Phototherapy and Therapeutic Photography: The Healing Power of Photographs

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Introduction

My interest in the field of work which I will be discussing in this thesis has also been very important in my own photographic work. Before I had even been reading about phototherapy, I was using my own photographs in this kind of context. For me personally photography has been helpful in order to cope with the challenges that I have faced moving between countries for the last ten years.

Thus, I began to be more intrigued in actual phototherapy and therapeutic photography. Since it seemed that there was some confusion over the terms I wanted my thesis to draw a distinction between these two. What came to be even more important in the end was to reveal how phototherapy was developed. In order to find the answer, I began to explore the 19th century paintings and medical drawings in the hope that they could reveal some connections to phototherapy. From there I explored how photography came to be invented and how its therapeutic potential came to be discovered within psychiatry. Here the influence of psychoanalysis had to be taken into account as well as the rise of feminism in 1960s-1970s. Thus chapter one is devoted to the question of how phototherapy was developed and what came to influence this development.

In order to understand better the therapeutic value of photographs, I will also look at how ordinary people have used photographs in a therapeutic way which is the main focus of chapter two. Post-mortem photography will be discussed in this context as a practice which brought comfort to people who were grieving over the death of a loved one. I am also intrigued in analysing what kind of role Kodak, the company that created snapshot photography played in the construction of ideas of how people should use their cameras and how they should represent themselves. This will lead into a discussion of feminist subversion and Jo Spence who could be considered as one of the pioneers of phototherapy or more precisely re-enactment phototherapy. Analysing the therapeutic use of photographs amongst ordinary people will also add more understanding of the actual development of phototherapy which is my main focus in this thesis.

The last chapter is devoted to the question of how photography has been used in a therapeutic way in arts. The American photographer Nan Goldin is my key artist here as she has found photography’s power as a medium to visually explore her own identity as well as that of others. I will be looking at her work in comparison to paintings created by Vincent Van Gogh, Frida Kahlo and Egon Schiele, much in a similar way as I was trying to find the traces of phototherapy in the 19th century paintings. In this context mirrors will also be discussed in relation to Lacan and Jung as part of explaining the human need for the search of wholeness within themselves. Furthermore I am intrigued in finding out whether Goldin has used photography only for her own personal healing or
has it been also aimed to help others? Through this I will hopefully be able to find connections between her practice and that of Jo Spence’s. After carrying out this research, I am able to answer the question of how phototherapy came to develop and how the therapeutic value of photographs have been cherished previously by its different practitioners.
1. Tracing the roots of phototherapy

This chapter focuses on the history of phototherapy which can be traced back to the mid 19th century. In order to get a better understanding of the birth of psychiatric photography, I will start with a discussion of the early medical drawings which demonstrates the increasing interest towards physiognomy in the 19th century. Medical practitioners began to use the facial features and expressions of patients in the diagnosis of mental illnesses which established a context for the emergence of medical photography. Thus the beginning of this chapter is devoted to looking at the development of medical photography and how it was used by different practitioners. From there I am going to move on to discuss the birth of psychoanalysis and what kind of role photography had upon Freud’s thinking. How do some of the psychoanalytical ideas connect with photography? Lastly I will discuss the more recent development of actual phototherapy while explaining its difference to therapeutic photography.

1.1 Early medical illustrations

The early history of medical drawings reveals that patients were depicted primarily in a non-pathogenic way meaning that the patients were treated for their wounds and disabilities in the illustrations. A great amount of interest was paid to the appearance of patients since it was believed that this could give a better understanding of their actual conditions. ¹The great Masters of Arts were also interested in depicting the physical signs of sickness. A good example of this is the Renaissance painter Albrecht Dürer and his portrait Melancholia which shows the subject leaning her chin on her hand in a mood of despair. Although Dürer’s works provided some information about signs of sickness they did not serve any medical purpose. It was not until the 19th century that painting and psychiatry started getting closer together as demonstrated through the work of Théodore Géricault and his portraits of insane people (Fig. 1).²

During the course of the 19th century interest in medical portraits increased substantially. In his book *The physiognomy of mental diseases*, published in 1843, Scottish physician Alexander Morison argued about the importance of physiognomy in the following way: “There is no class of diseases in which the study of Physiognomy is so necessary as that of mental diseases. It not only enables us to distinguish the characteristic features of different varieties but it gives us warning of the approach of the disease in those in whom there is a preposition to it, as well as confirms our

opinion of convalescence in those in whom it is subsiding.” 3 The book contained plates of mentally ill patients who were shown in an acute phase of their illnesses and after the acute phase had ended. Short descriptions were also presented alongside the plates giving more information regarding the symptoms and behaviour of the patients (Fig. 2, 3)4

In the same year as Morison’s book was published, the French psychiatric J.E.D Esquirol presented his own textbook called Of Mental Diseases which also contained psychiatric illustrations. Although the work was striking, it was Morison’s book that primarily came to be significant in drawing connections between the appearance of people and psychopathology and later inspired physicians such as Jean-Martin Charcot to carry out their own research on visual characterization of hysteria.5

It was not just physiognomy that began to receive great interest during the 19th century amongst researchers and the public but also all other technical developments such as the invention of photography. Photography was officially invented in 1839 although its basic principles had been known for a long time before. The new medium was praised for its quality to be able to capture more detail and information than any other medium such as painting. In relation to physiognomy this would mean that the appearance of people could now be captured in the most realistic way as a photograph was considered to be the reproduction of reality. This idea was also expressed by the British medical journal Lancet in 1859 that: “Photography is so essentially the Art of Truth-and the representative of Truth in Art- that it would seem to be the essential means of reproducing all forms and structures of which science seeks for delineation.”6

1.2. The practitioners of medical photography

Hugh Diamond is considered to be the pioneer of medical photography as he was the first one to use photography in the treatment of mental illnesses. Diamond had studied medicine at the Royal College of Surgeons in 1824 after which he started his own medical practice in Soho, London and later in 1834 became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. At the beginning of his medical career it was not yet feasible to use photography for either artistic explorations or scientific explorations. As photography became more accessible in the 1840s Diamonds interest began to move away from medical practice towards psychiatry and he started writing about the relation

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4 Conolly, Gilman, Diamond, 2014, p.xii
5 Conolly, Gilman, Diamond, 2014, p.xiii
6 Evans, Hall, 1999, p. 255
between the latter and photography. Diamond began to study photography at Bethlem Hospital under the guidance of Sir George Tuthill. In 1848 he was appointed superintendent of the Female Department of the Surrey County Lunatic Asylum, a position in which he stayed until 1858. During this period Diamond made photographs to document the facial expression of patients suffering from mental disorders and he used the photographs for identification of those disorders much in a similar way to Morison and Esquirol. Alongside taking photographs Diamond also published a variety of articles related to different aspects of photography including its technical developments and scientific uses.  

In 1856 Diamond presented his article ‘On the application of Photography to the Physiognomic and Mental Phenomena of Insanity’ to the Royal Society. The purpose of the article was to explain his theories related to the use of photography in identification of mental disorders. These theories were further illustrated through images of his patients which he had taken while working in the asylum (Fig 4 & 5) 

According to Diamond photography offered a new way to make observations and document the state of patients which would not be just artistic interpretations as made through illustrations. He stated that photography is “a perfect and faithful record, free altogether from the painful caricaturing which so disfigures almost all the published portraits of the insane as to render them nearly valueless either for purpose of art or of science.” 

Recording the patient’s appearance for the use of identification of mental illnesses was the first function for medical photography that Diamond outlined in the article. This information provided by the portraits could then also be used for comparison and diagnosis for future patients giving it a second function. Interestingly Diamond’s third function for medical photography was related to how patients experience the portraits themselves. He pointed out the positive impact of photographs upon the patients: “I have had many opportunities of witnessing this effect. In very many cases they are examined with much pleasure and interest, but more particularly in those which mark the progress and cure of a severe attack of Mental Aberration.” Thus, Diamond acknowledged the healing power of photography and how it also went beyond verbal communication: “The photographer needs in many cases no aid from any language of his own, but prefers to listen, with the picture before him, to the silent but telling language of nature…the picture speaks for itself with

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7 Hannavy, 2007, p. 415
the most marked precision and indicates the exact point which has been reached in the scale of unhappiness between the first sensation and its utmost height.”

Diamond’s article could be considered as a break-through paper which influenced many physicians in the field of medical photography, most notably John Connolly, a professor of medicine at the University of London. In 1858-59 Connolly published a major series of essays entitled ‘The Physiognomy of Insane’ in the *Medical Times and Gazette*. Each of Connolly’s essays was illustrated by lithographs taken from the photographs of Diamonds which he praised for their capability to deliver truthful information of the signs of insanity. In one of the essays Connolly wrote: “I used to frequently regret the want of the art or of the help of a painter, to enable me to convey to others by pictorial images the strange aspects and facial expressions of mental malady, which were often more forcible than any words that could have been employed…Since the time to which I am referring, however…the new and important discovery of the art of photography..has endowed the Physicians attached to asylums with the power I wished for.”

Connolly mentions the power of observation in relation to the practice of physicians which is further analysed by Michel Foucault in his book *Madness and Civilization* (2001). According to Foucault “absolute observation” took place in the 19th century asylums where there was no real dialogue between the patient and doctor. On the surface patients were treated better than before, but new kinds of strategies were developed in order to keep control over them. Foucault proposed that observation was one form of control. The knowledge of being under the doctors’ penetrating gaze made patients aware of their own condition and evoked a feeling of otherness. Patients’ own stories were not taken into consideration instead their diagnosis was entirely based on the doctor’s observation, which demonstrates the unequal power relationship between the patient and doctor.

In relation to photography, Foucault’s theory seems to be consistent with Connolly’s practice as he believed that photography could give physicians special power to gain visible evidence of different symptoms which then could be applied to a diagnosis of a group of patients. In this way the camera served as an extension of doctors’ medical gaze that was not just used for a diagnosis but also for reaffirmation of power over the patients.

In a similar mindset the French neurologist, Jean-Martin Charcot used photography as a tool to study hysteria in the late 19th century. Georges Didi-Hubermans’ book *Invention of Hysteria* (2003) provides an account of how Charcot came to rediscover hysteria and how different kinds of working methods, most importantly photography came to aid in this process. Charcot worked at Salpêtrière

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11 Connolly quoted in Wright, 2013,p.75
12 Foucault, 2001, p. 261-264
13 Pearl, 2010, p.151
in Paris, an institution for insane and incurable women. This is where he developed an interest
towards the malady of hysteria that he later began to investigate through hypnosis and
photographing the hysterical attacks of the female patients. The attacks were in fact staged
performances that took place in the amphitheatre where Charcot always held his famous Tuesday
lectures. From these lectures there emerged a photography series called *Iconographie
photographique de la Salpêtrière* (Fig 6.) Charcot created his concept of hysteria out these visual
representations which is a method highly criticized by Didi-Huberman. He sees that the
photographs could not be treated as objective documentation because the patients were asked to
perform their hysteria. In this light, Charcot’s method represented, according to Didi-Huberman,
more a form of art than a pure scientific investigation. 14

Despite his criticism towards Charcot, Didi-Huberman does acknowledge that Charcot was the
figure who came to separate hysteria from epilepsy and all other mentioned illnesses classifying
hysteria as “a pure nosological object”. It is also important to note how he demonstrates how
photographs came to play a significant role in formulating such a theory. During the 19th century
various different kind of treatments were used for hysteria for instance stimulants, antiphlogistics,
narcotics, revulsives and so on, but since these were rather ineffective, hysteria came to be treated
with a therapy of “putting under observation”, which for Foucault had represented just a new way
of gaining more control over the patients. 15

Foucault’s arguments seem to be valid when analysing the practice of Charcot and Connolly but he
seems to ignore Diamond’s therapeutic methods which included showing the patients their own
portraits. These photographs worked like mediated mirrors through which the patients could learn
personal judgement and form new ways of seeing themselves. Of course the role of the
photographer could not be ignored here. What the patients were encouraged to believe was what
they saw in the photograph and that was Diamond’s interpretation of them. However this shows that
Diamond’s patients were given this possibility to gain a positive image of their self through
photography instead of being controlled through the gaze of a doctor as Foucault had suggested. In
this way Diamonds methods could be viewed as showing early signs of phototherapy. 16

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Huberman_Alisa_Hartz_Invention_of_Hysteria_Charcot_and_the_Photographic_Iconography_of_the_Salpetriere_200

Huberman_Alisa_Hartz_Invention_of_Hysteria_Charcot_and_the_Photographic_Iconography_of_the_Salpetriere_200

16 Pearl, 2010, p.155-157
1.3 Photography and Psychoanalysis

In the late 19th century Sigmund Freud came to change the understanding of the human mind with his theory of psychoanalysis. In this section I am exploring the roots of psychoanalysis which leads to the La Salpêtrière hospital where Jean Martin Charcot was teaching the young Sigmund Freud. I will also analyse how photography came to influence Freud in refining his theory and what it is that draws psychoanalysis and photography together.

1.3.1 The Development of Psychoanalysis

The face of psychology came to change in a dramatic way with the emergence of psychoanalysis that provided new insights into a human being’s unconscious mind, psychic determinism, infantile sexuality and irrational aspects of human motivation. Although Sigmund Freud can be considered responsible for forming and forwarding the theory, it is important to analyse from where his ideas evolved and if photography played any role in the process. In 1885, Freud’s fame was tarnished after his cocaine experiments and publication on the palliative effects of the drug. He did not get deterred by this episode but as a consequence, he left Vienna for Paris and began to study under Jean-Martin Charcot at La Salpêtrière. There he was witnessing how Charcot photographed and treated his hysterical patients. Freud was impressed by Charcot’s conclusion that all the physical symptoms the patients had such as paralysis, contractures and seizures were in fact emotional responses to traumatic events.

From there Freud came to develop his own theory of hysteria that ended up being slightly different from Charcot’s view. Charcot’s had made a separation between male and female hysteria by suggesting that causes of hysteria were different for each sex even though the effects might have been the same. Freud did not conform to this idea as he believed that all hysteria both for female and male originated from trauma. For Freud trauma did not have to be an accident or injury as that was what Charcot had referred to as the origin of trauma, it could also be an early disturbing sexual experience that existed as a repressed memory. Freud believed that trauma could be cured by making people conscious about their unconscious thoughts either through hypnosis, dream interpretation or free association. All the physical symptoms the patients had shown were

17 Kandel, 2005, p. 64
18 Webster, 2003, p. 6-10
according to Freud related to process of symbolization and were representing the emotional states people were in.\textsuperscript{19}

It is interesting to note how the origins of the psychoanalysis actually lie at the heart of Charcot’s methods which emphasised observing and measuring the hysterical patients. As Freud began to develop his theory further, he additionally started paying attention to what the patients were saying, which was partly by a reference to the work of his medical colleague Joseph Bauer. Together these men worked on developing different psychoanalytical techniques ending up publishing \textit{Studies on Hysteria} in 1895. Most of the patients were middle-class women suffering from variety of different kinds of symptoms related to hysteria. Freud and Bauer encouraged their patients to talk, recount their dreams and fantasies and recall their dreams through which the patients were expected to heal. \textit{Studies on Hysteria} could be regarded as a ground breaking work since it took the patient’s own stories into consideration and valued the interaction between the patient and psychiatrist.\textsuperscript{20}

1.3.2 Photography, memory and psychoanalysis

Freud had clearly understood the importance of observation under the guidance of Charcot. In her book \textit{Mirrors of Memory: Freud, Photography and the History of Art} (2010), author Mary Bergstein has investigated further how visual culture and arts especially photography shaped the thoughts and attitudes of Freud and influenced the birth of psychoanalysis. She points out that Freud was a child of a photographic age, his library was full of illustrated books and photographs, all of which Bergstein has examined further for revelations of Freud’s thinking. Bergstein’s main focus is on images of art and architecture which she believes have influenced Freud the most in forming his theory of psychoanalysis.\textsuperscript{21}

Bergstein begins her investigation by exploring the connection between photography, memory and psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis seeks to uncover repressed memories within a patient’s unconsciousness most often through free association or dream interpretation which means that the patient is taken on some kind of visual trip where they have to face the memories in pictures. For Freud, dreams appeal predominantly in visual images and these images get transfigured but are never really lost. In psychoanalytical terms images do not disappear either regardless how much they have been repressed, they will stay alive in one’s unconsciousness. In other words

\textsuperscript{19} Gilman, King, Porter, Rousseau, Showalter, 1993, p. 314-316

\textsuperscript{20} Gilman, King, Porter, Rousseau, Showalter, 1993, p. 314-316

\textsuperscript{21} Bergstein, 2010, p. 1-7
unconsciousness could be considered as one big image library. Bergstein believes that Freud’s ideas on visual imagination were hugely influenced by the common perception of his era that a photograph could serve as a mirror of memory, mimicking the dreams and ideas of a person and showing everything in a true light. In order to prove her argument right, she uses Freud’s first Rome Dream as an example.

In his book *The Interpretation of Dream* (1899) Freud gives an account of his dreams of which many are related to his desire to travel to the city of Rome. In one dream, he is looking out of the window of a train at the Tiber and Ponte Sant’Angelo when suddenly the train starts moving and he realises that he has not entered the city. This scenery that appeared in his dreams, Freud recognised as coming from a famous engraving that he had been looking at a day before in the parlour of his patient. It is more than likely that Freud had come across this view of Tiber and Ponte Sant’Angelo before since it was often the subject of photographs, postcards and engravings. What is interesting here is that Freud’s description of himself looking at the beautiful scenery through a train window resembles the experience of looking at a beautiful, framed landscape photograph. This indicates that Freud’s visual imagination was influenced by the modern visual culture and photography. However, as Freud finally got to visit his dream city, he was slightly disappointed by the fact that the scenery did not appear the same as in his dreams (and photographs), thus Bergstein concludes that “photographs in various guises are analogues to diverse kinds of memories, fantasies, or dreams and ways of envisioning what was expected.”

The English writer and photographer Victor Burgin has also drawn similar connections between the unconscious, fantasy and photography. For him the unconscious is “The idea of another locality, another space, another scene, the between perception and consciousness”. This definition is not far from his idea of fantasy: “Fantasy is located between the conscious and the unconscious; it is where the transaction of these two zones occur. In fantasy-daydreams, for example the unconscious is given some sort of temporal, spatial and symbolic form by the conscious. Certain lost objects are dreamt about, given a particular spatial arrangement and placed in a particular narrative. Thus fantasy is often described as a kind of staging”. A parallel with photography is obvious since photography also stages objects and represents a world that is different from reality as demonstrated through Freud’s Rome dream.

22 Bergstein, 2010, p. 8-9
23 Bergstein, 2010, p. 9-15
25 Rose, 2011, p.125
1.3.3 Optical unconscious

One of the scholars who first discussed photography’s relation to the human unconscious was the German philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin. In his book *A Little History of Photography* (1931) Benjamin coined the term “optical unconscious” to capture the new realm of the unseen that photography had introduced in a way to which psychoanalysis had constituted an access to the unconsciousness: “It is another nature which speaks to the camera rather than to the eye: “other” above all in that sense that a space informed by human consciousness gives way to a space informed by the unconscious.” As an example Benjamin is using the act of walking, everybody knows what it involves, but nobody is able to describe the fraction of second when a person starts to walk unless that is captured in a photograph “It is through photography that we first discover the existence of this optical unconsciousness, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis.”26 In other words Benjamin was also suggesting that a camera does not offer us a perfect image of reality but instead a route to a different world which we in this case call unconsciousness, a place for fantasies, dreams and also for fears.

Later in the 20th century the French philosopher and theorist Roland Barthes was also fascinated by the fragmentary nature of photographs which often presents objects out of context. In his book *Camera Lucida* (1981) Barthes is looking for the essence of photography and analysing the effects that photographs have upon their viewers. In order to do so, he comes up with two different categories which he labels the *studium* and *punctum*. The *studium* of a photograph is the ordinary meaning which is a product of the reader’s education in one particular culture and generally matching with the intention of the photographer, “polite interest” as Barthes calls it. 27 The *punctum* breaks through this complacency of response by evoking more personal interest within the viewer, being usually a little detail which can take over the whole photograph, dominate it. The *punctum* as it is personal, can be different for everyone. As it is most often unintentionally included in a photograph (not representing the initial meaning of the photographer) we can connect it to Benjamin’s concept of optical unconsciousness. 28


27 Barthes, 1982, p. 27

28 Barthes, 1982, p. 40-45
Punctum does not just represent the unconscious material but also brings out unconscious thoughts within the viewer. Barthes discusses these thoughts at a very personal level in Camera Lucida which was written shortly after his mother had passed away. In the book, Barthes goes through old photographs of his mother with the desire of knowing and recognising her in them. He comes across an old photograph that features his mother as a child in a winter garden. This photograph turns out to be so powerful and overwhelming and so implicated in Barthes own anticipation of death that it is not reproduced in the book. He states: “I cannot produce the Winter Garden Photograph. It exists only for me. For you, it would be nothing but an indifferent picture, one of the thousand manifestations of “ordinary”, it cannot in any way constitute the visible object of a science; it cannot establish an objectivity, in the positive sense of the term; at most it would interest your studium: period, clothes, photogeny; but in it, for you, no wound” 29

Barthes’ description of Punctum bears resemblance to Freud’s concept of Uncanny which means mild anxiety or uneasiness that arises from when the familiar suddenly appears strange or frightening. This happens when something in the familiar experience or object triggers the return of repressed complexes. 30 Punctum and Uncanny can be seen functioning in the same way as they both trigger the viewer, opening up a new reading for a photograph. As for Barthes by looking at the Winter Garden Photograph, he saw something that is familiar, his mother at a very young age but at the same time he was staring at a ghost, a person who did not exist anymore. This very personal reading evoked feelings of uncanniness and brought him closer not only to the death of his mother, but also to his own death.

Barthes’ reading of The Winter Garden Photograph can also be linked to the idea of trauma. The connection between trauma and photograph is acknowledged by Freud in his book Moses and Monotheism (1939). The process of developing a trauma in the early childhood can be compared to “a photograph that which can be developed and made into a picture after a short or long interval”, Freud states 31. Thus what cannot be realised in the beginning will later develop into a trauma living as an image, a photograph in one’s unconsciousness. Freud’s comparison between a trauma and photograph is important in the sense that it proves how Freud saw them functioning in a similar way and that photographs were metaphorical objects of one’s mind.

29 Barthes, 1982, p. 73
In *Interpretation of Dreams* Freud makes another comparison between photography and psyche by stating the following: “We should picture the instrument that carries out our mental functions as resembling a compound microscope or a photographic apparatus.” 32 It becomes very obvious that when Freud was thinking about human psyche, he was imagining it to be working in a similar way to a camera. Thus it is not so relevant to investigate the photographic books Freud had read in his lifetime as Bergstein was doing instead it is important to look at Freud’s writings which reveal his inspiration towards the medium of photography which is also reflected through his theory of psychoanalysis.

32 Freud, 1913, p.536-537
1.4 The evolution of phototherapy

So far we have uncovered that the roots of phototherapy stem back to the mid 19th century and the work of Hugh Diamond. Since then there have been continual efforts to apply photography to diagnostic and psychotherapeutic purposes in psychiatry and many of those practises are well documented such as the practise of Jean Martin Charcot. The writings of Freud also indicate that he had been impressed by the medium which he saw functioning in a similar way to the human psyche. Thus it is not a surprise that photography eventually became a form of therapy. In this section I look at the most recent history of phototherapy and discuss the works by Jo Spence and Rose Martin who came to develop their own phototherapy practice in the early 1980s. This practice did not only aim for personal healing but also addressed issues related to the representation of women in arts and society and thus were tightly linked to feminist politics and cultural theories which I will be looking more in depth. I am also intrigued in finding out how phototherapy became integrated into clinical work which is why I discuss the work by Canadian psychologist Judy Weiser. It also appears that there is some confusion regarding the terms phototherapy and therapeutic photography so I would like to draw a distinction between these two.

1.4.2 Re-enactment phototherapy and the gaze

Re-enactment phototherapy is a methodology that Rosy Martin came to develop in co-operation with the late Jo Spence in 1983. The practise is described by Martin as: “Exploring the self as a series of fictions, as a web of inter-related stories told to us and about us, we used therapeutic techniques to look behind the ‘screen memories,’ the simplifications and myths of others, too long accepted as our own histories. We began to tell our stories through our therapeutic relationship and together we explored ways of making visible the complexity and contradictions of our own stories from our points of view” 33 Interestingly Martin mention the term screen memories which is also a term that was first discussed by Freud in his essay titled Screen Memories (1899). Freud defines the notion of screen memory as “one which owes its value as a memory not to its own content but to the relation existing between that content and some other that has been supressed” 34

that memories from childhood vividly recalled in adult life have no specific connection to the (traumatic) events that happened in the past. Rather they are composite formations, referents of early childhood events (most often traumatic) represented through a distorted lens.  

This idea was clearly understood by Martin and Spence who wanted to go beyond the screen memories in order to really understand the issues related to identity, gender and traumas.

A good example of such an effort is Martin’s self-portrait *Dapper Daddy* made in collaboration with Jo Spence in 1986 (Fig 7). It shows Martin dressed up as a male and more specifically as her father. The point of doing so is to address her personal relationship with him and the multitude of different aspects that involves. For instance Martin is seen holding up a cigarette in her hand through which she is examining the links between her own smoking habits and that of her fathers. By looking polished and shiny, Martin is also going through her personal trauma of being born in a poor working class family but later placed in a posh middle-class school.  

*Dapper Daddy* appears to be also relevant in relation to the notion of gaze. The term gaze, as used in art-historical context is generally understood as looking or watching although it is much more complex than that which is explained by Margaret Olin in her essay ‘Gaze’ (1996). Olin writes that gaze is a deliberate act of looking that combines pleasure and knowledge, often placing these two elements within the negative context of desire, power and manipulation. Olin also states that these issues surrounding gaze play a significant role within a feminist theory, as they were “introduced into the mainstream of contemporary discourse in the contrasting context of formalist theories of painting and feminist theories of film.” This latter could be referring to Laura Mulveys’ critical essay ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative cinema’ (1975)

In ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative cinema’, Mulvey establishes the term male gaze as part of understanding the role of a female character in cinema but the term is also applicable to typical female representation in photographs. Mulvey argues that in Freudian terms, woman symbolizes the castration threat by her real absence of a penis and also serves as the object for male desire. Thus the role of women within a culture, and films (and photographs) is to be a “signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as a

34 Freud, 1899, p.320
35 Reed, Levine, 2014, p.28
36 Hogan, 2012 p.128
bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning.” 38 This leads to women being the victims of scopophilic gaze that is either active (which represses and controls women) or fetishistic (which represents women as sex objects). Mulvey writes: “In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness. Woman displayed as sexual object is the leit-motif of erotic spectacle… she holds the look, plays to and signifies male desire.” 39

A gendered power relationship emerges from these binary oppositions. Woman is the image and man is the bearer of the look with all the power on his side. Because women are represented as passive characters or erotic objects of sexual stimulation for the male gaze, they no longer pose a threat to a male viewer. Instead the male viewer can just look at the woman for consumption, most often in a sexual way. 40 Although the theory may appear slightly outdated, Visual Pleasure and Narrative cinema was a ground-breaking essay which pointed out issues related to female representation in films and photography and thus might have also had influence upon the practice of Spence and Martin.

According to Olin, Mulvey and other theorists posit that the male gaze can be averted by revealing how it operates. She writes: “In large part the project of Mulvey and other feminists is to awaken in the male voyeur, enjoying the female as spectacle, the shame that comes from discovering someone is watching him.” 41 In this way the viewer comes to understand the oppressive system of looking and objectifying with some shame which actually makes the visual exploitation of the female image difficult. Although Dapper Daddy is not an image that would typically give visual pleasure to the male voyeur, it is a photograph that challenges typical gender roles by displaying a woman dressed up in a male suit and taking up a role as a man. This method is best described in the book The Art of Reflection: Women Artists’ Self-Portraiture in the Twentieth Century by Marsha Meskimmon who writes that Martin, “challenges this simple model of development which assigns women to positions
of lack and perpetual ‘penis envy’ and investigates her own relationship to her father as an introjected part of herself, rather than desired ‘other.’” 42 Thus Martin is taking her place here as the maker of meaning, investigating her own personality in relation to her father while being protected from the male gaze.

Martin’s collaborator Jo Spence also used a similar method of performative re-enactment to tackle issues regarding female representation, identity and femininity. However, she is mostly famous for her raw self-portraits that were taken while she was receiving treatment for cancer (Spence died of cancer in 1992). Most of the portraits expressed the frustration and anger Spence felt by being managed and controlled by a state institution. She explains: “Here I was on a production line, as the kind of fodder passing along between doctors and consultants. That was the beginning of it. I began to see how they constructed a world view through the way they worked and what I wanted was irrelevant really. I was the patient, who had to be managed, got better, but I did not exist, other than what their discourse made me” 43 In this way, Spence used the camera as a weapon against the state institution and medical discourse which finally led to a series of photographs called *The Picture of Health* (1982)

Through the photographs of this series, the viewer is confronted with what society is trying to conceal. In the photograph *Expected*, (1990, Fig. 8.), Spence appears nude thus revealing her aging and suffering body. She is wearing a pair of red shoes which can be seen as a symbol of femininity or eroticism. Her pose suggests that she is tripping over. The photograph includes a great amount of humiliation but not towards the subject but the society and its ideas of beauty. Furthermore, it captures the anger that Spence experienced through her treatments during which she was treated as a medical object rather than a subject. 44

In another photograph titled *Booby Prize*, (1989, Fig. 9) Spence’s head has been cut off so the viewer can only see her nude body which gives the photograph a feeling of isolation. The body is initially shocking because of the all scars due to her illness. Again the photograph reflects Spence’s own experience of what it feels like to battle cancer and live in a body that is not perfect but still real. Both of these photographs, Expected and Booby Prize also bear huge importance in relation to resisting the male gaze as they are ridiculing the society’s idea of beauty. 45 In the essay

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42 Meskimmon, 1996, p. 120

43 Hogan, 2012 p.7

Phototherapy- Psychic realism as a healing art that is included in the anthology The Photography Reader (2002) by Liz Wells, it is pointed out how private sector counselling and therapy came to be improved after the 1950s. Before that women especially black and working class women were expected to remain silent about their problems and instead just adapt into the situation. Jo Spence and Rosy Martin rallied against these expectations and helped women to break free from the burden of representation. In relation to phototherapy, this would mean more open representations of people who could now feel freer to explore their identities and issues through photography instead of just using photography at very superficial level to capture smiles. 46

1.4.3 Judy Weisers’ phototherapy

Spence and Martin can be seen as pioneers of using photography as therapy in Europe but it appears that a similar approach had been known in North America as early as the 1970s. Canadian psychologist Judy Weiser used different phototherapy techniques in her own work in 1971 and published her first article on the subject in 1973. Only six years after, Weiser received an invitation to the first International Phototherapy symposium which was a surprise for her since she was not aware that there were other practitioners (although none of them from the UK). This symposium finally led to a publication of Phototherapy Journal and the International Phototherapy Association. Phototherapy started to gain more and more popularity but it would still take many years before Weiser’s and Spence’s paths would connect. In her article ‘Remembering Jo Spence: A Brief Personal and Professional’ (2005) Weiser addresses the joy that came out of meeting Spence before she passed away but she does not elaborate how that meeting came to impact her own views about phototherapy. 47

What Weiser does address in her essay is that her idea of photography is very different from that of Jo Spence’s: “My kind of “PhotoTherapy” was clearly not the same as the "photo therapy" that Jo had been doing and writing about, and in fact, outside the U.K. her work would likely have been called "Autobiographical Photography" or "Therapeutic Photography" instead”. 48 In the official

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46 Wells, 2002, p. 402

47 Weiser, 2005, https://www.academia.edu/3173920/Remembering_Jo_Spence_A_Brief_Personal_and_Professional_Memoir, accessed on the 7th of April 2015
phototherapy website Weiser further highlights the difference between phototherapy and therapeutic photography. According to her, phototherapy refers to the use of photographs in therapy which involves the client and therapist. Conversely the term therapeutic photography indicates the use of photographs as healing tools which does not require any attendance to therapy. This definition can be seen resembling Doug Stewart’s (also one of the pioneers in the field) idea of phototherapy from the 1978: “Phototherapy is the use of photography or photographic materials, under the guidance of a trained therapist, to reduce or relieve painful psychological symptoms and to facilitate psychological growth and therapeutic change”

By following these definitions, Spence’s work would then rather represent what we should understand as therapeutic photography. Yet I would like to note that some of the works Spence produced came out of collaborations with therapists and doctors for instance the series Narratives of Dis-ease: Ritualised Procedures (1988–89) was created together with psychotherapist Dr. Tim Sheard. Many of Spence’s self-portraits have also come to inspire the younger generation of photographers to tackle issues related to the female body and politics. Furthermore Spence’s work was clearly not created for the sake of art but also to fight against the prevailing ideologies and power. Thus it appears that calling her work purely “Autobiographical Photography” or “Therapeutic Photography” is an understatement.

Spence seemed to have been aware of the difficult relationship between phototherapy and her work as she had stated before that: “Two elements make up photo therapy—photography and therapy—and each word has come to have a number of meanings for me, both as a former professional photographer and a cancer person. I arrived at these formulations mostly through actual practice, so my ideas may not be the same as those of an academic or professional therapist. Any theory I have now acquired came to me slowly from a variety of sources...”

Later, Martin who is now trained in phototherapy has taken a similar stance to Weiser and Stewart when it comes to defining the terms: “When Jo Spence and I first wrote about our practice, we used the term "phototherapy." Subsequently we learned of the work of therapists within the United States and Canada who used photography in their practice, and also used the term "phototherapy." To try

48 Weiser, 2005, https://www.academia.edu/3173920/Remembering_Jo_Spence_A_Brief_Personal_and_Professional_Memoir, accessed on the 7th of April 2015


to avoid confusion, we latterly used the term "re-enactment phototherapy," to make clear that our work was drawing upon psychodramatic techniques and was about the creation of new photographic images, within the therapeutic relationship."

What we can note from here is that the definitions for phototherapy and therapeutic photography are not written in stone and may vary depending on which country they are being practised and by whom.

2. The power of vernacular photographs

“Phototherapy techniques use people’s own personal snapshots, family albums, and photos taken by others (and the feelings, memories, thoughts, beliefs, and other information these evoke) to deepen and enhance their therapy process, in ways that words alone cannot do” explains the phototherapy pioneer and practitioner Judy Weiser. In this chapter I would like to delve into the world of ordinary photographs and explore their power upon their viewers. I will begin the chapter by giving an introduction of terms such as domestic photography, family photography and snapshot photography which can be connected to the larger category of vernacular photography. My aim is not to give a clear definition for each term since there is so much overlap between the terms but rather to provoke reflection of the terms which will minimize confusion when they are discussed in different contexts. From there, I move on to discuss how ordinary people have used such photographs in a therapeutic way in the past which for instance requires a look into Post-Mortem Photography. The story of Kodak is discussed in relation to creating an ideal family representation which became challenged in the 1970s by scholars, academics and especially feminists including Jo Spence herself. Spence is taken into more careful inspection since her work paved the way for a more realistic representation of family matters and most importantly for phototherapy.

2.1 Reflection on the terms

In the book From Snapshots to Social Media - The Changing Picture of Domestic (2011), Risto Sarvas and David M Frochlich are exploring the different terms such as domestic photography, family photography and snapshot photography. According to them the term domestic photography refers to the photographic activities of ordinary people producing and using photographs for personal purposes. The word domestic implies that these activities are take place in their homes, thus we can connect the two ideas home and photography. Images of babies’ first steps, birthday parties or other celebrations are good examples of events which could take place at home and be photographed. People also travel on their holidays and take photos, then return to their homes to


54 Sarvas, Frohlich, 2011, p. 5-6
view and place them in photo albums before showing them to their friends, thus domestic photography is rooted in the idea of home.  

Traditionally these people who have been involved in domestic photography have been viewed as a family unit, thus family photography can be seen as almost synonymous with domestic photography. Many families display photographs of smiling children or family portraits in their livingroom which also reflect the family centric values which are prominent to domestic photography, yet domestic photography does not necessary need to assume a family as a person living alone without any family can still take part in domestic photography.  

Another term that can be connected to domestic photography and family photography is snapshot photography which as the name already suggests are photographs that are taken spontaneously and without any artistic intention. Although snapshots are also closely related to family photographs, one must remember that family photographs can also be taken by a professional photographer whereas snapshots specifically refer to amateur photography. 

As we may notice, there is an overlap between the terms, so a clear definition cannot be given. However, these explanations will give a better understanding of the terms as they will be mentioned in different contexts in this thesis. 

Lastly what can be mentioned is that all these terms could be located in the field of vernacular photography which is quite an obscure genre itself. Curator and Historian Daile Kaplan describe vernacular photography as “produced by an untrained maker, usually an amateur photographer. Loosely translated, vernacular images read as visceral and immediate; their focus is the communicative, versus artistic, aspects of the medium. In other words, a vernacular practitioner is one who does not marry the idea of the image with any consequent ambition, such as seeing their work embraced by the art establishment.” Because of these obscure qualities vernacular photographs have not previously received much attention in the history of photography, but as part of phototherapy they have started to receive more acknowledgment.

55 Sarvas, Frohlich, 2011, p. 5-6  
56 Sarvas, Frohlich, 2011, p. 5-6  
2.2 Early family photographs.

In this section I concentrate on looking how ordinary people have used photographs in a therapeutic way in their own use. In the beginning of its history, photography was mainly reserved for the elite who had the leisure and money to practise it on their own or get their photographs taken in a professional studio. The first commercial photography studios were produced photographs on a silver copper plate, known as daguerreotypes, which attracted the growing middle class to get their unique portraits taken. As the studios became bigger, it enabled whole families to be photographed at once. Most of these early portraits feature dignified and serious looking people. Partially this was the style of Victorian times but there were also technical reasons. Sitting for a daguerreotype required being exposed to light for a long time, thus smiles were hard to sustain under such circumstances. It is pointed out in the essay ‘In And Beyond The Charmed Circle of Home’ included in Liz Wells’ anthology *Photography: A Critical Introduction* (2000) that “The modern ubiquitous snapshot smile should be seen as technological achievement as well as a change in social mores.” In other words, it was partly due to the shorter shutter exposure times that people gained more power over the representation of themselves and their family life through photographs. Before that photographer had to tell the subjects to look stiff and still as otherwise the photograph might have got blurred and ruined. Thus creating an impression of a smiling happy family (which we often see in modern family photographs and snapshots) was impossible during the early years of photography.

As already mentioned, the seriousness of faces in the early daguerreotypes could also partly be explained through the period in which they were created. Queen Victoria embraced the new medium of photography and also wanted her own children to be photographed (Fig.10). These portraits remained strictly formal reflecting dignity thus forming an ideal model for domestic life. As soon as the middle class saw this, they also wanted to be represented in a similar manner (Fig. 11). Thus we can note that from the early age of photography, people, mainly the elite, were using photography to strengthen their status and wealth in society.

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58 Wells,2000,p.130

59 Wells,2000,p.131
2.2.1 Post-Mortem Photography

Post-mortem photography, the practice of photographing the recently deceased became very popular amongst the middle class during the Victorian era when mortality rates were extremely high. Like portraiture, the first photographs of the dead were achieved through the daguerreotype process which was rather expensive thus only affordable to the wealthier side of society. However, as the number of photographers increased throughout the 1940s, the cost of daguerreotypes also diminished. During the 1850s less expensive and faster photographic processes became available such as the ambrotype (on glass), the tintype (on thin, cheap metal), and the carte-de-visite (on paper). By the end of the next decade, all members of society had the chance to get their portraits taken and although the price for Post Mortem photographs were much higher, people were willing to do financial sacrifices in order to get one visual remembrance of their loved-one. 60

The earliest Post-Mortem photographs were either close-ups of the face or full length of the body and rarely included the coffin. The subjects were usually depicted as if they were sleeping or else arranged as lifelike. Children were often seen in cribs on in beds, surrounded by their toys or family members, most often by their mother (Fig. 12). The long exposure times made the deceased subjects very easy to photograph. They would turn out very sharp compared to the rest of the family members, which was also the way of recognizing the deceased person in a photograph. (Fig.13). Flowers like forget-me-nots or calla lilies were often used in post-mortem photography of all types. At the later stage the subjects were also depicted in a coffin accompanied by grieving attendances (Fig.14) Post Mortem Photographs not only helped people through the grieving process over a loved one, but also served as keepsakes to remember the deceased, thus these photographs were highly cherished within the family. They were part of the mourning period which could last from months to years depending on the family relationships. 61

The function of Post Mortem Photography seems to be linked with some of the ideas that Barthes introduces in his book *Camera Lucida*. From the first chapter we remember how emotional Barthes becomes when he looks at the photograph of his late mother. All of sudden all photographs become memorials and the very essence of photography is its spectral conjuring of death-in-life. In his book Barthes describes the viewing process of his favourite photograph Winter Garden. He was staring at the little girl in the photograph that he had recognized as his mother, at the same time, he


had realised that this little girl, his mother, is now gone. The photograph opened up his wounds evoking a spectrum of feelings. He later writes that it is “an image which produces death while trying to preserve life” 62

The French theorist André Bazin’s characterization of photography in his essay ‘The Ontology of the Photographic image’ (1945) was similar in the emphasis on death and photography. In the beginning of his essay he states that “If the plastic arts were put under psychoanalysis, the practice of embalming the dead might turn out to be a fundamental factor in their creation. The process might reveal that at the origin of painting and sculpture there lies a mummy complex. The religion of ancient Egypt, aimed against death, saw survival as depending on the continued existence of the corporeal body. Thus, by providing a defence against the passage of time it satisfied a basic psychological need in man, for death is but the victory of time. To preserve, artificially, his bodily appearance is to snatch it from the flow of time, to stow it away neatly, so to speak, in the hold of life. It was natural, therefore, to keep up appearances in the face of the reality of death by preserving flesh and bone” 63

The term mummy complex is referring to a man’s preservative instinct, an attempt to ward off the reality of time and death. Bazin believed that this need to make immortal the mortal was also the function of plastic arts such as painting and sculpture but these two mediums he believed rather incomplete as they were not fully capable of reproducing reality. It was the invention of photography and cinema that finally allowed objective capturing of reality and freed the painting and sculpture from their mimetic duties allowing them to delve into abstraction: ”Photography and the cinema are discoveries that satisfy, once and for all and in its very essence, our obsession with realism.” Bazin writes. 64

Bazin’s arguments seem slightly outdated if we consider the objectivity of these mediums as well as people’s desire for reality. As we come to notice photographs or cinema neither serve as realistic representation of the world nor completely satisfy people’s obsession with realism. In fact as we can note from the popularity of 3D movies, it is not the reality but alternate reality they can invest themselves into. However, Bazin’s ideas are applicable to the early Post-mortem photographs which were accomplished through the unique process of daguerreotype. The photograph of the dead person would be made on a copper-plate and then put in ornate case, a small enough to hold in the

62 Barthes, 1982, p. 92
63 Bazin, 1960, p.4-5
64 Bazin, 1960, p. 7
hand or carry in the pocket. This whole process of creating a photograph through daguerreotypes resembles mummification as well as cherishes the desire towards reality and uniqueness.

Many of the deceased people in Post-mortem photographs were staged to look as if they were still alive with sometimes even their eyes painted open. In his essay ‘Mourning and Melancholia’ (1917) Freud compares mourning and melancholia to each other while discussing their different responses to loss. He describes the process of mourning in the following way: “Reality testing has shown that the loved object no longer exists, and it proceeds to demand that all libido shall be withdrawn from its attachments to that object. This demand arouses understandable opposition- it is a matter of general observation that people never willingly abandon libidinal position, not even, indeed, when substitute is already beckoning to them. This opposition can be so intense that a turning away from reality takes place and a clinging to the object through the medium of a hallucinatory wishful psychosis” 65 Freud’s analysis of the mourning process could also explain the purpose of Post-mortem photography. It could have been due to the denial of reality of death that people wanted to look at a photograph of their deceased loved one. Whenever the reality would hit them, they could always take out their daguerreotype and look at the person who despite being dead appeared alive in the photograph. For Bazin photographs just “help us to remember the subject and to preserve him from a second spiritual death” 66 but it can be argued that Post-mortem photographs just served the denial of death until people were able to face the truth.

By the early 20th century the practice of Post-mortem photography diminished. This was partly due to the fact that 20th century saw many breakthroughs in healthcare and death rates decreased. People started becoming more distant from death which also came to have an impact upon the tradition of mourning and memorializing. 67 This somehow distant relationship between a man and death could also be reflected in Barthes book Camera Lucida. It is through the reading of a Winter Garden photograph that Barthes himself realizes the death of his mother as well as faces the fact that one day he will also be gone. Thus here The Winter Garden photograph does not serve as an evidence of life as it could have been the case with Post Mortem Photography instead it serves as an evidence of death.


66 Bazin, 1960, p. 6

2.2.2 Kodak and the rise of Amateur photography

What also came to have an impact on the decreasing popularity of Post mortem photography was the birth of snapshot photography. It is a common belief that snapshot photography became available for everyone with the introduction of the Kodak #1 camera in 1888 but it in reality it was still the members of upper-and middleclass who could afford to buy the first Kodak camera. However around a decade later Kodak came to change this by introducing the Kodak Brownie which was a very basic card-box camera with a fixed focus lens and single shutter speed. With its simple control and price of five shillings, it was intended to be a camera that everyone could afford to use which is what the Kodak slogan ‘You press the button, we do the rest’ also reflects. Popular photography would not have been able to establish itself without advertising as such. In the beginning of the 20th century advertising industry had grown dramatically as industrialization expanded the supply of manufactured products and photography was in the center of the development. This helped Kodak with constructing ideas of what should be photographed, when and by whom.

Until then the strictly formal portraits of Queen’s Victoria’s family had served as a model for respectable domesticity, a style which the upper class wanted to imitate for their own photographs. As the lives of working class people improved with the emergence of municipal housing, they also began to follow the idea wanting to get more dignified and graceful portraits taken of them at their own homes. These new working class homes with gas lighting and piped water would then be finally good enough to serve as a location for such photo shoots. From there the lifestyles of the different classes became to grow closer together while snapshot photography also came to diffuse this division with its informal and casual style.

In her essay ‘Family, Education and Photography’ (1993), Judith Williams highlights these aspects by arguing how the rise of family photography, both photographs of family and the practice of photography within a family was dictated by bourgeois ideology. This seems to be a valid argument if we, for instance, look at the snapshot type of photograph of princesses Margaret and Elizabeth which was taken in 1930 (Fig. 15). This photograph became a new model for domestic life which almost all members of society could then aspire to due to the social improvements and

68 West, 2000, p. 38-41
69 Wells, 2000, p. 159-163
70 Wells, 2000, p. 162-165
71 Williams, 1993, p. 236

29
the rise of popular photography.^{72} "Photography played not merely an incidental but a central role in the development of contemporary ideology of the family, in providing a form of representation which cut across class, disguised social differences, and produced sympathy of the exploited with their exploiters. It could make all families look more or less alike."^{73} Williams argues.

Kodak also brought children to adverts through marketing their first Brownie cameras. These images of children ended up covering over one-third of all advertisements produced between 1917 and 1932. They had significant symbolic value for Kodak with constructing ideas of the ideal family and domestic life which could make their business grow bigger. The timing was also perfect for that as The United States had just entered the war due to which the importance of family had increased within the society.^{74} Camera sales went up as families wanted to buy cameras to record the soldiers leaving for war. The photographs of young men in their uniforms, most of who never returned, could be seen representing the sad part of the 20th century family albums.^{75}

Interestingly, this kind of desire to get the last record of the person who is leaving for a war also bears resemblance to Post Mortem photography. Most families must have been aware that their loved one might not return thus getting the last visual memory of the person was highly valued which is also reflected through the boom in camera sales around that time. Naturally these kinds of photographs were not selected to feature in ads as they would have had negative connotations and gone against the Kodak brand as a creator of happy moments. However, Kodak did use soldiers in ads but just in a different manner, for instance the ad *Pictures from home* (Fig 16) features a group of soldiers training to fight in World War I. They are gathered around and looking at Kodak photos from home with a smile on their faces. The text in the ad hints that family members should be taking and sending photographs of their home to the soldiers in order to keep them emotionally stable. Here Kodak clearly acknowledges the healing power of photographs as well as uses that as part of their marketing.

The reason why Kodak chose to include children in their adverts for the first Brownie cameras was not merely an effort to promote the importance of family and domestic life but also to demonstrate the simplicity of their cameras as in the ad *Let the children Kodak* (Fig 17). Targeting these cameras for children legitimized photography as a play where no real photography skills were needed. Photography could now be spontaneous, fun and playful enjoyed by the whole family which would

\[^{72}\text{Wells}, 2000, \text{p. 162}\]

\[^{73}\text{Williams}, 1993, \text{p. 238}\]

\[^{74}\text{West}, 2000, \text{p. 79-80}\]

\[^{75}\text{Wells}, 2000, \text{p. 164}\]
then also come across through the photographs taken in those situations. Williams points out how in
the early family photographs it was enough that the family members were just placed in front of the
camera and documented. But when Kodak gained more popularity this was no longer enough and
people were expected to smile and give an impression of being happy “Fun must not only be had, it
must be seen to have been had.” 76 Thus part of Kodak illusion was to show how photography could
bring more fun into a domestic life while also creating an image of how everyone’s life should look
in the photographs.

Kodak was also targeting middle class women who had the time and leisure to take up photographic
activities. Women were not just considered as potential customers in the press but they also featured
in ads. The new form of photography was definitely gendered: “Perhaps the most influential family
image in our culture has been that of the Madonna and child; father was absent long before he had
to hold the camera” as Williams writes. 77 The adverts of new Kodak cameras with easy operating
instructions implied that the process of taking a picture is so simple that even women can do it
while the chemicals and other contraptions could be left to the men. Although initially the
photographic content of women’s activities was her home and children, this became to change in
the 20th century as women gained more independence. Kodak introduced the Kodak girl who
became the symbol of modern and spontaneous woman while still being a responsible mother and
good wife. In the Kodak adverts, she would be captured “always out of doors…perched on a rock
pointing to sea, leaning on a jetty, watching the yachts come in…picturing children romping on the
beach, or a rustic cottage, or a modern young woman in a car, while urging purchasers to ‘Make
Kodak snapshots of every happy scene’” 78 in this way Kodak not just pushed the idea of happy
family memories but also a picture of an ideal woman while their popularity just kept growing.

2.2.3 Against the Kodak representation

In this section, I explore the collapse of Kodak’s popularity which began in the 1970s. By that time
the gap between the enrichment and proliferation of ideal images of family life and the difficulty of
its lived reality began to provoke criticism towards personal photography especially from the
feminist side. Why would photographs just show happy smiling people if the reality was different?
Why would personal photography never feature crying children, fighting spouses or poverty? As a

76 Williams, 1993, p. 239
77 Williams, 1993, p. 239
78 Wells, 2000, p. 160-162
consequence of this critique the whole family image was no longer solid and secure but broken and full of contradictions. This again led to a critique towards family as an institution which could also be seen hypocritical and false. 79

Jo Spence was amongst the first ones to argue against the conventions that were included in domestic photography and the bourgeois society behind them: “Within the realm of personal life, photographs of angry children, divorcing or rowing parents or sibling rivalry- in short, the representations of pain and conflict that are a part of family life-either do not get taken or are discarded. It is largely parents’ wishful thinking and ‘memories’ that are represented by family pictures, although they are offered as children’s own.”80 Based on these ideas Spence started her own project called Beyond the Family Album (1979) which could also be considered a turning point in Spence’s career as she began to move closer to the re-enactment phototherapy, a practise that she later came to develop together with Rosy Martin.

For Beyond the Family Album (1979), Spence wanted to explore her own family and class background as well as her role as a woman, so the project besides being very political would also be autobiographical: “Later, as a feminist, when I become more aware of my own socialization as a ‘woman’ (and of the process of ‘bourgeoisification’ which I had undergoing—which had taken me completely away from the working-class roots and struggles of my own family) I began to think about how I had been represented by others. This was a starting point to a project on ‘my history,’ in which I began to tentatively examine the existing photographs of me, and ended by my taking control over how I wanted to be photographed.” Spence explained. 81 She ended up re-staging her family album, for instance she would dress herself up to match portraits from earlier times in life or juxtapose an image of herself as a naked infant with an image of herself years later as a naked adult in a similar pose and present images of herself as sick and vulnerable. This allowed her to embody her past and take control over her own representation.

Beyond the Family Album was exhibited at the Hayward gallery London, in June 1979 as part of a survey show of contemporary British photography called Three Perspectives on Photography. The exhibition had a great deal of interesting comments attributed to it. Richard Ehrlich wrote in his review of the exhibition in Art and Artist that: “Jo Spence presents us with a ‘visual history’ of herself whose aims were more therapeutic than political. Self-image formed the subject of her

79 Wells, 2000, p. 167-168

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large, word packed ‘visual history’, and a tedious affair it was. Spence’s verbal analysis included statements like ‘photographs are not transparent reflections of reality’ and her visual analysis of images like the one that juxtaposes a baby picture of herself with an identically posed nude self portrait taken some forty four years later. Let us not deny Jo Spence her doubts and confusion, but may we ask that she convey them to us in a way that raises them above the level of pure therapy” 82

This review is important in the sense that it reflects the difficulties related to Spence’s work. Her work was definitely considered therapeutic but for that reason it also raised the question whether it was just that or did it have any political purpose? Should it even be entered in museums? Could it be called high art? Ehrlich’s review reflects the confusion that was around Spence’s work which I still believe somehow existing as giving Spence’s work a clear definition appears to be almost an impossible task. Spence’s work is neither what we should understand as photo therapy (as defined by Weiser) nor it is pure art. However Spence utilized the power of camera to challenge society on issues such as class, gender and power, so calling it non-political would be an insult. What becomes important here is the fact how she came to change the ways in which people viewed ordinary photographs and reveal the therapeutic potential of these photographs.

Then it is not a surprise that these ordinary photographs have later found their way to be a part of phototherapy. It is now believed that each snapshot a person takes or keeps is also a type of self-portrait reflecting those times and people that were important enough to be recorded through a camera. Collectively these photographs can make stories of someone’s life, providing visual footprints that can reveal where the person has been emotionally and physically and even indicating what could happen next in the future. How exactly they are used in therapy session is described by Judy Weiser in following way: “Under the guidance of a therapist trained in Phototherapy techniques, clients explore what their own personally meaningful snapshots and family albums are about emotionally, in addition to what they are of visually. Such information is latent in all personal photos, but when it can be used to focus and precipitate therapeutic dialogue, a more direct and less censored connection with the unconscious will usually result” 83 Weiser’s comment is interestingly linked to Walter Benjamin’s thoughts over photography’s capability to reflect one’s unconsciousness so what we can note is that this belief already stems from beginning of 20th century. What we can also note is that photography started gaining more therapeutic value during the 1970s which could almost be considered as a counteraction towards what Kodak had earlier

82 Ehrlich,1979, p. 39
built on, an illusion of what life and people should be instead of what they truly are. Spence clearly contributed to this in a significant manner by creating works which pointed out what was wrong with this kind of illusion.
3. The use of therapeutic photography in art.

In this third chapter I would like to explore the therapeutic use of photography in relation to arts. In the past many painters have tried gaining a better understanding over their self through self-portraiture. Often these works have been dramatic in their representation of pain, for instance the paintings by Vincent Van Gogh, Frida Kahlo and Egon Schiele. In this chapter I look at some of these paintings and explore how a similar kind of practise was later adapted by the American photographer Nan Goldin. Goldin’s work has often taken the traditional form of self-portraiture where she has placed herself in front of the camera and taken a photograph of herself, sometimes her life has been reflected through the photographs of others such as her ex-partners and friends. Through my explorations, I am intrigued in finding out whether Goldin has used photography only for own personal healing or has she aimed her work to be therapeutic for a broader audience as it then would find its connection to the work of Spence’s. Furthermore I discuss the psychoanalytical theories by Jung and Lacan which further clarify the human need in understanding the self.

3.1 What is the self?

When stating that artists have often searched for their self through art, it is important to understand what is actually meant by the term the self. The self has often been referred to as something true “The person’s revealed his/her true self” meaning that the person showed what she or he is by their personality. But that is just one example, the dictionaries may give many words that describe the self or self-related states such as self-esteem, self-knowledge, self-expression, self-denial and so on. There are also adjectives that show how different the self can be for instance it can be self-less, self-centred, self-conscious, self-reliant. Furthermore different theories such as the psychoanalysis, behaviourism and sociology are also interpreting the word differently which makes it actually impossible to give one clear definition for it. However the Oxford Dictionary states that the self is “one’s particular nature of personality; the qualities that make one individual unique” 84, this reflects the individuality of the word which also means that it should also be analysed in an individual way. With this in mind, the photographic self-portraits always represent the individual self of the person featuring in the photograph which naturally is not the same for everyone and thus not easily definable.

3.2 Artists, mirrors and the self

In this section I look at how some painters have created self-portraits in order to investigate their inner self and how this process links with the psychoanalytical theories regarding the self. Often these kinds of inner explorations have also included the depiction of pain for example in the work of the Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh. Van Gogh reportedly suffered from mental disease which eventually led him to commit suicide. If we are looking at one of his many self-portraits, *Self-portrait with Bandaged Ear* (Fig 18) we can note how Van Gogh has painted himself very pale and with a bandage across his ear which gives the impression to the viewer that his mind is in turmoil or that he is sick. This actual process of how Van Gogh created his self-portraits could be viewed as a form of therapy, assuming that he was trying to understand his mind and become healthier through creating them. Whether painting helped him to become more mentally stable and survive, is difficult to say but it clearly served Van Gogh a way to express and deal with his issues.

The Mexican painter Frida Kahlo created self-portraits with the same mind set. After hurting her spine and pelvis in a tram accident at the age of 18 Kahlo had to go through many surgical operations which left her bed-ridden for a long period during which she created hundreds of self-portraits. These paintings did not only reflect the physical pain that Kahlo experienced but also emotional pain due to the stormy relationship with the painter Diego Riviera. The painting *Diego and I* (Fig. 19) could be seen symbolizing this difficult relationships. Through her paintings Kahlo also explored the different aspects of her identity which were often very symbolic depictions as for instance the painting *The Wounded Deer* (Fig 20). These works also address her Mexican background.

Another painter who often depicted the turmoil of his mind was the Austrian painter Egon Schiele. During his lifetime he created hundreds of self-portraits and can be considered an early exponent of Expressionism. Schiele lived and worked in Vienna at the same time as psychoanalysis was developed which had a huge influence upon his work for instance he would often represent himself castrated or deformed as demonstrated through the self-portrait made in 1950 (Fig 21) In a similar way to Van Gogh and Kahlo, Schiele created his self-portraits in order to master his identity and overcome his personal problems.

Van Gogh, Kahlo and Schiele used painting as a mirror of their self and mind. Mirrors have always been a symbol for truth, yet we can still ask whether that really shows the truth. For instance the reverse of left and right shows us that what we see in a mirror is not a perfect replication of

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85 Jackson, 2010, p. 706

86 Jackson, 2010, p. 706
ourselves. The idea of a false image that mirrors provide can be linked to the concept of mirror phase (sometimes called as the mirror stage) which was developed by the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. According to him, an infant cannot initially separate itself from other bodies being that for instance their mothers or even an object. This comes to change usually sometime between the ages of 6 and 18 months when an infant sees its own reflection in a mirror and identifies it as its own. However, this is a process in which an infant sees some kind of reflection of the ideal rather than the reality. The wholeness and pleasure that was earlier symbolized by the attachment to the image of a mother will then get replaced by an image of the ideal body. From there an infant starts living up to this ideal image while those who they cannot identify with are regarded as different or other. For Lacan this process of identification continues subconsciously throughout the adulthood.

This process of identification plays a prominent part in the work of Van Gogh, Kahlo and Schiele who were creating paintings inspired by their personal pain and search for wholeness. The theory of the self by Swiss psychotherapist Carl Gustav Jung echoes similar ideas to Lacan’s view of the self. For Jung the self is the equivalent word for wholeness or being more precise the goal of the self is wholeness. The self represents totality that includes unconsciousness and consciousness. When we are in the process of trying to understand the self, we are in the process of individuation as Jung calls it. We are aiming to become conscious of us being unique human beings. This journey will always include conflicts which for Jung stand as a positive factor, since from there something new can come out. People will never come to fully understand this totality, because we can only achieve little fractions of it within the range of consciousness. Jung regards symbols, however, as very important as they are the product of unconsciousness instead of coming from the rational mind. These symbols can be regarded as vital in understanding the self. For instance Van Gogh’s colours could be interpreted as symbols of his mind, Kahlo included traditional Mexican symbols in her work to reflect her cultural identity and Schiele captured himself in different positions, sometimes lacking body parts, which I assume was to reflect the feeling of incompleteness.

Painting has always been appreciated for having this quality to express something that can not necessarily been seen in reality but which still exist whereas photography was for a long time dismissed for not being able to capture anything else than reality. I find this interesting in relation to

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87 Bull, 2010, p. 50-51
88 Bull, 2010, p. 50-51
the first photographic self-portrait that was made by Hippolyte Bayard. Bayard had laboured a long
time to make a permanent photographic image. Due to his disappointment that Daguerre and Talbot
were the first ones to receive credit for the invention of photography, Bayard created an image titled
*Self-portrait as a Drowned Man* (1840). In the photograph Bayard appears as a nude drowned man
and at the back of the photograph is a note explaining that the drowned man represented how his
life had ended because he was disappointed with the fact that he had not received any credit for the
invention of photography (Fig 22). 91 Although this message of the photograph might be a bit
exaggerated and ironic, the photograph itself demonstrates that the medium can be used in a
creative and expressive way.

### 3.3 The photographic journey of Nan Goldin

In this section I concentrate on discussing the work of American photographer Nan Goldin and
compare some of her photographs to the paintings discussed earlier as well as find some similarities
between her work and that of Spence’s. I am especially intrigued in analysing whether Goldin
produced her work only to overcome her own personal crisis or also to help others. When Nan
Goldin hit fame with her *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (1979-1985) in 1985, her photographs
were described as a “mirror of oneself as well as the mirror of the world.” 92 It is interesting that this
notion of photography’s capability to be a mirror of oneself or the world was still very strong in the
1980s and still exists today although we do know that the medium can also lie. Nevertheless, the
series *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* gained credit for being raw and honest as it was depicting
Goldin’s wayward life. Goldin herself had described the series in the following way: “The Ballad of
Sexual Dependency is the diary I let people read. My written diaries are private; they form a closed
document of my world and allow me the distance to analyse it. My visual diary is public; it expands
from its subjective basis with the input of other people.” 93 The series was initially devised as a
slideshow set to music to entertain Goldin’s friends who besides Goldin also featured in the
photographs. However it ended up being exhibited at the *Whitney Biennial* in New York in 1985
and published as a photobook in the following year, which institutionalised Goldin’s work into the
frame of fine art thus placing it into the realm of critical comments and making Goldin famous. As
the book was published it came to represent the snapshot-style, yet something different from the

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91 Hannavy, 2007, p. 1261


93 Goldin, 1986, p. 6
ordinary Kodak shots with their revealing nature. Critical remarks were made over the quality of the photos which were often shot in saturated colour and back-lit but Goldin did not pay any attention to that: “I did not really care about good photography, I cared about complete honesty”, Goldin had once said. And this was clearly what the viewers also cared for.

What I find interesting is how differently the art world responded to Goldin’s series The Ballad of Sexual Dependency compared to Spence’s exhibition Beyond the Family which had been exhibited earlier on. Whereas Spence’s work had been viewed rather as something like phototherapy evoking questions whether it should be called art, Goldin’s work was almost immediately accepted into the realm of art. Perhaps this could be explained through Goldin’s connection with fashion. Where as Spence’s work did not have any connection to fashion Goldin has been clearly influenced by it which is further highlighted through her comment on photographing transvestites: “I wished I could have put them on the cover of Vogue, because all I knew about photography came from the fashion magazines”. 95

The Ballad of Sexual Dependency was mainly concentrated on capturing the struggle for intimacy and understanding amongst friends and couples. It also features images of Goldin’s own abusive relationship with her ex-boyfriend Brian. The series has a narrative feeling as it starts by introducing Goldin and Brian in the beginning of their relationship (Fig 23). This photograph could be described as what is normally understood a typical snapshot with the couple looking directly at camera. It has also these Kodak qualities as Goldin is smiling at the camera looking happy and dressed up seductively supposedly for Brian. Brian’s pose suggests more that he is surprised, so overall everything in this photograph indicates that it is a typical a snapshot that could be displayed in a family album. Although this photograph may appear rather shallow but it clearly has significant importance for Goldin since she has included it in the series. Most often these types of photographs are also used as part of photo therapy in order to explore one’s relationship to their family or others. 96

As the series proceeds, the viewer will get more immersed into the tense relationship between the two (Fig 24). The second photograph which also serves as the cover for the book version of The Ballad of Sexual Dependency does not appear as a typical snapshot but has rather a cinematic

95 Goldin, 1986, p. 6
feeling. What it is also lacking is the typical domestic bliss that we are used to seeing in Kodak photographs with smiling families and couples. This photograph reveals the tension between the people which is indicated through Goldin’s gaze that is aimed at Brian who is looking away. Goldin’s pose indicates that she is fearful and sad. What the viewer is later subjected to is the aftermath of this tension which comes clear through a photograph of Goldin’s battered face (Fig. 25). In the photograph Goldin’s face is photographed in close up, directly in her face, showing the clear signs of domestic violence. These kinds of photographs were often seen as evidence to a crime or an accident so what we are looking is definitely not an ordinary snapshot. It naturally evokes a question why would someone like to take a photograph of themselves after being beaten up? Goldin has said the following: “Photography saved my life. Every time I go through something scary, traumatic, I survive by taking pictures”. Thus the camera is like a therapeutic tool for her in order to fight against life struggles.

Goldin has clearly been using photography for similar therapeutic reasons as Van Gogh, Kahlo and Schiele used their painting. For Van Gogh, Kahlo and Schiele, painting has been a mirror of their mind. Goldin on the other hand, has used her camera as a mirror to reflect back what is going on inside her mind and life. There are also similarities between Goldin and Kahlo when it comes to depicting certain themes such as violence (let it be physical or emotional) in a relationship. For instance the photograph of Goldin’s face resembles Kahlo’s portrait of herself with Diego painted on her forehead. Both of them can be seen addressing the pain that human relationships may involve. Dealing with this pain through art can be therapeutic as it was also pointed out by Goldin. Where as the works of Kahlo, Van Gogh and Schiele could be viewed more as autobiographical paintings produced for their own personal reasons Goldins’ intentions for her work go further than that. When she was asked for the reason of why she decided to show her bruised face to the public, she replied: “I wanted it to be about every man and every relationship and the potential of violence in every relationship” Thus her work is aimed to help others who are or have been in a similar situation and that is how it also becomes therapeutic for others. Of course it is impossible to say whether her work has had any impact on people who for instance have suffered from domestic abuse, but clearly Goldin believes that by bringing up the subject she is also able to save others. This aspect connects her work to Spence’s who did not purely produce photographs to fight against her breast cancer but also fight against society’s perception of breast cancer and how patients with breast cancer were treated in general, thus there lies the intention to help.

97 Goldin, 1986, p. 6
98 Goldin, 1986, p. 6
3.3.1 The other side and gender

Goldin began her career by photographing her transgender friends with whom she used to share a flat with in Boston during the early 1970s. From there emerged a series called *The Other Side* (1972-1992). Transgender people and transvestites have often been the subjects in the works of many photographers, for instance Diana Arbus photographed them alongside other marginal people such as nudists and dwarfs. However, they have never been portrayed with such fascination and glamorization as they are in the work of Goldin. Goldin has always been quite critical towards the portraits of transvestites by Arbus as according to her Arbus was just trying to make her subjects to strip off and reveal themselves as men although the subjects would not have necessary felt comfortable to do, let alone to be identified as men. Goldin had another purpose for her own portraits: “My desire was to show them as a third gender, as another sexual option, a gender option. And to show them with a lot of respect and love, to kind of glorify them because I really admire people who recreate themselves and who manifest their fantasies publicly. I think it’s really brave. I just really have so much love and respect and attraction for the queens.”

Thus we can note that Goldin’s aim for her portraits was to pay respect to her friends who have otherwise been neglected in society. In this way her work also becomes therapeutic in a larger scale for all sexual minorities who can look at her photographs and see a positive representation of them as a group. Naturally this also links Goldin’s work with gender politics as she is demonstrating how gender is actually constructed thus she is defying the conventional idea of the sexes. Spence also dealt with gender politics in her own way. The photograph of Spence after she had her breast operated due to her cancer diagnosis (Fig 9) shows her nude body with all the scars and flaws. It is not that perfect body so highly valued by the Western world but a body that has suffered and that belongs to a woman who is no less a woman than any of those who are generally considered fitting to the standards of beauty. Thus Spence’s representation of her flawed body can bring comfort to other women in society who have been through the same illness and process.

Goldin’s and Spence’s acts took place before there was even a discussion over gender politics which came in the 1990s and with emergence of the publication of *Gender Trouble* (1990) by Judith Butler. Butler began to question the essentialism of the binary gender distinction and introduced the idea that gender should be viewed as performance. For Butler, one cultural phenomenon that revealed this was that of the drag queen. Drag raises some serious questions regarding gender

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identity such as is the man in a woman’s costume essentially a man dressed up as a woman, or does dressing up as a woman actually show that his real gender identity is a woman. For Butler the performance of drag played upon the distinction between the anatomy of the performer and the gender that is being performed, thus this made Butler conclude that gender is in fact performative. According to Butler this parody of drag was important because it resisted the power structures which still regulate our lives and supported her conclusion that there is not initial gender basis, not fixed gender identity. \(^{100}\)

Butler’s argument is highly significant in relation to Goldin’s portraits from the series *The Other Side*. The series provides an internal vision of a world revealing in gender parody, but without any hint of patronizing or judgement. Perhaps this could be due to the fact that Goldin was photographing a group of friends, a group she felt strongly belonging to herself and as she was living with these people, had direct access into their lives. For instance the photograph of two drag queens, known as *Jimmy Paulette and Taboo* (Fig 26) shows them in a New York apartment partly in drag. Jimmy Paulette is standing in the door way and looking directly into the camera while Tabboo is visible in a long mirror on the right side of the photograph and captured sitting on the floor. The photograph is interesting in the sense that it reveals the third gender. At the same time the viewer can see their muscular bodies combined with a heavy make up which is exactly the parody Butler was also referring to. It creates a fusion between genders, what it is like to be a woman or man, or more like showing what it is like to be something between these two. This again may help the society to change the constrained views that there are only two genders which also may serve as a huge help for anyone who is struggling with their own gender.

Goldin has been actively using mirrors to strengthen the meanings of her photographs as demonstrated through the photograph *Shiobhan in my mirror* (Fig 27) Although we can tell that the subject is a female, she appears rather masculine. The foreground is blurred whereas the reflection in the mirror is sharp which connotes the subject’s longing to become more eloquent and polished version of herself. This can be directly linked to Lacan’s idea of one’s ideal image of themselves that they are trying to live up to. On the right side of photograph, attached to a mirror, is a photograph of a female body which represents the normative type of beauty that the subject does not want to acknowledge and which in this case could be regarded as the other. Here, we can note how Goldin is also playing with symbolism. She is not just making a direct representation of her subject but using mirrors and props instead to give the viewer a stronger understanding over the subject’s personality.

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\(^{100}\) Butler, 1990, p. 136-138
Since most of the subjects Goldin has photographed are her friends, this also brings another level of intimacy to her photographs. This intimacy could never be possible in a phototherapy relationship between a therapist and client. Whether this has an impact on how photographs can help it is impossible to say. Goldin’s practise definitely falls into the category of therapeutic photography as her photographs are healing tools not only for herself but also aimed for others including her friends. Friendship also set the base for the practise that Spence and Martin developed together and which later came to be known as re-enactment therapy. This experimenting with photography between friends helped overcome their personal issues as described by Martin: “Jo was working on how she was perceived by others, within the complexities of her own life: as a student, as a middle-aged woman, as someone with cancer and as a photographer. I was working on how, as a lesbian, I felt I was constrained to wear a uniform, which was something I had resisted all my life.” 101 Thus Goldin, Spence and Martin began to use photography as a healing tool for their own personal problems in interaction with their friends. Through this a huge number of works were created which also had an impact on society as these photographers were setting up an example of how photography could be used as a tool to explore one’s inner conflicts as well as used as a weapon against social injustice.

3.3.2 Mourning

Many of Goldin’s friends whom she photographed had died of Aids by the 1990s so death played a prominent part not only in Goldin’s life but also in her photography work. Goldin has stated that her work has been about “keeping a record of the lives I lost, so they cannot be completely obliterated from memory. My work is mostly about memory. It is very important to me that everybody that I have been close to in my life I make photographs of them.” 102 Thus photography has clearly been one way for Goldin to preserve life just like Bazin had seen it as one of the functions for the medium and can also be therapeutic in this way.

One of Goldin’s friends became extremely important to her and her name was Cookie Mueller. Goldin documented her life obsessively and even when Mueller became sick of Aids, Goldin just kept taking pictures of her. This was not particularly done with the mindset of documenting Aids but rather keeping someone alive through photography. From there the series called Cookie arouse,


a portfolio which consisted of 15 portraits taken over 13 years accompanied by a text about the relationship between Mueller and Goldin. Goldin’s obsessive way of recording Cookie’s life did not manage to keep her in this world. Eventually she also passed away because of Aids. The final photograph of the Cookie portfolio displays Cookie laying in a white satin-lined casket with flowers surrounding her head (Fig 30) What is interesting is that Goldin made use of the tradition of Post-mortem photography in this series. As suggested earlier in chapter one this tradition is connected to the denial of death. The argument is also supported by Goldin whose main reason to obsessively photograph Cookie was to save her through photography. How could photography save anyone? As Goldin had explained that her work is about memory, photographs can serve as proof of one’s existence. Although the person might be gone, they can still somehow live through photographs and this has been therapeutic for Goldin. What she also later realised that these photographs could help others whose lives have been touched by Aids. Goldin curated an art exhibition entitled Witnesses: Against our Vanishing in 1989 which was a response to the Aids crisis that had affected the United States. The show stirred a lot of controversy because of the exhibition catalogue that criticized the government and the Catholic Church for the silence of Aids. The exhibition was a major success in terms of the number of visitors who felt disappointed with the government’s ways to deal with the issue. Goldin was also one of the people who started Red Ribbon and the Day With(out) Art in 1989. In 1990 Goldin exhibited the Cookie portfolio and in her retrospective in 1996, one of the rooms was also dedicated to the topic of Aids. Goldin has stated that although she was not able to save Cookie through her photography, her work has definitely helped people with Aids by giving a face to the topic. Although this is not directly linked to phototherapy, we can still note the impact Goldin’s work has had on society. It opened up people’s eyes regarding the Aids epidemic which had otherwise been a taboo. Thus we can also believe that her work has had a positive impact on people who had been affected by Aids since the discussion about the topic became more open and people learned factual information about the disease. In a similar way, Spence’s work was aimed to cause bigger social change. She produced work which was not just about her but aimed for all others who had suffered cancer and shared the same background. The purpose of this was to give vulnerable people power to speak up and be understood. Although Spence’s and Goldin’s works received a completely different kind of responses, we can notice that they do share similarities such as dealing with death.


Throughout her photographic career, Spence was fighting against death which is reflected through her photographs often set in a hospital environment. Goldin on the other hand used photography to be able to remember her loved ones who had passed away. Both photographers also used photography not just for personal healing but also to address issues in society such as how we perceive aids and cancer and people affected by those two, thus their work has had a larger therapeutic impact.
Conclusion

In this thesis I have been researching the development of phototherapy while also drawing its separation from therapeutic photography. We have seen that phototherapy emerged through medical photography in the 19th century and especially through the work of Hugh Diamond who pointed out the therapeutic impact that photographs had upon their viewers. In order to understand the fascination towards the new medium amongst psychiatrists of that time, I also researched 19th century paintings that depicted different signs and symptoms of mental diseases. In a way photography just came to serve a more realistic way to capture these symptoms. Psychoanalysis on the other changed the views of how we perceive photographs not just as mirrors of reality but also as mirrors of one’s unconsciousness, thus it is not a surprise that today photographs have found their place in psychiatry which also what we should call as official phototherapy where as therapeutic photography is something that can be practiced without a trained therapist or counsellor. Since phototherapy often makes use of vernacular photographs, I also wanted to research how these ordinary photographs have been used in a therapeutic way amongst people but not in a therapy context. This finally led me to discover Post Mortem Photography and the importance of these photographs for the viewers who were going through the grieving process over their loved ones. Another discovery that I had was also how Kodak, the company that created snapshot photography used the therapeutic impact of photographs as part of their advertising as well as created ideas of how photography could be a fun activity that strengthens the family ties and thus has a therapeutic function.

Lastly I concentrated on discussing therapeutic photography in the art context. My key figure was the American photographer Nan Goldin whose photographs often reflect the turmoil in the mind of the artist in a similar way to the works by Vincent Van Gogh, Frida Kahlo and Eugen Shiele. All of them also seem to have created works in which they were search for their self which appears to be part of the human journey in life as suggested by Lacan and Jung. Furthermore I compared Goldin’s work to that of Spence’s. Although these two photographers have been viewed in a rather different way in the past, Goldin as an artist and Spence as an educator, we can see that there are striking similarities in their works as through them both were searching for a personal healing while also trying to help people in similar situations. For Judy Weiser their practice does not fit into the category of phototherapy simply based on the reason that neither Spence nor Goldin were trained in phototherapy, yet Spence and Goldin used photographs in a way they could be used as part of therapy, for self-reflection. But this is just one of the examples of photography’s various functions, as demonstrated in this thesis, it can also be a medium of mourning or a communication device to
pass on the story of those in need to provide a therapeutic outlet for those in need (as also in the case of Spence and Goldin).
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Fig. 2. Alexander Morison, *F.W, a Male, Aged 47 (In a state of mania)*, 1843. Source: [https://archive.org/stream/physiognomyofmen00mori#page/n3/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/physiognomyofmen00mori#page/n3/mode/2up), accessed on the 27th of October, 2014

Fig. 3. Alexander Morison, *Portrait of No. 1. in his sane state*, 1843. Source: [https://archive.org/stream/physiognomyofmen00mori#page/n3/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/physiognomyofmen00mori#page/n3/mode/2up), accessed on the 27th of October, 2014

Fig 5. Hugh Diamond, *Plate 36*, 1856.

Source: [http://psicoart.unibo.it/article/viewFile/2090/1478](http://psicoart.unibo.it/article/viewFile/2090/1478),
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Fig. 7. Rosy Martin in collaboration with Jo Spence, *Dapper Daddy*, 1986. Source: Meskimmon, 1996, p. 121

Fig. 8. Jo Spence, *Expected*, 1990

Fig. 9. Jo Spence, *Booby Prize*, 1989

Fig. 10. Unknown, *Daguerreotype of Queen Family Victoria and the Princess Royal*, 1845. Source: [http://www.queen-victorias-scrapbook.org/marsh_family_daguerreotype1845_poster-contents/6-1b.html](http://www.queen-victorias-scrapbook.org/marsh_family_daguerreotype1845_poster-contents/6-1b.html), accessed on the 8th of April 2015

Fig 11. Unknown, *George Marsh (Daguerreo, 1845).* Source: [http://www.zazzle.co.uk/george_marsh_fam1b](http://www.zazzle.co.uk/george_marsh_fam1b), accessed on the 8th of April 2015

Fig. 13. Unknown, *Family with their dead daughter*, 1852.


Fig. 16. Eastman Kodak Company of Rochester, *Pictures from home*, 1917. Source: https://beyondthebubble.stanford.edu/assessments/world-war-i-advertising, accessed on the 22nd of April 2015


Fig. 20. Frida Kahlo, *The wounded deer*, 1949. Source: [http://www.fridakahlo.org/the-wounded-deer.jsp](http://www.fridakahlo.org/the-wounded-deer.jsp), accessed on the 18th of May 2015

Fig. 22. Hippolyte Bayard, *Self-portrait as a Drowned Man*, 1840. Source: http://thenonist.com/index.php/thenonist/permalink/self_portrait_as_a_drowned_man/, accessed on the 28\textsuperscript{th} of May 2015
Fig. 23. Nan Goldin, *Nan on Brian’s lap, Nan’s Birthday*, 1981. 
Source: Goldin, 1986, p. 8

Fig. 25. Nan Goldin, *Nan one month after being battered*, 1984. Source: Goldin, 1986, p.93
