations such as: "rock/paper/(no) scissors" and "I cannot see but feel in me/on me/through me, Florence begins to exhaust Clementina in me" (Mavor 1999: 112). The repetition of "me" suggests the imagery's invention of the personal "authentic" subject. Such iterations also demonstrate that the "essence" in the interaction with imagery is constituted in the text itself. In this sense, it is the analyst's reading that is establishing patterns of femininity, not the particular "woman" continuously denoted by the photographic image.

I conclude this sub-chapter on the Hawarden photographs with an analysis of their intervention in the printed imagery of the typical female figure, not as a prompt to fantasy but as an artistic act that makes sense by their comparison to the commercial examples. In one of the above-mentioned examples showing the woman-with-a-book motif, we can see that the book is perched on the cabinet but it is a fraction of a distance from her head, as if to hint at training her deportment whilst she reaches inside a cabinet drawer (Figure 11). Furthermore, while in the *cartes de visite* photographs of Thompson we see the book being passed between the female figures, a somewhat similar example in Hawarden's work displays, not the book as the object of exchange, but a photograph.

David Bate (2004) has written on photography and the visual pun (*paranomasia*), which through its cultural connotations, its trail of discursive meanings, can work as a subversive joke on a dominant visual economy, in the case of his analysis, by employing the Oriental signifier (Bate 2004: 117-119). In his analysis of Man Ray's *Violon d'Ingres* (1924), Bate draws attention to the way in which Man Ray punned the visual economy of the woman's body in his French forebear Ingres' *Baigneuse de Valpinçion* (1808) by staging the image for a photograph (Kiki de Montparnasse also known as Alice Prin was the model) with the superimposition of a violin's sound holes on her back. The "false homology" between the violin and the woman's body yields the joke that "a woman is an object to be played like a violin" (Bate 2004: 118). And, as Bate puts it, "Preconscious reverie with the appropriate cultural knowledge is all that is required to 'get the joke'." (Bate 2004: 118) Bate therefore demonstrates that Man Ray both "avoided critical analysis" – the image is "only a joke" and so it "avoids social restrictions and censorship" – and played the joke on Ingres that the master painter loved "playing his women like a violin." (Bate 2004: 119) The joke is vulgar and a slur: "Ingres was known for not having sexual relations with his models" (Bate 2004: 119). Yet, as Bate argues, it has cultural significance in the sense that it reconfigured the Oriental signifier, serving to "annunciate a point of view" and demarcate the Avant-Garde from the French academic tradition.

Could Hawarden have been playing at a similar means of a photographic joke some sixty years earlier? In her photographs, there is no explicit and characteristically Surrealist false homology to speak of. But, by comparison to the *cartes de visite* and the lithographs, and some of her more conventional

photographs, we can see that she employed the woman-with-a-book motif with wit. From Solomon-Godeau (1996), we have seen that the book acted as a narrative prompt that justified the erotic display of the woman's body with its legitimised erotic connotations of "corrupting" knowledge. In Figure 11, the female figure is neither gazing at the book, nor is she quite balancing it on her head. As a motif of the imagery of the typical female figure, the book does not quite serve to narrativize the erotic display of the female figure. Rather, it can be argued to pun the visual economy of the woman's body by presenting a false homology between the woman's body and the book. From this point of view, the photograph therefore plays a joke on both the legitimate "fashionable novel" and the cultural practice of a young lady's deportment. In this way, Hawarden's photograph, with its decidedly ambiguous display of a young woman opening a drawer as opposed to a book, could have similarly avoided critical analysis. The photograph reconfigures the image of the typical female figure, thereby annunciating Hawarden's point-of-view, not as a woman (though there is clearly that too), but as an experimenting artist.

IV.II.IV. The Postcards of Women in Gardens

As I demonstrated earlier, the collection of postcards of women in gardens shows certain signs that are presented by the generic type of the female figure in the domestic contextual setting and the theatrical contextual setting. However, I also need to mark out important distinctions. In doing so, I am working in the knowledge that Preston (2009) explains the postcards presented in her study to be typical of those showing women in gardens.

Of course, the photographic image continuously denotes the "woman". The postcards also declare a domestic contextual setting and a theatrical contextual setting. In my view, the domestic setting is not so much declared by the garden as it is declared by the positioning of a "chair or a hammock in the garden" or the inclusion in the scene of the "exterior of the house" and/or the "open threshold of a porch door or window". The theatrical contextual setting is not declared by the same means as the *cartes de visite*. Unlike the *cartes de visite*, the commercial examples of later postcards often present the image alongside a printed caption declaring the female figure a name such as "Miss Evie Greene". This caption signifies the female figure as an actress, and therefore explicitly declares the theatrical contextual setting of the postcard.

The elements that are especially distinctive to the collection of postcards of women in gardens are as follows. First, there is not the variation in costume as seen in the collection of *cartes de visite* and Lady Hawarden's photographs. Second, with regard to the continuously denoted "woman", we do not perceive the same particular face repeated in more than one image: in some examples the denoted "woman" is captioned with the name of an actress, whereas others are anonymous. While we do not perceive the same face, there is a uniformity of costume, which is fashionable Edwardian women's wear consisting of a white blouse and a long-length a-line skirt. Third, certain examples show the female figure posing with infants and children. Fourth, these images do not show the excessive embellishment of the narrativised elements such as the costume and motifs. There is no fringing to the dress; the skirts are not layered skirts; if there is jewellery or an accessory, then it is a necktie. Fifth, of course, the images position the female figure in the context of the garden, as opposed to the interior

of the household or the photographic studio. To say that the garden "replaces" the inorganic embellishment of the previous generic type would be to imply a causal relationship that would be difficult to verify. However, the garden does endow the imagery with an embellished, detailed aesthetic. In one image, a female figure appears to display a small branch of leaves in her belt.

Significantly, however, even though the collection declares both a domestic contextual setting and a theatrical contextual setting, the garden is the staged aesthetic point of connection between these two contexts: a connection emphasised all the more by the uniform costume. Thus, the image is repeatedly reflected as an image of the female figure in a garden, in excess of the photographs' insubstantiality as a medium that continuously denotes a literal reality. Further, the material format is a postcard, which, since it provokes the inscription, "the caption," beneath the social image, emphasises the material as a personal possession (Stewart 1993: 138).

In her text, Preston rightly makes references to the "idea" of the garden, and to its symbolism. However, I suggest that any insight into the imaginative qualities of the garden is foreclosed by the perceived significance to historical women's lives and identities. This is particularly so because the link presupposes women's attachment to domestic space, implied in such phrases as "'ordinary' women's homes were revealed in large numbers through the postcard". (Preston 2009: 783) Preston also conflates the image of the typical female figure and the socially valued woman's body with the lives of women themselves: "femininised photographic postcard culture played an important part in raising women's communication and visibility." (Preston 2009: 782) Much of her argument centres on the notion that the women *recognised*

themselves by the postcards. Written inscriptions on the postcards such as "I expect you will reckonize [sic] who this is" and "Hope you will be able to recognise us" are seen to be indications that women were actively constructing an image that reflected their sense of self: "Each reveals concern over whether her sense of self was accurately reflected in the image." (Preston 2009: 783-785) Preston continues:

> Each small act in the life of a portrait may be seen as a part of an ongoing process of constructing identity which, in assisting subjects' recognition of themselves, was as important as the emotional and visual relationship with their surroundings.
>
> (Preston 2009: 786)

This argument posits the subject as a woman of lived experience whose identity and "sense of self" as an individual is bound up in her relationship with the garden. The imagery of the typical female figure is not construed in terms of its significance to women, female identity and sexuality, but in terms of the *specific symbolic site's* significance to women in general. Therefore, the authority of the collection is not obtained from the imagery's continuous denotation of a particular woman. Rather, it is obtained from the scene itself. In attending to this aspect of the argument, I take an interest in how the repeatedly reflected image of the garden resolves the capacity of the imagery of the typical female figure to confound the social need to define the Other. The analyst does not read the imagery as an objectification of the mirrored scene itself, thereby

completing the social contract of the generic type because the contract is completed by the imagery itself.

With regard to the collections of the *cartes de visite* and the Hawarden photographs, the imagery of the typical female figure presents a repertoire of narrativised elements that justify the presentation of the woman's body. This narrativisation is explicitly contextualised as both domestic and theatrical. However, although typical of the imagery, it cannot be anchored to a specific scene. On the other hand, with the postcards of women in gardens, there is an overall consistency to the imagery. The photographic image continuously denotated the "woman". But, moreover, it provides the assurance of a body that is uniform in appearance and assured by her position at a particular narrativised site. Since the imagery of femininity is always narrativised in justification of the display of the woman's body, we can understand the woman's body as the object of attention. Here we see that the object (the woman's body) is *unified* with the narrativisation of the woman in the garden. The analyst personally engages with the image, yet the social and cultural image is firmly secured as that of the "woman in a garden". Therefore, the articulation of the woman's body is always narrativised as such. The effect is that the denoted woman as an imaginary entity is constituted as Woman in a generalised sense, as opposed to including notions of female sexuality. Furthermore, and concomitantly, the signifier of desire is erased from the reading of the imagery.

When I discussed the fantasy of the undifferentiated, self-contained Woman in relation to the Hawarden photographs, it was in response to the notion that "Hawarden's queerness" could be defined by the privatisation of the photographs for her and her daughters within the domestic sphere. However, in

that case, the reading of the woman's body entailed the imagery of the typical female figure's excessive narrativisation in justification of the eroticised display. On the other hand, while the fantasy incorporates notions of female sexuality, it is also paradoxically bound to the premise of the undifferentiated Woman's purity and chastity. This is all the more so the case when the fantasy visualises women's supposed proximity to nature. As Dijkstra writes: "Her purity was her self-containment, her inviolate sex the mirror of her existence, barren though that existence may be." (Dijkstra 1985: 132) In her purity, her identity exists in relation to her reflection. In Preston's account, the postcards of the women in gardens generate a collection of images where the woman is read to conceive of herself by her inherent relationship to the garden, the sign of domesticated nature. With regard to the *cartes de visite* and the Hawarden photographs, the fantasised subject is an effect of the viewer-possessor's own, possessive relation with the imagery. On the other hand, the postcard of the woman in the garden visualises the purity of the undifferentiated Woman as a subject of fantasy. The woman's body is unified with the narrativisation of the woman in the garden, and, recalling Stewart, in the postcard's relation to the individual viewer-possessor, this then becomes the site of that viewer-possessor him or herself (Stewart 1993: 138). Significantly, this does not mean that a denoted "woman" recognises herself as a subject. The imaginary "woman" is not looking at the reflection in order to recognise herself as other. Rather, I argue that articulation of the text is an iteration of "recognition" that responds to the imagery as a means of socially integrating the subject newly invented by the material itself.

IV.II.V. Close Descriptive Readings

I conclude this chapter on contemporary readings with my close descriptive reading of a postcard from my collection that portrays Maud Allan as 'Salome' (Figure 1 and Figure 14). This reading is intended as an intervention in the woman as a genre, which aims to interrupt the social hierarchy that inscribes the image of the woman's body with the aesthetic and ideological conventions of the detail. Susan Stewart (2007) writes that:

> To describe more than is socially adequate or to describe in a way which interrupts the everyday hierarchical organization of detail is to increase not realism but *the unreal effect of the real*. If such writing as the *nouveau roman* seems inhuman, unmotivated, it is because the surface of detail has been leveled to significance without hierarchy; it does not tell us enough and yet it tells us too much.
>
> (Stewart 2007: 27)

My readings of the postcard attends to the heightened visual detail that is offered by the image of the female figure in an Orientalist costume and setting, by comparison to the other types of images in the genre, as a prompt to closely and empirically read the surface of detail at a level of "significance without hierarchy" (Stewart 2007: 27). In addition to employing Stewart's comments on the description as a means of proposing how we might respond to this image,

my readings emerged from a period of experimentation in my project where I was working from Pierre Macherey's questioning of the importance of the writer of a text over the reader (Macherey 2006). What I was doing then, in producing these readings, was working out a means of reading the image that was critically reflective on the consequent objectification of the woman that that reading would produce. The reader may see Appendix C for documentation of this experiment. The readings in the appendix may be helpful in responding to the question of whether it is possible to speak of a subject, to annunciate "I", in response to the woman-as-image. The attention to the textural detail in the readings also poses questions concerning the affect that the image has on the reader (see Sedgwick 2003; 2008). It would also be of interest to examine these readings in light of critical attention to the repressive pleasures of the text (Barthes 1975). Following my findings concerning the material, aesthetic and ideological conventions that produce the woman as a genre and their operation of the body of the observer, I want to conclude my analyses by focusing on a reading I made that describes the image in empirical detail. This reading is an edited extract from paragraph 4 of the lengthier descriptive reading of the postcard (Appendix C). It is as follows:

> The female figure seen in the photograph is seated. Her bare feet are rested on an object too short in height to be named a plinth or a pedestal and, given that it is at the base of a chair, may be best termed functionally as a footstool. It may also be described as a rectangular box which, in actual scale, could be four inches in height and eighteen inches in length, but, by the measurements of

the card, is 1.1 inches by approximately 0.5 inches. A fabric covers the box shape, resembling velvet by the way it reflects the light to reveal its texture. The folds are gathered and tucked asymmetrically underneath, held in place between the corners of the box and the floor. The feet of the figure are turned out slightly and have long, straight toes. The foot to the right of the picture is positioned on the footstool towards the edge of the frame, about an inch and a half further forward than the one on the right. Beneath the right foot, the fabric puckers to form a wrinkle, almost a fold, that crosses the big toe and the following two smaller toes. Just over half way up the foot, roughly at the point where one might find the small mound of a bone, rests the hem of a fabric. Sequins bear varying degrees of lightness so that one is identifiable by the definition of its circular disc but not the other. From a distance, tiny dots of lightness take form in covering of the top of the feet. The pattern of the sequins above the foot on the right extends upwards in three or four trails. Set differently from the others below them, these sequins' reflection of light creates a spectrum of dull grey. They meet a larger motif that sits above the parting between the feet and rests slightly further toward the left. The sequined fabric falls across the left and right sides of the footstool. There are two other sequined motifs, one to the side and above of each foot. They flank the brighter, more visible central motif from where a single trail of sequins runs up between the legs of the figure. The legs are visible through the sheer fabric. There is the line that defines them and the uneven mounds of

> the knees. The leg on the right has its foot positioned slightly further towards the frame. It has been brought closer to the fabric and to the light than the one of the left. The fabric falls producing a series of vertical folds. The sequins of the hem meet neatly with the floor.

When I performed live a longer version of this reading at a conference without analysis or further commentary, a member of the audience observed the connection to the excessively descriptive writing of the *nouveau roman* (MOTIF 2014). Stewart writes of the *nouveau roman* that: "The tension that novelists like Puig or Robbe-Grillet present combines an objective surface of detail with a hidden and necessarily subjective subject, a subject formed from the pattern of its absences." (Stewart 2007: 27) In the above reading the combination of the objective surface or detail and the hidden subject therefore point to an eroticised tension in the image's engagement with a viewer and the loss of self that was indicated by the historical reading of Allan's image; in this case, however, the loss of self emerges without the societal hierarchy that produces the woman. But it is important to keep in mind that this reading is not a piece of literature that has been written by an author; rather it describes a mass-made postcard. In operating on the body of the observer who produces it, but doing so by exceeding the social contract of the woman-as-image, I would argue that it strongly evidences the quantification of knowledge about the body that Crary (1992) identifies as a hallmark of abstract vision. In other words, while the reading of the image does not narrate and produce the fictional women, the quantification of the body of the observer is made explicit. In the last analysis, it is perhaps this problem and its indication of a double bind that

argues why these images and the materials that produce and circulate them should be consigned to history.

Chapter V

Conclusion

In his analysis of the comic, prying figure of the aptly named Paul Pry, whose "image was marketed widely in the 1820s", Jim Davis draws attention to the connections between the souvenir materials that portrayed him and societal anxieties surrounding the curiosity that is warranted by epistemological inquiry:

> The prints and porcelain figures of Paul Pry are perhaps not only mementoes, miniaturized souvenirs of a favourite actor in a memorable part, but also a way of rendering curiosity, as exemplified in the unquenchable energy of a busybody like Pry, controllable and even inanimate. Thus just as the comic figure of Paul Pry renders laughable contemporary anxieties engendered by the effects of curiosity, so the iconography further allays these fears.
>
> (Davis 2015: 92-93)

In widely presenting the image of a comic figure whose persistent inquiries make him the butt of the joke, caricature prints, porcelain figurines and Toby Jugs help to control and dispel societal concerns over what may come to pass as a result of a spirited curiosity. If the image of Paul Fry positively and humorously controlled and *allayed* fears of the unknown in the early nineteenth-century, then the image of the generic feminine female figure would

go on to control and *speak* of such anxieties when they concern individual identity and agency.

The images I have examined depict women but the individual produced and continues to produce them. In the genre that produces these images, the sign of the woman is a cipher for the fictional otherness that manages the complexities of an individual identity subject to contradictions in everyday lived experience. There is pleasure and perhaps even a certain necessity to this genre, since it socially articulates what we do not (yet) know about ourselves. However, it also has more malign effects pertaining to the control of private life and the body that quickened in the nineteenth-century, a point Davis also mentions with regards to the figure of Paul Pry.

Before I summarise what these malign effects are, I should like to contextualise this point for discussion by offering a definition of how the private sphere may otherwise be defined. It is here that I turn to the traditional model of the everyday whereby the private sphere is associated with the feminine, the female and the home, and the public sphere is associated with the masculine, the male, and the streets, as outlined in Schor (1992). While restrictive in the sense that it operates according to a gendered binary division in society where women are traditionally the governors of the home and men are traditionally the governors of the street, this model nevertheless takes into account the possibility of contingency, chance and revolution in everyday lived experience. Importantly, however, a subject's representative relation to the material world fundamentally shapes the model. That is to say, it takes a fixed relational distance between subject and object as a given. It therefore provides no means of accounting for the fundamental abstraction of vision that occurred

in the nineteenth-century: the collapse between subject and object that operated on the body of the observer. When scholars use the traditional representative model to analyse the everyday images that depict women we are left with a nexus of contradictions and no means of resolving or explaining them.

To return to the production of the images then, in reducing the complex, and possibly contingent, private life of the individual to the aesthetics of detailed information and a system of classification the effects relate to what Crary identifies as a "process of normalization and subjection of the observer" (Crary 1992: 17). He writes: "If there is a revolution in the nature and function of the sign in the nineteenth century, it does not happen independently of the remaking of the subject." (Crary 1992: 17) When that sign is woman, or perhaps it is more helpful to say "Woman", the subject who produces it is not similarly defined by a fixed binary logic *as* a woman or a man. Rather that subject is remade through a covert process that demands careful examination. Moreover, the ideological production of the images points to the effort directed towards a truth or clarity of perception that would shape the newness of the subject. However, in the process, this ideological production garners a semiotic field whose conventions, I would argue, are likely involved in the repression of "language, historical memory, and sexuality." (Crary 1992: 96)

In contributing knowledge of woman as a genre in western society, I have focused on developing and delivering a methodology that can rigorously examine this material and may be put to use in future research. A key effort of my study has been figuring out how to account for contradictions and the range of competing viewpoints concerning gendered power dynamics between a subject and its object in a dominant historical narrative, *without* attributing

power to *a* gender identity. In my view, an answer to these contradictions lies in the investigation of the embodied processes of abstraction engendered by everyday materials, and an acknowledgment of one's own complicity and subjection as an observer. In the investigation of the production and circulation of the woman-as-image in western society, it is not a question of *who* oppresses the objectified woman. Rather it is a question of identifying, historically, materially, aesthetically, ideologically, the social contract of her objectification. My project has aimed to establish a foundational case for such an inquiry.

It has also raised issues that warrant further investigation, namely those concerning the deployment of stable or fixed subject positions in inquiries pertaining to modern culture. One of the most persistent issues to have emerged from my research pertains to the notion of the fetish. For women, whether self-identified or identified by others, the notion of the fetish is a vexed one, since, according to traditional Freudian psychoanalysis, it wards off the threat of castration posed by the sexual difference of the woman's body. Yet, as Anne McClintock observes:

> The female fetish scene flourishes: high heels and hot lingerie, lipstick and leather, bondage and discipline, dildos and suspenders, food and fantasy, chocolates and perfume. Without well-heeled female fetishists the fashion and cosmetic industries would shudder to a halt.
>
> (McClintock 1993: 1)

McClintock (1993) helpfully explores the sexism at work in the traditional psychoanalytic formulation, and seeks to tease out a justification for the *female fetish* in the framework of psychoanalysis. As suggested by the above quotation, this approach focuses on the fetish object (hot lingerie, high heels etcetera) from the point of view of a female subject position. But what happens to the notion of the fetish when we focus on the *image,* the visual scene, that is rendered by the figure of a woman posed in hot lingerie and high heels, for example? My examination of nineteenth and early twentieth-century scenes of eroticised femininity rendered in the miniature form of everyday images points not to the warding off of anxieties surrounding difference and the unknown, but to the speaking of it. Further inquiries into the relation between the fetish as a subject to object relationship and the visual *scene* of the fetish may well prove fruitful from the point of view of those who seek to challenge the gender binary.

In coming to reflect on my project, I realise that its scope widened and further widened with my curiosity. I also realise that this curiosity, in investigating the contractual production of the woman-as-image in western society, was also a curiosity about myself: it has been driven by a need to map out and challenge the societal limits of my white, middle-class, feminine (or cis-gendered), female identity in a patriarchal western society, to articulate the anxieties and fears of the unknown that are a part of my subject position in that society, and therefore to radically and sceptically question, in the wise words of Angela Carter, "the nature of my reality as a *woman.* How that social fiction of

my femininity was created, by means outside my control, and palmed off on me as the real thing." (Carter 1983: 70)

Appendices

Appendix A.

Example of a Postcard's Image; Quotations are the captions to the image provided in Staff 1979.	Subject	Form of Collectivity
"A corner of Tottenham Court Road, London, in 1909" (Staff 1979: 71); "An aeroplane crash, July 17, 1913. Local events were immediately depicted on postcards." (Staff 1979: 70)	Place (Views)	Locale, Nation
"A theatrical advertising card, printed in green and used in 1908." (Staff 1979: 68); "An advertisement card issued by the National Telephone Company and used in 1907." (Staff 1979: 67)	Advertisement	Event, Nation, Commercial Product, Technology
"Patriotic cards were published for every occasion. This one celebrated the Coronation of 1911." (Staff 1979: 69)	Royalty and Patriotism	Nation
"Numerous postcards were published during the period of the Suffragettes, both for and against the movement." (Staff 1979: 69)	Propaganda	Politics, Nation

“A Thanksgiving card printed in Germany and posted from New Jeresey, U.S.A. in 1909” (Staff 1979: 65); “A Valentine card dated 1907.” (Staff 1979: 67)	Traditional Greeting	Family

Appendix B.



Figure 12. Edwardian postcard depicting a woman in a garden. Author's collection.



Figure 13. Edwardian postcard depicting a woman in a garden. Author's collection.

Appendix C.

The Technique of the Description

The following text describes a postcard from my collection entitled "Miss Maud Allan as 'Salome'." The recto (image side) of the postcard is presented in the introduction to Chapter 1 of this thesis (Figure 1). The verso (message and address side) of the postcard is presented below (Figure 14).

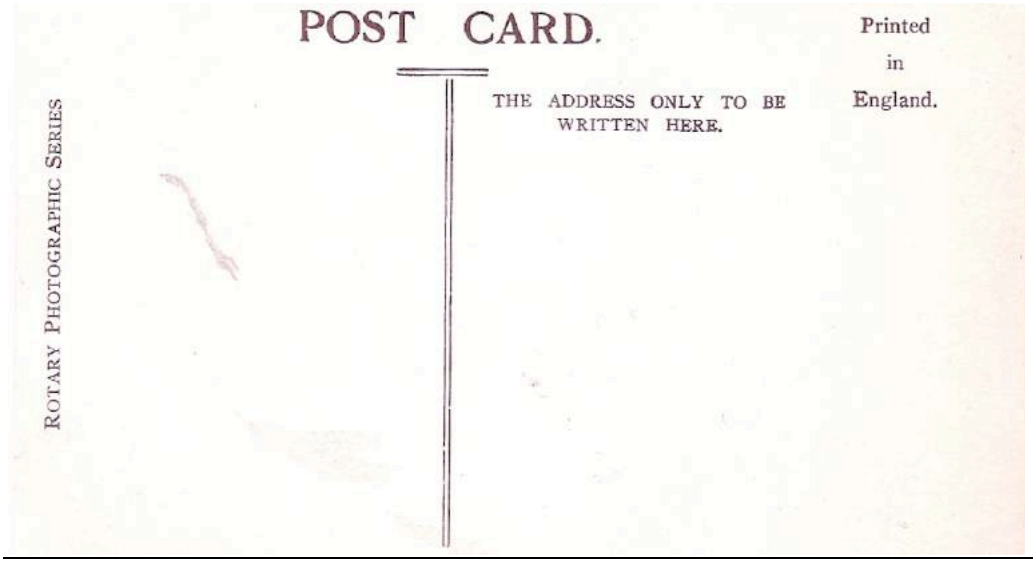


Figure 14. "Miss Maud Allan as 'Salome'" postcard, c.1908, verso (author's collection).

Paragraph 1

A paper envelope arrives in the post. The folds and edges are bound in transparent, adhesive tape. So it is difficult to open and I have to pick delicately at the cut corners to try and peel back the glossy layer. I pull at the corner caught under my nail and it runs off diagonally towards a point that detaches a portion of the tape from the paper. But the remaining tape is still posing as a barrier along the folds and edges. I pull at this tape further and begin to expose a fold in the envelope. I wriggle my finger under the fold, but the tape prevents its full length from opening so I make a small tear in the paper. I pull at that

tear so that it runs towards the middle of the envelope. I can then take out the content: a postcard in a plastic sleeve.

❦

I name the parts of a body, not the skin. The first is the nail, not the hand or the finger. Material, body part, action: “picking”, “peeling”, “pulling”, “catching”, “running”, “wriggling”, “opening”. I feel and see that what I hold is paper. I am holding something definable, the envelope. But the envelope is a thin wrapping that directs my attention to its content. The “edges” let us know about the physical limits of something, of what it might be. The “fold” can hold something else. It implies a layering of material. Is it this tactile information that tells me what I hold is an envelope? A thin wrapping, the envelope directs attention to its content. I see and feel the adhesive tape that is stuck to the folds and edges.

I “pick”, presumably I am picking with a nail on one of my fingers. A finger-nail is slightly thicker, denser, stronger than the tape. It can coax the tape with quick movements: a repetitive, abrasive contact. “I have to pick delicately at the cut corners.” The necessity of my careful response implies fragility. But the alliteration of “cut corners” contrasts my response with the description of the material, which has been subjected to the severity of cutting.

The picking initiates the unwrapping of the envelope (or the opening?). The words “try”, “pull”, “caught”, “remaining”, “posing”, “barrier”, “wriggle”, “prevents” protract the process, suggesting the labour of my response to the envelope. The notion that this process then “begin(s) to expose a fold in the envelope” is perhaps a strange one. The fold is exposed because it is no longer covered by the tape. The delicacy of my picking at the tape — the action that imbues the material with a fragility and a sort of respectful care — would also seem to render it vulnerable, to deprive it of defense in the form of the adhesive tape.

So does the repetitive and necessary delicacy of my acting upon the

adhesive tape expose the weakness of the fold. My finger can then be used to act upon the envelope. There is an act of violence in the “tear” and “pull”, only then can I access the “content”.

Paragraph 2

I take a ruler. The compressed edges of the plastic sleeve run to measurements of 15.4 and 9.8 centimetres. Holding the two opposite edges of the longer length between the tips of my fingers and thumb of my left hand, I squeeze gently to part the perpendicular opening. Then, with my right thumb on the nearest edge of card and my right forefinger on the back of its surface, I draw out the card inside. I can feel the grain of its back surface, the verso, and I see the gloss of the front surface, the recto. I shift my fingers so that I now hold it between my right fingers and thumb, gripping its longer edges in imitation of how my left hand holds its sleeve, which I now put down on my desk. I run my fingers along the edges but do not touch the surface, handling the object in the manner I have been taught to hold a photograph or a vinyl record. I turn it over to look at the verso and I see the words ‘POST CARD’ printed in block capitals across the top, as if to confirm the paper object’s format and design. A vertical line 5.9 centimetres from the left edge of the card measures 6.4 centimetres and divides two blank spaces. Parallel to the division line and running along the left edge of the card is printed a title, ‘Rotary Photographic Series.’ To the right of the division line and positioned below the word ‘CARD‘ is printed the instruction, ‘THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN HERE.’ Alongside which, ‘Printed in England’ marks the space where one might put a stamp.

❦

The tone of this paragraph is measured. The introduction of the ruler to the description marks an intention to describe the postcard and the plastic sleeve by their measurements. The edges of the plastic sleeve are measured, not the plastic sleeve. The object is held: fingers, thumb and hand, edges and length are referenced to give the position of its relation to my body. The “compressed

edges" and the word "squeeze" give my description a constrictive tone. Does the measurement of the sleeve also do this? Yet I "squeeze gently". What does it mean when one word implies pressure and constriction, and the other tenderness? "Part the perpendicular opening" also has an alliterative quality. The word "perpendicular" denotes the geometrics of the description. The position of my thumb and finger is then given in relation to the card. The "opening" of the sleeve lets us know that there is an "inside". I then describe that I feel the card but did I feel the sleeve? Grain/gloss; recto/verso; sleeve/card; finger/thumb; right/left: there is a rift of dichotomies in the descriptive transition from sleeve to card. An "imitation" is made between left and right before one object is "put down on the desk". My description continues at the edges of the object. The surface is referenced in the negative of my not touching. I make the metaphorical allusion to my own personal instruction in the life, in my comparison of the card to a photograph or vinyl record. Then, just as my description begins to slide into references to other objects, as I perhaps begin to fantasise about my own past, I see the words informing me that what I hold, that what I ought to be describing accurately is not a photograph, nor a vinyl record, but a "POST CARD". My description continues at the edges. Measurement makes another separation with the "division line"; "two blank spaces" described, but they are not given purpose. There is further wording on the card: "Rotary Photographic Series"; "THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN HERE"; "Printed in England". The first casts the understanding that the postcard is one of many in a particular series (photographic, not a photograph). The second is in understanding that this is an object (a card) to be posted and for that one needs to write an address. The third recognises the manufacture of the postcard by printing and its national origin.

Paragraph 3

I turn the card over once again and take its measurements as 8.6 by 13.8 centimetres. I hold the edges between my fingers and tilt it back and forth slightly. The gloss of the recto's photographic surface reflects the light in the room: shapes of green, blue and red appear to move across the picture; I then

hold the card quite still in the palm of my hand and it appears flat and dull. I press a finger tip onto the surface, and hold it up to the light to see the whorl of an imprint. I then make several of these, covering the gloss with the intricately patterned residue of my skin.

❦

The measurements of the postcard are taken. A tilting of the card back and forth. The tone of this paragraph is playful. It is not the postcard that is described but the animation, the alteration of its surface with and by my body. I make a play of light across the gloss of its surface to see not the image in detail but the movement of refracted light, the colours green, blue and red. Perhaps I knew that I would see the movement of light? Perhaps I wanted to record a personal moment of ephemerality? Perhaps I wanted to somehow unfix the photographic image? Perhaps I imagined the blue, green and red light? When I hold the card still, not at its edges but in my palm, it "appears flat and dull" as though in opposition to the receding scene of animation. I then alter the texture of the surface. The light is also used to make this impression upon the object. "I make several of these, covering the gloss with the intricately patterned residue of my skin." In this sentence the gloss is used to refer to the texture of my own skin. "The whorl of an imprint." The printing of my fingertip can be seen in the light. The repetition of my finger print perhaps reprinting the printing of the photograph.

Paragraph 4

The female figure seen in the photograph is seated. Her bare feet are rested on an object too short in height to be named a plinth or a pedestal and, given that it is at the base of a chair, may be best termed functionally as a footstool. It may also be described as a rectangular box which, in actual scale, could be 4 inches in height and 18 inches in length but, by the measurements of the card, is 1.1 inches by approximately 0.5 inches. A fabric covers the box shape, resembling velvet by the way it reflects the light to reveal its texture. The folds are gathered and tucked asymmetrically underneath, held in place between the

corners of the box and the floor. The feet of the figure are turned out slightly and have long, straight toes. The foot to the right of the picture is positioned on the footstool towards the edge of the frame, about an inch and a half further forward than the one on the right. Beneath the right foot, the fabric puckers to form a wrinkle, almost a fold, that crosses the big toe and the following two smaller toes. Just over half way up the foot, roughly at the point where one might find the small mound of a bone, rests the hem of a fabric. I look closely and see sequins bearing varying degrees of lightness with the effect that I can identify one by the definition of its circular disc but not the other. If I look at the card from a further distance, then I do not perceive sequins but rather the tiny dots of lightness that take form in their covering of the top of the feet. I look closer again and I notice that the pattern of the sequins above the foot on the right extends upwards in three or four trails. Set differently from the others below them, these sequins' reflection of light creates a spectrum of dull grey. They meet a larger motif that sits above the parting between the feet and rests slightly further toward the left. Looking back towards the hem, I see the sequined fabric fall across the left and right sides of the footstool. I have to look very closely to see them but there are two other sequined motifs, one to the side and above of each foot. They flank the brighter, more visible central motif from where a single trail of sequins runs up between the legs of the figure. And I can see the legs. They are visible through the sheer fabric. I can see the line that defines them and the uneven mounds of the knees. The leg on the right that, as I mentioned above, has its foot positioned slightly further towards the frame is more visible than the one on the left. It has been brought closer to the fabric and to the light. The fabric falls producing a series of vertical folds. The sequins of the hem meeting neatly with the floor.

❦

"The female figure seen in the photograph is seated." The opening sentence is an objective statement. It is not made in the first person. It is not 'I' that is doing the seeing. The statement implies that any person looking at the photograph will agree that they see a seated female figure. The female figure then takes on the subject position in the following sentence. Her feet are rested

on an object. This object causes some difficulty for the objective tone of the description. I give suggestions as to what it could be. It is relative to a chair and is given a "functional" name by that chair as a "footstool". Why then could it not be named functionally by the previously made statement that it was where the figure's feet came to rest? The object's name changes again when it is measured. It is "a rectangular box": a geometrical name given to meet with the accurate tone of the measurements? The "actual scale" measurement is given, perhaps in order to describe the idea of it as a footstool, to help portray the scene that a person (a female person) is sitting in a chair with her feet on a stool. Measurements are then taken according to the scale of the postcard. Does "approximately" imply depth, a lack of certainty? I ask this question because an accurate measurement could have been taken. The "box shape" is covered in fabric (not the "plinth", "pedestal" or "footstool"). The light gives it texture (what light, and where is it coming from?), or does not give it texture, but reveals its texture. The fabric is not revealed but it resembles velvet. The description of texture is an uncertain covering. "The folds are gathered and tucked asymmetrically underneath, held in place between the corners of the box and the floor." The folds of what? Let us presume it is the fabric — the velvet? they are gathered and tucked but by whom? And what are they underneath? Let us again presume that they are underneath the box. We might also ask what "floor"? Are we also to presume that the fabric is between a box and floor, not some other fabric and/or texture?

The description of the feet being "turned out" is balletic in expression. That they are so but "only slightly" is hesitant in tone: but by comparison to what? First position? The toes are described as long and straight but how long? Why have I not given measurements as with the box and the postcard? The feet are described in relation to one another. A measurement is given between the two: but how can one foot be "further forward" than the other? I am describing a two-dimensional object representing a three-dimensional object and the foot is a depiction, so where is "forward"? "Forward towards" what? My body — the body of the person describing? The fabric puckers beneath the foot: is it the foot that is doing the puckering? Forward, up, beneath: these prepositions are all used in the description as though the figure were three-dimensional. I make

reference to the “small mound of a bone” one “might find” there. But it is not described as being seen in the description. It is a general point of reference, to the foot of the person doing the describing perhaps. The three-dimensionality imposed on the description by my writing makes sense so that can describe the fabric as “resting” on the foot. The first person is then used for the first time in the paragraph” “I look closely and see sequins.” Must one look closely in order to see the sequins? Does the introduction of the first person and the closeness of my looking imply an instruction, the sequins are described at varying degrees of closeness: “closely”, “at a further distance” and “closer again”. A mode of telescopic vision is written into the description. The sequins are defined, they are “tiny dots”, but then they are a pattern that leads us “upwards”. I describe the pattern of sequins as being “above the foot on the right”, that they are “set differently” from others “below” and implying that the colour spectrum is also different. But, I have not described the others so as to enable me to make such distinctions. I describe a larger motif, but larger than what? And what does this motif look like, how might it be described? I give no such information. The “motifs” are described again: “two other sequined motifs” that are less visible than they “central motif”. I use the adjective “brighter” but it does not omit light as a photograph. Do I not mean lighter?

“Sequins run up between the legs” evokes a sexual tone. As though the sequins could move against the figure. “I can see the legs” affirms the tone. The following sentences describe the visibility of the legs and a coordination with their position by the feet. But then the brevity of the sentence also generates a rhythm that would imply or even induce the momentum of the paragraph’s completion. “The fabric falls producing a series of folds” is written in present tense. Are the folds being produced before our eyes in real time? A cascade of folds? No, this is a fixed image. But the implication is movement before “neatly,” yet perhaps abruptly meeting the floor, about which we know little.

Paragraph 5

My gaze returns to the knees of the figure, bent over the seat of the chair. The

light skin of the legs is visible through the dark, sheer fabric; their shape is defined by a line that is cast along the edge of the flesh where the fabric falls in a series of folds from the thigh and then from the knee. It is possible to see the line of the calf: it is lit enough for me to see where it lies. The folds reflect a light similar in shade and tone to the surface of the figure's skin, creating vertical lines at angles between approximately 190 and 230 degrees from the point of the knee. The lines of the folds cross with the line that defines the edge of the flesh, abstracting the figure.

❦

'My gaze returns". The critical eye of the description opens the paragraph. Perhaps to regain control after the closing flourish of the one preceding it? I make a contrast between the "light skin" and the "dark, sheer fabric". This fabric is silencing, puzzling. It is difficult to comment upon: is the description of the skin, or of the fabric? Is it of visibility and obscurity? I describe the line of the legs rather than simply the legs. The flesh has an edge, the figure a shape. The terms of the description, of the material relation between the figure's body and the fabric have changed in order to account for the visibility of skin *through* fabric? Again, the fabric "falls" as though in real time, "from the thigh, and then the knee": the imagined movement of the fabric directing the eye from one part of the body to the next.

And again, the "line of the calf" is "seen" because it is lit. Rather than assert "I see the calf", I give some explanation, or perhaps excuse would be more accurate, in my description. The folds of the fabric are described by their relation to the skin. I acknowledge the skin as a surface and the shade and tone of the materials. The "folds reflect a light similar in shade and tone to the surface of the figure's skin, creating vertical lines." So the reflection of the light "creates" the vertical lines? The lines are given angles, not the folds. When the line of the fold crosses the line of the flesh. I describe it as an abstraction of the figure. What do I mean? Do I mean that my concept of the figure has been abstracted by the description? That to describe an image as objectively as possible, one necessarily abstracts our conceptualisation of

whatever it depicts in actuality?

Paragraph 6

My gaze returns again to the knees and I wonder whether they mark the approximate centre of the recto of the postcard. Using a ruler, I mark the centre point of the postcard according to its actual measurements, including the border of the photograph. Then I mark the centre point according to the measurements excluding the border. The first measurement lies at a point about 0.8 inches above the knee to the right where a pearl rests against the upper inner leg. The second measurement lies at a point where a large dark oval stone, 0.8 inches in length, rests against what would approximate the public area. Between these two points, a distance of 0.2 inches is covered by strands of pearls that lie between the thighs. So the knees are not found at the centre point of the postcard. But the material that occupies the centre point, when measured to include the border of the photograph, is held in place by their positioning together, as though to form a cradle for the pearls. But if we consider the centre point to be that which excludes the border of the photograph, then it forms a triangle with the pearls running through the middle and the points of the knees as the base.

❣

"My gaze returns again to the knees." The objective tone of the description is directed towards finding out the centre point of the postcard. The knees appear to possibly mark the centre, I have twice used them as a point to find bearings for my gaze. I take two centre points with the ruler: with and without the border. One lies at the pubic area, though I have written "public" area. I then give an answer to the question I posed: The two centre points are used as coordinates. In the first, I reference the knees in the making of a metaphor: they are not the centre point but they are affirmed as a "cradle" for the pearls. In the second, I describe a triangle: in this picture, the knees are described as the base.

Paragraph 7

The strands are finished with larger pearls in the shape of teardrops, which sit between the legs and just below the knees. The area that lies between the upper thighs, below and slightly to the left of the central oval stone is distinguishable only as a cluster of tiny light dots surrounded by pearls. The dark oval stone is encircled by stones of equal size and shape that are similar in tone to the pearls. However, on close inspection, they are slightly larger in size and have a surface that reflects the light in such a way that suggests to my eye that they could be diamantes. There are two stones to the left and right of the central one that are similar in appearance. The one on the left is positioned at an angle matching that of the central stone, with its face towards the viewer and its back resting against the stomach of the figure. I can see that this stone is slightly smaller than the one in the centre. The stone to the right appears to rest more so against the thigh than the stomach with the effect that it appears to my eye even smaller than its partner to the left.

❦

The opening sentence is in continuation of the previous paragraph. “The strands are finished with larger pearls” The strands of what? I am relying on the assumption that these are known to be strands of pearls. The paragraph opens with the “finishing” of the pearls named previously. My description continues by focusing on the pearls and stones in the image, which are positioned by the legs, knees and thighs of the figure. “A cluster of tiny light surrounded by pearls” is a description of the area between the upper thighs. I write that it is “distinguishable only” as this “cluster” of dots and pearls but have I not already made it distinguishable by the reference to the thighs? Does this mean that I am not describing what I see? Perhaps I am describing what I see according to its imagined position and my conceptualisation of the human figure? I could be describing by relying on my own concept of the figure, rather than by referencing to what I precisely see in my response to the postcard. The description in the following three sentences does not refer to the parts of the body. Stones are described initially as being similar to the pearls

but “on close inspection” their differences are described; surface and light are the instruments of their identification. The “central stone” is referenced in the description of two neighbouring stones, presumably it is the stone that was identified earlier at the centre point without the border. The angle of one matches that of the central stone but I do not give an angle measurement for either. The stone is also described as having a face and a back, but I cannot see the back. Again the third dimension is imposed in the description. The “face” is towards the viewer and the back “rests” against the stomach.

Paragraph 8

The trio of stones are set amongst yet more strands of pearls. There are four or five that meet the left and right oval stones at their diamante edges and then hang loosely across the thighs. The opposite ends are fixed to a belt composed of nine strands of pearls that encircle the waist. These loose strands of pearls, including those that rest between the legs, are set against the sheer fabric that covers the surface of the skin below the waist.

❦

“The trio of stones” is a collective sum of what has been described in the previous paragraph. The strands of pearls are numbered as “four or five”. Why is this number indefinite and unquantified? I wonder why I cannot be sure whether I either see four or five strands. They “hang loosely”, again, implying movement, as if to “hang loosely” from something is to leave open to the possibility of movement for the object, that whatever is hanging might move on a point if touched. That they “hang across the thighs” is difficult. Can something hang across something else? Where would it be hanging from, if not a point? I wonder about the way in which the pearls might “hang loosely” across the *curve* of the thighs. The curve is not a fixed point; it is a soft gradient. Something might “hang loosely across” a curve to reveal or enhance its shape to the eye. Although I have alluded to this curve, I have not named it. It is in my description of “the opposite ends” (presumably of the strands of pearls) that I affirm that those are fixed to something: a belt. I do not position

the ends in the description, other than by reference to the belt at the waist. They are “opposite” but it is not clear where their “opposition” lies. The pearls are fixed to pearls that encircle the waist as a belt. I wonder about my use of the word “encircle”. Can I see the circle when I look at the photograph? Is the waist encircled? I wonder whether my description can claim to be accurate. Again the pearls are loose, perhaps after the point of “fixing” to the belt? I describe the inclusion of “those that rest between the legs”. But are the pearls not described as encircling the waist? Are these present pearls the same as those that have been previously referenced. There is a layering in the description: of “pearls”, “sheer fabric” and “skin”. The fabric “covers” the “surface of the skin” and the pearls are “set against” the fabric. Can sheer fabric cover a surface when neither material can be touched, only looked at? Moreover, the description of the loose strands of pearls as being “set against” is also difficult. How can something that is loose also be set? Does the “against” imply that the materials are in tension? The layering of material is rhythmic: the pearls are loose but they are set against something, but that something is sheer and it covers a surface that is below something else. The rhythm of the description accompanies the writing of the material, unveiling one layer leading to the next. “Loose”, “sheer”, “surface”, “below”: Each word making the material unstable and indefinite, but nevertheless persistent in its execution.

Paragraph 9

Above the waistband of pearls, the skin is bare. There is an inward curve to the left of the torso where the belt meets the skin. I look at the waist, the skin of the torso, where four strands of pearls hang from beneath the left breast. I see that, rather than hanging straight, these strands (those towards the centre of the figure) rest on an area of skin above the belt, accentuating a small mound of flesh. They fall to hang in a loop that crosses the belt and appear to be fixed in the middle of the torso at a point that meets with dark, round stones that are similar in colour and texture to the ovals below, and are also encircled by the small, light stones I refer to as diamantes. From this middle point, another four strands hang to the right side of the figure. Here, the skin is shadowed in contrast to the shine of pearls that emerge from a patch of darkness below the

breast. They hang evenly, undisturbed by flesh or any other material, each strand touching only its neighbour. As on the left, the loop crosses the belt and joins the round stones at the waist's middle above the area approximating the pubis and the navel. From one of these stones, three shorter strands extend upwards, each composed of six pearls. These are attached at the other end to a similar large dark, round stone which is encircled by two rings of diamantes. The stone is positioned at the point where one might expect to find the lower point of the breastbone. A single, round stone is attached to either side. These smaller stones reflect the light differently from those I have already described. They are not as light as the pearls and diamantes but neither are they as dark and opaque as the oval and round stones mentioned previously. They are altogether duller in appearance.

❦

"Above the waistband of pearls". Again the opening sentence is a brief summation of what has been described previously given with a direction and an initial statement: "the skin is bare." My use of the word bare is in reference to the description that the "skin below the waist" is covered. Or, does my use of the word bare make it known in this single sentence that the skin is covered elsewhere? I describe an "inward curve". Perhaps the direction focuses on, or at least recognises, the postcard by its presentation of a portrait style, composed photograph (as when I took the measurement of the centre point): rather than, for example, using more geometric terminology such as concave (or convex). But then, in the next sentence I use the first person and to refer to the waist. When "I look at the waist," at "the skin of the torso," am I also looking at what I previously described as a curve? (My reference to the torso is one clue.) If so, why have I used a variety of descriptive terms? Why one set of terms for my description in the first person, and another set for my descriptive statement? Again, I describe the pearls as hanging, in this case, "from beneath the left breast." So I wonder whether I am suggesting that the pearls are attached to the left breast? Or perhaps my meaning is vague, that they hang from somewhere and something "beneath the left breast." In other words, I may be omitting some detail.

I recall that my use of the word “hang” is not reliable in its apparent simplicity. I reassert my focus on “the centre of the figure”. The pearls are described as “accentuating a small mound of flesh.” So here I could say that my description of the “hanging pearls” is being used, in turn, describe how they take on the form of another material. In the following sentence, I even describe the pearls as falling, repeating the supposition of movement that my writing brings to the image. The middle point acts to lead the description towards the right side of the figure, but not without difficulty.

“Here, the skin is shadowed in contrast with the shine of the pearls that emerge from a patch of darkness below the breast.” The sentence is uneven in tone and seems to disturb the rhythm of the description. What is happening in this description of pearls and skin? Where is the contrast? Is it between shadow and shine? Between the skin and pearls? The skin and pearls are the nouns, the names of the material things in the sentence. Each is given its adjective: shadow and shine. But the adjectives do not qualify the nouns as such. Rather, they qualify the broader descriptive narrative by constructing an opposition between the nouns. But then these coupled nouns are predicated by “that emerge from a patch of darkness below the breast.” This further complicates the sentence. It is the pearls that are said to be “emerging”. However, the description of “a patch of darkness below the breast” prompts me to wonder about its distinction from the “shadowed” skin. In the latter case, it is the skin that is being described by the shadow. In the former, it is the darkness that is being described in reference to the breast. Do the pearls both contrast with the skin and emerge from the darkness? In a case where each noun slides into the next by way of an adjective, the sentence ceases to make sense. That is, it does not detail anything in particular, it has no subject, but leads from each word to the next: from skin to shadow to shine to pearls to darkness to breast.

The following sentence opens with “They hang”. Are we to assume that the pearls are the subject of the previous sentence? The adjective is “evenly”. Is the tone of order a corrective to the earlier unruliness and uneveness? I describe the right side of the torso. I write of the “loops”, “stones”, “strands”

and “pearls” that I wrote of when I described the “left”. A sentence begins “these are attached at the other end” and I ask myself the question, what “end” and where? I describe the position of a stone as “where one might expect to find (...) the breastbone.” The implication of course being that the breastbone is not to be seen, but it is nevertheless used as a reference point in the description. I attempt to describe “smaller stones” that I have not yet previously described. I do so by comparing their dullness with the pearls and the diamantes, and the oval and round stones. Can I not say more about the dullness?

Paragraph 10

Above each of these stones, still on either side of the large dark stone set with diamantes, is a single pearl. From each of these pearls, a single thread extends diagonally inwards towards the middle of the figure’s chest. Each thread is approximately one inch in length and is met by another single pearl. From this pearl two threads of equal length extend outward, each to be met by another pearl. This sequence of thread and pearl creates a lattice over an area of skin, about two inches in breadth, at the middle of the chest. It is attached to a long strand of pearls that forms a deep, rounded neckline that falls over the shoulders towards the chest. Behind the lattice, I see a faint, curved shadow. From a point that approximates the middle of the neckline **(**if one can describe a shadow as having a point**)** a curve runs in an outward slope to the left side of the stone at the breastbone and another curve runs to the right side, the left being slightly darker, and thus more pronounced than the right.

❦

My naming a single pearl in the opening of this sentence seems to set a rhythm for what follows. The rhythm follows the ordered to and fro of the pearl and thread that I see in the photograph. I use the notion of “falling” to take my description from the neckline to the chest. The strand of pearls that makes the neckline is “deep”, falling “over” and “towards” the chest. I wonder about my use of prepositions in my description.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

"Maud Allan and her Art", Maud Allan biographical file, Theatre and Performance Department, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

"Faint Flickerings," anonymous press article, Maud Allan biographical file, Theatre and Performance Department, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

"THE FASHIONS." *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, 1 July 1861, p. 165+. *19th Century UK Periodicals*, http://0-tinyurl.galegroup.com.catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/tinyurl/6orUf7. Accessed 30 July 2018.

"DESCRIPTION OF OUR FASHION PLATE." *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine,* 1 Apr. 1868, p. 179. *19th Century UK Periodicals.* http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/5vbeR2. Accessed 30 July 2018.

Secondary Sources

Albright, A. C. *Traces of Light: Absence and Presence in the Work of Loïe Fuller,* Middleton, CT, Wesleyan University Press.

Allan, M. (1908) *My Life and Dancing,* London, Everett & Co.

Allen, R. C. (1991) *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture,* Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press.

Apraxine, P. (2000) 'Introduction' in Apraxine, P. and Demange, X. (eds.) *'La Divine Comtesse': The Photographs of the Countess de Castiglione,* New Haven and London, Yale University Press: 10-13.

Apter, E. (1996) 'Acting Out Orientalism: Sapphic Theatricality in Turn-of-the-Century Paris' in Diamond, E. (ed.) *Performance and Cultural Politics,* London and New York, Routledge: 15-34.

Auerbach, N. (1991) *Private Theatricals,* Cambridge, MA, Havard University Press.

Barthes, R. (1975) *The Pleasure of the Text,* New York, Hill and Wang.

Barthes, R. (1977) *Image, Music, Text,* London, Fontana.

Barthes, R. (1993) *Camera Lucida,* London, Vintage.

Batchen, G. (1999) *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography,* Cambridge, MA and London, MIT Press.

Bates, D. (2011) *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent,* London, I. B. Tauris.

Baudelaire, C. (2010) *The Painter of Modern Life,* London, Penguin.

Baudelaire, C. (2008) *The Flowers of Evil,* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Baugh, C. (2005) *Theatre, Performance and Technology: The Development and Transformation of Scenography,* Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Beaumont, C. W. and Sitwell, S. (1938) *The Romantic Ballet in Lithographs of the Time,* London, Faber and Faber.

Beaton, C. (1944) *British Photographers,* London, William Collins.

Beetham, M. (1996) *A Magazine of Her Own?: Domesticity and Desire in the Woman's Magazine, 1800-1914,* London, Routledge.

Behdad, A. (1994) *Belated Travellers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution,* Durham and London, Duke University Press.

Behdad, A. (2016) *Camera Orientalis: Reflections on Photography of the Middle East,* Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press.

Benjamin, J. (1988) *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and the Problem of Domination,* New York, Pantheon Books.

Benjamin, J. (1995) *Like Subjects, Love Objects: Essays on Recognition and Sexual Difference,* New Haven and London, Yale University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1999) *The Arcades Project,* Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

Bentley, T. (2002) *Sisters of Salome,* New Haven and London, Yale University Press.

Berlant, L. (2012) *Desire/Love,* Brooklyn, NY, punctum books.

Boym, S. (1991) *Death in Quotation Marks,* Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

Buszek, M. E. (2006) *Pin-Up Grrrls: Feminism, Sexuality and Popular Culture,* Durham and London, Duke University Press.

Butler, J. (1999) *Gender Trouble,* New York and London, Routledge.

Calvino, I. (1995) *Difficult Loves,* London, Minerva.

Carter, A. (1983) 'Notes From the Front Line' in Wandor, M. (ed.) *On Gender and Writing,* London, Pandora.

Cherniavsky, F. (1991) *The Salome Dancer: The Life and Times of Maud Allan,* Toronto, Ontario, McClelland and Stewart Inc.

Crary, J. (1992) *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century,* Cambridge, MA and London, MIT Press.

Del Barbarò, M. F. (2000) 'An altar to the past: the photographic records of the Countess de Castiglione in Italy' in Apraxine, P. and Demange, X. (eds.) *'La Divine Comtesse': The Photographs of the Countess de Castiglione,* New Haven and London, Yale University Press: 88-95.

Derrida, J. (1998) *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Doan, L. (2001) *Fashioning Sapphism: The Origins of a Modern English Lesbian Culture,* New York and Chichester, Columbia University Press.

Dodier, V. (1999) *Lady Hawarden: Studies From Life, 1857-1864,* New York, Aperture.

Dorney, K. (2014) 'Excavating Enthoven: Investigating a life of stuff', *Studies in Theatre and Performance,* Vol. 34, No.2: 115-125.

Doy, G. (2007) *Claude Cahun: A Sensual Politics of Photography,* London and New York, I. B. Tauris.

Dijkstra, B. (1986) *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture,* New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Dymkowski, C. (1986) *Harley Granville Barker: A Preface to Modern Shakespeare,* Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library and London, Associated University Presses.

Eng, D. L., Halberstam, J., and Esteban Muñoz, J. (2005) 'What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?', *Social Text,* Vol. 23, Nos. 3-4: 1-17.

Firestone, S. (1970) '(Male) Culture' in Robinson, H. (ed.) *Feminism – Art – Theory,* Oxford and Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishers Ltd: 13-17.

Freeman, E. (2010) *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories,* Durham and London, Duke University Press.

Frost, L. (2013) *The Problem with Pleasure: Modernism and its Discontents,* New York, Columbia University Press.

Garelick, R. K. (2007) *Electric Salome: Loie Fuller's Performance of Modernism,* Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press.

Gale, Maggie B., and Featherstone, A. (2011) 'The Imperative of the Archive.' in Kershaw, B. and Nicholson, H. (eds.) *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance,* Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press: 17-40.

Gillen, J. (2013) 'Writing Edwardian Postcards', *Journal of Sociolinguistics,* Vol. 17, No. 4: 488-521.

Hambourg, M. M. (1993) *The Waking Dream: Photography's First Century. Selections from the Gilman Paper Company Collection,* New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Hannavy, J. (ed.) (2007) *Encyclopaedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography,* New York and London, Routledge.

Hill, P. (1999) *Lacan: For Beginners,* Danbury, CT, For Beginners Books.

Holland, V. (1955) *Hand Coloured Fashion Plates: 1770-1899,* London, B.T. Batsford Ltd.

Jameson, F. (2002) *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act,* London, Routledge.

Kelly, V. (2004) 'Beauty and the Market: Actress Postcards and their Senders in Early Twentieth-Century Australia', *NTQ,* Vol. 20, No. 2: 99-115.

Kershaw, B. and Nicolson, H. (eds.) (2011) *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance,* Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

Kultermann, U. (2006) 'The 'Dance of the Seven Veils'. Salome and Erotic Culture around 1900', *Artibus et Historiae,* Vol. 27, No. 53: 187-215.

McCauley, E. A. (c.1985) *A. A. E. Disdéri and the Carte de Visite Portrait Photograph,* New Haven and London, Yale University Press.

McCauley, E. A. (1994) *Industrial Madness: Commercial Photography in Paris, 1848-1871,* New Haven and London, Yale University Press.

McClintock, A. (1993) 'The Return of Female Fetishism and the Fiction of the Phallus', *New Formations,* No. 19: 1-21.

McClintock, A. (1995) *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest,* New York, Routledge.

Macherey, P. (2006) *A Theory of Literary Production,* London and New York, Routledge.

Marcus, S. (2007) *Between Women: Friendship, Desire and Marriage in Victorian England,* Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press.

Mavor, C. (1999) *Becoming: The Photographs of Clementina, Viscountess Hawarden,* Durham and London, Duke University Press.

Pennell, E. R. and Pennell, J. (1915) *Lithography and Lithographers; some chapters in the history of art,* New York, The Macmillan Company. https://archive.org/details/lithographylitho00penn. Accessed 30 July 2018.

Pollock, G. (1987) 'What's Wrong with 'Images of Women'?' in Parker, R. and Pollock, G. (ed.s) *Framing Feminism: Art and the Woman's Movement, 1970-85,* London, Pandora Press: 132-138.

Preston, R. (2009) ‘‘Hope you will be able to recognise us’: the representation of women and gardens in early twentieth-century British domestic ‘real photo’ postcards’, *Women’s History Review,* Vol. 18, No. 5: 781-800.

Roberts, M. L. (2002) *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France,* Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press.

Rivière, J. (1986) ‘Womanliness as Masquerade,’ in Burgin, V., Donald, J. and Kaplan, C. *Formations of Fantasy,* London, Methuen: 35-44.

Schor, N. (1992) ‘*Cartes Postales*: Representing Paris 1900’, *Critical Inquiry,* Vol. 18, No. 2: 188-244.

Schor, N. (1995) *Bad Objects: Essays Popular and Unpopular,* Durham and London, Duke University Press.

Schor, N. (2007) *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine,* London, Routledge.

Schweitzer, M. and Zerdy, J. (eds.) (2014) *Performing Objects and Theatrical Things,* Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York, Palgrave MacMillan.

Senelick, L. (1991) ‘Eroticism in Early Theatrical Photographs’, *Theatre History Studies,* Vol. XI: 1-49.

Solomon-Godeau, A. (1986) ‘The Legs of the Countess’, *October,* Vol. 39: 65-108.

Solomon-Godeau, A. (1996) ‘The Other Side of Venus: The Visual Economy of Feminine Display’ in de Grazia, V. with Furlough, E. (eds.) *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective,* Berkley and London, University of California Press: 113-130.

Staff, F. (1979) *The Picture Postcard and its Origins,* London, Lutterworth Press.

Stewart, S. (1993) *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection,* Durham and London, Duke University of Press.

Volcano, D. G. and Dahl, U. (2008) *Femmes of Power: Exploding Queer Femininities: Exploding Queer Feminities*, London, Serpent's Tail.

Warner, M. (1991) 'Introduction: Fear of a Queer Planet', *Social Text*, No. 29: 3-17.

Warner, M. (2006) *Phantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media into the Twenty-first Century,* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Wollen, P. (1993) 'Out of the Past: Fashion/Orientalism/The Body' in *Raiding the Icebox,* Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press: 1-34

Zipes, J. (1979) *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales,* London, Heinemann.

Zipes, J. (2006) *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre For Children and the Process of Civilization*, London, Routledge.

Conference Presentation

(2014) "A Detailed Description of a Postcard", Performed Reading, MOTIF, RHUL Practice-Based Research Conference, The Centre for Creative Collaboration, London, UK.