

**WE HAVE NOT LIVED THROUGH SUCH A THING**  
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**BİZ ÖYLE BİR ŞEY YAŞAMADIK**

“Photography and the Expression of Romantic Love”

by CEMRE YESİL

Submitted to the Institute of Social Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Visual Arts & Visual Communication Design

Sabancı University

Spring 2012

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“Photography and the Expression of Romantic Love”

APPROVED BY.

Murat Germen  
(Thesis Advisor)

.....

Orhan Cem Çetin

.....

Selim Birsal

.....

Ahu Antmen

.....

Can Altay

.....

DATE OF APPROVAL:

.....

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## ABSTRACT

### WE HAVE NOT LIVED THROUGH SUCH A THING

“Photography and the Expression of Romantic Love”

Cemre Yeşil

MA., Visual Arts and Visual Communication Design

Supervisor: Murat Germen

Spring 2012, ix+ 43 pages

Keywords: photography, romantic love, relationship, memory, sharing

*“In our age there is no work of art which is regarded with as much attention as a photograph of oneself, one’s closest relatives and friends, one’s sweetheart.”*

*Lichtwark, 1907.\**

This research is about the relationship between photography and romantic love; The need for 'love' and the need for 'memory photography' are in a way similar; they both serve as illusions of togetherness. They are both reflections of the self and they are both proofs of liveliness. Memory photographs have always coexisted with the feeling of love; but in our era where we have various media which allow for sharing, love can not exist without photography either. This thesis is an analysis of the co-existence of 'the romantic love affair' and its photographs. Going through the history and nature of photography, this paper analyses and comments on the need for taking, storing and sharing memory photographs which reflect a relationship of 'love'. In this thesis, I aim to reveal why and how people use photography as an expression for the love they feel.

Having focused on the theory of photography, this paper also serves as a supplementary text to my exhibition which is a series of photographs that I took to document the relationships between various people and their photographs, hoping to figure out the reason for the fixation I have had with an individual photograph.

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\*Cited in: “Creative Camera International Year Book 1977”, Coö Press, London, 1976, p. 231.

## ÖZET

### **BİZ ÖYLE BİR ŞEY YAŞAMADIK** “Fotoğraf ve Aşkın İfade Biçimi”

Cemre Yeşil

Görsel Sanatlar ve Görsel İletişim Tasarımı Yüksek Lisans

Tez Danışmanı: Murat Germen

Bahar 2012, ix+ 43 sayfa

Anahtar kelimeler: fotoğraf, aşk, ilişki, anı, paylaşım

*Çağımızda hiçbir sanat eseri yoktur ki, insanın kendisinin,  
en yakın akraba ve arkadaşlarının  
ve sevgilisinin portre fotoğrafı kadar dikkatle seyredilsin.*

*Lichtwark, 1907.\**

Bu tez fotoğraf ve aşk arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir; Aşka ve anı fotoğrafına duyduğumuz ihtiyaç, bir anlamda birbirine yakın ihtiyaçlardır; her ikisi de birliktelik vaadi ve yanılması verir. İkisi de bir kendilik yansımasıdır ve canlı olmanın kanıtı niteliğini taşır. Anı fotoğrafları hep sevgiyle ve aşkla var olmuştur; ancak paylaşacak bir sürü mecranın olduğu bu dönemde, sevgi de, aşk da artık fotoğrafsız var olamamaktadır. Bu tez, aşk ilişkilerinin ve o ilişkilere ait fotoğrafların birlikteliğini analiz eder. Fotoğrafın tarihi ve doğası üzerinden, bir aşk ilişkisine ait iki kişilik anı fotoğrafları çekmeyi, saklamayı ve paylaşmayı inceler ve yorumlar. Bu tezde amacım, insanın fotoğrafı, sahip olduğu aşk ve sevgi üzerinden, neden ve nasıl bir ifade biçimi olarak kullandığını araştırmaktır.

Bu tez aynı zamanda, benim tek bir fotoğrafla kurduğum derin bir ilişkiyi anlamak umuduyla, başka insanların yaşadıkları aşk ilişkilerine dair fotoğraflarıyla kurdukları bağları belgelediğim bir seri fotoğraftan oluşan sergimin de eklenti metni niteliğindedir.

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\*Cited in: “Creative Camera International Year Book 1977”, Coö Press, London, 1976, p. 231.

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## INTRODUCTION

The concept of love involves disparate intentions and meanings in different languages and cultures. The fact that it is quite difficult to discuss and explain “love” as a concept could be the reason why it involves disparate linguistic and semantic intentions in different geographies, besides the fact that some complicated feelings are difficult to describe. The word for “love” which Turkish borrowed from the Arabic language is described as “agonizing affection”.<sup>1</sup> It would not be wrong to say that each and every human being has loved some people or things, however it is questionable whether the agonizing effect of this feeling is measurable, explainable or verifiable. Although it is not possible to make this uncertain line between love and affection decisive, it can be said that love is a universal concept and that human beings have some common needs and behaviors which could easily be associated with this concept.

We often observe that love has been the main theme in many forms of expression created by human beings throughout history. The expression of love in different media bearing the traces of the geography in which it took place and of the time it was experienced stretches from mythological narrations to today’s pop songs. On the fact that human history can not give up consuming love as a theme, we can say both that the concept of love which is perceived and experienced in the conditions of 'then' and 'there' affects the medium it will be expressed through, and the medium used affects the way love is experienced 'then' and 'there'. For instance, according to İskender Pala, “The poetry based Divan Literature is full

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<sup>1</sup> Nisanyan, Sevan. (2002-2012). *Çağdaş türkçenin Etimolojik Sözlüğü*. Retrieved October 9, 2012 from <http://www.nisanyansozluk.com/?k=aşk>

of expressions of love in its entirety. It has left out no words spelled on love and whatever we say on in this regard, we can not bring the sentence into completion. In Divan poetry, there are more than 100 words, statements and combinations used for 'beloved'. If you add those utterances about love, lover and the other to them, you achieve a number which is almost equal to the vocabulary of today's middle class. This is indicative of not only the interest of the ancients in love, but also of the value our classical literature attributed to love. The fact that the word of love has achieved rich inspirations both in terms of harmony and musicality and significance and expression, provoking a disparate light shining in each soul and always finding a buyer for itself also caused the poets of the Divan Literature to hold it in high esteem.”<sup>2</sup> That is to say, as İskender Pala has also pointed out that, the ancients of course were not interested only in love, but it is obvious that if in the period of a person's lifetime 100 words are used for 'beloved', it would surely have an impact on the way that person comprehends love or the loved one. Similarly, the fact that 100 different words for 'beloved' were generated in that period reveals that they consumed the concept of love in quite different ways as apposed to our time, just like the pop songs reveal the kinds of love we have today. This distinction does not mean than the loves of that period deserve praise, whereas the loves of our time deserve negative criticism; it is only indicative of the conversion of the social, economical and spiritual lives people happen to live. For instance according to Tomris Uyar, “If they have been accustomed to interpret love as a suffering to be experienced on the way of ascending God throughout the centuries on this land, it shall be difficult for them to keep up with a new

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2 Pala, İskender. *Ah Mine'l Aşk, Aşkın Öz Yurdu ve Has Bahçesinde bir Temaşa*. Cogito, *Aşk*. Issue 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, edited by Aslıhan Dinç. Yapı Kredi Yayınları. İstanbul, 1995, p:81-102

and contemporary society where the beloved is touchable”.<sup>3</sup> This situation can be an example also for the change in the way love is conceived in social life following the changed in the way religion is practiced.

Today, photography has become essential for the social life to be considered social. No doubt as usual the theme of love, this time within contemporary social life, has found a medium for itself via the channel of love among human beings, as an individualistic form of expression, although not within an artistic context, it has taken its place on the walls of our living rooms, the screensavers of our mobile phones, the desktops of our computers, ie. right in the middle of our lives. How, why and to what extent can living together with these photographs which consistently remind us of what has been ours and which, I assume, involve love be different from living in a place where there were 100 words for “beloved”? What do photographs do to the loves we experience and vice versa?

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3 Uyar, Tomris. *Aşk ve Sevda üzerine çeşitlemeler*. Cogito, *Aşk*. Issue 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, edited by Aslıhan Dinç. Yapı Kredi Yayınları. İstanbul, 1995, p:71-73

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#### CHAPTER 1

##### i) The Illusion:

###### The need for love and the need for photography

*“Socrates: [...] may I ask you further, Whether love is the love of something or of nothing? And here I must explain myself: I do not want you to say that love is the love of a father or the love of a mother-that would be ridiculous; but to answer as you would, if I asked is a father a father of something? to which you would find no difficulty in replying, of a son or daughter: and the answer would be right.*

*Very true, said Agathon.*

*And you would say the same of a mother?*

*He assented.*

*Yet let me ask you one more question in order to illustrate my meaning: Is not a brother to be regarded essentially as a brother of something?*

*Certainly, he replied.*

*That is, of a brother or sister?*

*Yes, he said.*

*And now, said Socrates, I will ask about Love:-Is Love of something or of nothing?*

*Of something, surely, he replied.*

*Keep in mind what this is, and tell me what I want to know-whether Love desires that of which love is.*

*Yes, surely.*

*And does he possess, or does he not possess, that which he loves and desires?*

*Probably not, I should say.*

*Nay, replied Socrates, I would have you consider whether "necessarily" is not rather the word. The inference that he who desires something is in want of something, and that he who desires nothing is in want of nothing, is in my judgment, Agathon absolutely and necessarily true. What do you think?*

*I agree with you, said Agathon.*

*Very good. Would he who is great, desire to be great, or he who is strong, desire to be strong?*

*That would be inconsistent with our previous admissions.*

*True. For he who is anything cannot want to be that which he is?*

*Very true.*

*And yet, added Socrates, if a man being strong desired to be strong, or being swift desired to be swift, or being healthy desired to be healthy, in that case he might be thought to desire something which he already has or is. I give the example in order that we may avoid misconception. For the possessors of these qualities, Agathon, must be supposed to have their respective advantages at the time, whether they choose or not; and who can desire that which he has? Therefore when a person says, I am well and wish to be well, or I am rich and wish to be rich, and I desire simply to have what I have-to him we shall reply: "You, my friend, having wealth and health and strength, want to have the continuance of them; for at this moment, whether you choose or no, you have them. And when you say, I desire that which I have and nothing else, is not your meaning that you want to have what you now have in the future?" He must agree with us-must he not?*

*He must, replied Agathon.*

*Then, said Socrates, he desires that what he has at present may be preserved to him in the future, which is equivalent to saying that he desires something which is non-existent to him, and which as yet he has not got.*

*Very true, he said.*

*Then he and every one who desires, desires that which he has not already, and which is future and not present, and which he has not, and is not, and of which he is in want;-these are the sort of things which love and desire seek?*

*Very true, he said.*

*Then now, said Socrates, let us recapitulate the argument. First, is not love of something, and of something too which is wanting to a man?*

*Yes, he replied.*

*Remember further what you said in your speech, or if you do not remember I will remind you: you said that the love of the beautiful set in order the empire of the gods, for that of deformed things there is no love-did you not say something of that kind?*

*Yes, said Agathon.*

*Yes, my friend, and the remark was a just one. And if this is true, Love is the love of beauty and not of deformity?*

*He assented.*

*And the admission has been already made that Love is of something which a man wants and has not?"<sup>4</sup>*

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4 Plato. *Symposium*. Prentice Hall; 1<sup>st</sup> edition, translated by Benjamin Jowett. 1956

Photography is like Plato's Eros, craving for something which we do not own in itself. One takes photographs of something which might get lost, or attributes significance to its photographs which would upset him or her in case they get lost and thus he or she protects them. The loss in question here is not necessarily the dissolving of what was there; if we assume that the time is perceived to be linear in our day, even the things that we have left behind apparently cause a sense of loss in many cases. Just like the past triggers 'a sense of loss', the future triggers a sense of 'possession'. The reason for a person to cling tightly to memory photographs or for another person's endeavour to get rid of them, in fact, is the mankind's yearning to master time, ie. death and mortality via photographs. This is because photography conveys the time; it transfers what has been left behind onto a surface which can be possessed in the future. Thus, although it is an illusion, photography becomes the relief to grief which, like love, is inherent in creation. According to Platon, love is the desire for immortality.<sup>5</sup>

And, because of its nature, each photograph creates a loss. Photography makes visible what has been lost, because whatever has been photographed shall never be the same with what is on that photograph in essence. Although it is possible to 'fictionalize' the same state and achieve a similar image of it, the camera can not repeat the time, it can 'make you repeat' the state only. As Roland Barthes points out, "The photograph does not necessarily say what is no longer, but only and certain for certain what has been. This distinction is decisive".<sup>6</sup>

According to Sontag, "To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge-and, therefore, like power."<sup>7</sup> "The photographs shock, in the flow of the movie- transmuting, in an instant, present into past, life into death."<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, it wouldn't be wrong to say that photography allows us to own something, but at the same it causes us to have killed what

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5 Simmel, George. *Aşk Üzerine Parçalar*. translated by Bahadır Gülmez, Cogito, *Aşk*. Issue 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, edited by Aslıhan Dinç. Yapı Kredi Yayınları. Istanbul, 1995, p:180- 187

6 Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida, Reflections on Photography*. translated by Richard Howard. Hill and Wang, New York, 1981. p: 85

7 Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. New York Picador, 1st edition, 2001. p:4

8 Sontag, p:70

we have got because we have possessed it. In this regard, photography has become a means of 'killing in affection'. As Sontag points out, “A way of certifying experience, taking photographs is also a way of refusing it- by limiting experience to search for the photographic, by converting experience into an image, a souvenir.”<sup>9</sup> and she adds, “All photographs are *memento mori*. \* To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability.”<sup>10</sup>

According to George Simmel, the value relationship which is established based on love and mutual love is not reckoned by Platon. According to Platon, love is an intermediary state between 'to have' and 'not to have'. From a logical point of view, love should have vanished as soon as the act of possessing comes into question. According to modern love, real love is the love which is mutually shared and anything that follows is only derivative and incidental, he (Platon) has realized that the other involves things which are unobtainable, that the sovereignty of the individual or the self puts up a wall between one entity and the other, that even the most passionate will of the partners could not demolish this wall. In conclusion as George Simmel points out, “It is an illusion rather than a consciousness of the mutual act of loving and the reality of loving in contemplation of an actual possession.”<sup>11</sup> At this point, if we ask why human beings bear the desire for possessing something or somebody, there could be only one answer to that question: to create “the self” and to constitute its sovereignty. 'Selfhood', in its broadest sense, surrounds everything one claims to own”<sup>12</sup> Therefore, it is possible to say a person creates a sovereign self with all the things he/she possesses and continues to 'possess' through the sovereign self he/she has created. In other words, a person creates objects and subjects which he/she claims to own by way of falling in love, loving somebody, installing the photograph of his/her favorite musical in his/her room or carrying someone's photograph in his/her wallet; and thus complement and define himself/herself by bringing various

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9 *ibid.* p: 9

10 *ibid.* p: 15 \**memento mori*: “Remember your mortality”

11 Simmel, George. *Aşk Üzerine Parçalar*, translated by Bahadır Gülmez, *Cogito, Aşk*. Issue 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, edited by Aslihan Dinç. Yapı Kredi Yayınları. Istanbul, 1995, p:180-187

12 James William, *Principes de psychologie*, vol. 1, Courier Dover Publications, 1950. p:228



pieces together.

In Ancient Greece, Zeus, as a punishment, cuts people in two.

“ When its nature was cut in two, each- desiring its own half- came together; and throwing their arms around one another and entangling themselves with one another in their desire to grow together, they began to die off due to hunger and the rest of their inactivity, because they were willing to do anything apart from one another; and whenever one of the halves did die and the other was left, the one that was left tried to seek out another and entangle itself with that, whether it met the half of the whole woman- and that is what we now call a woman- or of a man; and so they continued to perish... [...] So it is really from such early times that human beings have had, inborn in themselves. Eros for one another- Eros, the bringer-together of their ancient nature, who tries to make one out of two and to heal their human nature.”<sup>13</sup>

Although we think love is an intermediary state between having and not having according to this mythological narration, we can say it forms an essential basis in defining one's self. However, if a person can not possess anything or anybody as Platon points out, the state of possession might also be an illusion which makes one's life livable. Whereas the role of photography in this regard might be to provide a proof to remind the person whatever he/she has so that the person could complement himself/herself. However, according to this theory, a photograph in itself is the illusion of an illusion. On the fate of photography, Barthes asserts: “By leading me to believe (it is true, one time out of how many?) that I have found what Calvino calls “the true total photograph,” it accomplishes the unheard-of identification of reality (“that-has-been”) with truth (“there-she-is!”); it becomes at once evidential and exclamative; it bears the effigy to that crazy point where affect (love, compassion, grief, enthusiasm, desire) is a guarantee of Being. It then approaches, to all intents, madness; it joins what Kristeva calls “la verité folle.”<sup>14</sup>

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13 Plato, Symposium. Translated by Seth Benardete. University Of Chicago Press; 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2001.

14 Barthes, p:113

## CHAPTER 2

### i) From 'Canvas of Love' to 'Paper of Love' :

#### The Journey of 'love' from Painting to Photography.

*“The violinist, must first produced the note, must seek it out, find it in an instant,' the pianist strikes the key and a note rings out. The painter and the photographer both have an instrument at their disposal. Drawing and color, for the painter, correspond to the violinist's production of sound; the photographer, like the pianist, has the advantage of a mechanical device that is subject to restrictive laws, while the violinist is under no such restraint.”*

*Camille Recht*

For longer than 40000 years, humankind has not abandon creating illustrations with different techniques and for different reasons. According to Aristotales, each mode of representation, verbal, visual or musical, is natural to human beings.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, what distinguishes humans from other animals is their ability to create and manipulate signs.<sup>16</sup> Aristotle deemed mimesis as natural to man and therefore considered representations as necessary for people's learning and being in the world<sup>17</sup> In that case, could it be that the humankind who has been creating representative images for 40000 years has been pursuing always the same thing in one respect – ie. to create representative images of what the society or the individual needs in order to contemplate and define their sovereign self? In this regard, it is interesting to think about when, how and why the representative images created and possessed by a humankind who has passed through the animal figures on the cave wall, the Zeus statue in the Greek temple and the portrait of Jesus on the church wall to contemplate himself started to exist not through a divine power, but through the subjects

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15 Vukceovich, M. *Representation*. The University of Chicago, 2002

16 Mitchell, W. *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 1990

17 Vukceovich, M. *Representation*. The University of Chicago, 2002

with which he/she has entered into relations.

The sculpture which is considered to be the first self-portrait<sup>18</sup> where the Egyptian sculptor Bek carved himself together with his wife “Taheret” not only shows that the humankind did not depict only the divine even in the past, but it also takes its place among the rare examples which are indicative of the fact that there might have been some other illustrative works of art which are in fact subjective but did not survive to our day because they were not given heed and protected.



Figure 1: A stela (now in Berlin ) shows Bek with his wife Taheret.\*

In Western art, we see that many portraits which have survived to our day belong to the political or social prominent figures of the society. For example, ‘Arnolfini Wedding’ by Jan Van Eyck, one of the leading artists of his era, dated 1434 illustrates the Italian merchant Giovanni Arnolfini, who used to visit the Benelux countries for trading, together with his wife.

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<sup>18</sup> Rice, Micheal. *In Ancient Egypt*. Routledge. 1999.

\*Retrieved from [http://www.perankhgroup.com/amarna\\_art1.htm](http://www.perankhgroup.com/amarna_art1.htm)



Figure 2: The Arnolfini Portrait, Jan Van Eyck, 1434

E.H Gombrich, on this work of art, comments:

“ A simple corner of the real world had suddenly been fixed on to a panel as if by magic...[...] The picture probably represents a solemn moment in their lives- their betrothal. The young woman has just put her right hand into Arnolfini's left and he is about to put his own right hand into hers as a solemn token of their union. Probably the painter was asked to record this important moment as a witness, just as a notary might be asked to declare that he has been present at a similar solemn act. This would explain why the master has put his name in a prominent position on the picture with the Latin words “Johannes de eyck fuit hic.” (Jan Van Eyck was here.). In the mirror at the back seems, we also see the image of the painter and witness. We do not know whether it was the Italian merchant or the northern artist who conceived the idea of making this use of the new kind of painting, which may be compared to the legal use of photograph, properly endorsed by a witness. But whoever it was that originated this idea, he had certainly been quick to understand the tremendous possibilities which in Van Eyck's new way of painting. For the first time in history the artist became the perfect eye-witness in the truest sense of the term.”<sup>19</sup>

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19 Gombrich, E.H. *The Story of Art*. Phaidon Press Ltd; 16<sup>th</sup>. Revised edition edition, 1995. p: 243

In this regard, this work of art by Van Eyck almost happens to manifest the need for photography for the first time in the history of art. As Gombrich pointed out, although we don't know whether it was the Italian merchant's or the Nordic artist's idea, the noble man chose to be illustrated more realistically and there possibly emerged a relationship between realistic illustrations and the degree of nobility. Based upon Mary Warner Marien,

“Although the camera obscura which technically helped to lay the foundations of photography was an equipment which artists had been using for long to create sketches, until the 19. century they were not used in order to ensure the illustrations in paintings were more realistic because the committed themes were religious, historical or mythological.”<sup>20</sup> “However, in the 18. century, people started to use some techniques which now allowed them to illustrate themselves, the present and what they ‘possessed’ without requiring them to be nobles. The ‘Silhouette Portrait’ technique which was named after the amateur profile portraitist and French Minister 'Etienne de Silhouette' became a new medium for the rising middle class in the 18. century in Europe.”<sup>21</sup>



Figure 3: Johann Kaspar Lavater. Silhouette Machine.c 1780,  
Engraving from Lavater's Essay on Physiognomy

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20 Marien, Mary Warner. *Photography: A Cultural History*. Laurence King Publishing,  
3<sup>rd</sup> edition, London, 2010. p: 6

21 *ibid.* p: 5

Although photography became a widely mentioned and recognized invention around the beginning of the 19. century after Joseph Nicephore Niepce and Louis- Jacques- Mande Daguerre's long endeavors, it was not yet in a position to involve people's lives. The 15 years following the year 1839 which the photographic historian Mary Warner Marien describes as "Second Invention of Photography was a period when the potential of photography in the social, artistic and scientific potentials of its first invention were investigated and debated."<sup>22</sup>

"While painters and printmakers could enhance their images, with sharp rendered scenes of gallantry and heroism, photographers were hard pressed to express the full historical significance or emotional impact of events".<sup>23</sup> "Most people who looked at daguerreotype in the 1840s were not able to create them. Nevertheless, they could appreciate the effects of the polished surface and the intimacy of holding the small picture in their hand, moving it forward and back for a better view."<sup>24</sup>

But, probably, what was really exciting about photography beyond that was the promise that exact copies of human image could be created, with regard to the perception in that era. "At first, Daguerre thought that portraits were impracticable, and the otherwise imaginative François Arago likewise declared that there was little hope that the technique could be used for portraiture."<sup>25</sup> As a matter of fact, we see that portrait photography started before long. And the glassy looks which occurred because of long exposures in the portraits that were taken in the photography studios which started to be opened in the beginning of 1840's were replaced with smiles only at the end of 1940's thanks to technological developments. "In the literature of the time, the idea of enacting an emotion for the camera was not felt to conflict with the notion that photographs rendered truth to experience. The photographic studio emerged as a new social space in which sitters could compose and record an image of how they desired to appear for acquaintances, strangers

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22 *ibid.* p: 23

23 *ibid.* p: 42

24 *ibid.* p: 2

25 *ibid.* p: 58

and posterity.”<sup>26</sup>

Walter Benjamin includes Dauthendey's following discourse on daguerrotype in the “Short History of Photography”: “We didn't trust our selves at first, to look long at the first pictures we developed. We were abashed by the distinctness of those human images, and believed that the tiny little faces in the picture could look back at us, so baffling were the effects on everyone of the unusual clarity and the unusual fidelity to nature of the first daguerreotypes.”<sup>27</sup> What is more, Mary Warner Marien remarks that photography's relationship with reality created a mystical belief in the social mind. She also points out that

“In overwrought language and outlandish plots, popular fiction played on the visual veracity of photography, suggesting that the medium could reach beneath the surface to penetrate the minds of sitters. It could thwart villains and make straight the path of true love...[...] The mysterious and compelling powers of hypnotism and mesmerism were merged with photography. In a daguerreotype of a hypnotism session, most of the participants appear unaware of the camera's presence, as though they are in what was termed a “magnetic sleep”.<sup>28</sup>



Figure 4: John Adams Whipple, Hypnotism, c.1845.

Daguerreotype, no.113. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

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<sup>26</sup> *ibid.* p:61

<sup>27</sup> Benjamin, Walter. *Little History of Photography*. translated by: Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter. *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*. Edited by Michael W. Jennings , Brigid Doherty, Thomas Y. Levin. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. London, 2008. p: 279

<sup>28</sup> Marien. p: 71-72

While these types of beliefs were developed about the relationship between photography and reality in the 19. century, it is not a coincidence that David Hockney, while questioning the relationship between photography and reality even in the 21. century, asserted that photography never reflects reality and the only situation where photography could reflect reality was the early period photographs which were taken with long exposures; because in that period, a person who used to sit on a chair to be photographed did not create a reality other than sitting on a chair for the duration of a long exposure. <sup>29</sup>

In this regard, it is interesting to realize who those people that were photographed sat on those chairs with and who the photographers made to sit on those chairs; and with or through whom they tried to create an image of reality in accordance with that period's understanding.

If we, in conclusion, understand that the relationship between photography and reality in that period was strong and if we momentarily ignore concepts like social class, richness, etc. and consider the Arnolfini only as a married couple who lived in the past, can we envisage what difference it would make for a married couple of 1860's to see themselves in a photograph taken in that period or for the Arnolfini to see themselves on a canvas? As Gombrich pointed out about this painting by Jan Van Eyck, although this work of art is creating a reality by placing the artist in an eyewitness position, for photography, we can say that it is the magic that photography has by nature, not the photographer, which plays a part in the creation of that reality. In other words, while it was Jan Van Eyck's signature that made the possible reality of the Arnolfini come true <sup>30</sup>, it can be the very medium of photography which makes the possible reality in a photograph come true. As a matter of fact, although there are more than 400 years between these two images and while we know many things about the creator of the one which is 400 years old, the reason why we even do not know the name of the photographer who took the 150 year old photograph could be the differences in need for the questions "who made this painting" and "who took this photograph?".

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29 Cetin, Orhan Cem. *History of Photography Class*. - Lecture notes. Faculty of Communication. İstanbul Bilgi University, 2008.

30 Gombrich, p: 180





Figure 5: The Arnolfini Portrait,  
Jan Van Eyck, National Gallery 1434



Figure 6: Unknown Photographer,  
Married Couple, around 1860

Undoubtedly, this also creates an impact on the image's meaning to those who take part in it. Even if we assume that the two images are the illustrations of two loving married couples, we, in fact, can not ignore the concepts like social class, richness, etc. which we previously put away, when the portrait oil paintings of 1400's are in question. According to Gombrich, Jan Van Eyck played a major role in the adoption of oil painting in art.<sup>31</sup> John Berger remarks on oil painting as follows: "This analogy between possessing and the way of seeing which is incorporated in oil painting, is a factor usually ignored by art experts and historians."<sup>32</sup>

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31 *ibid.* p: 180

32 Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books. 1972. p: 83



Figure 7: Mr. And Mrs. Andrews, Thomas Gainsborough, National Gallery, 1750

For example, John Berger comments that the Gainsborough's painting above is an indication of wealth. He states that the Andrews were not a couple who were depicted in nature, but, as it can be clearly seen in their attitude in the painting, a couple who were happy with being on their private land. He also states that what made this painting special for Mr. and Mrs. Andrews was, no doubt, to see themselves on their land which was depicted in full details thanks to the oil paint<sup>33</sup> and he adds:

“Oil painting did to appearance what capital did to social relations. It reduced everything to the equality of objects. Everything became exchangeable because everything became a commodity.”<sup>34</sup>

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33 Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. Episode 3. BBC four-part television series. Produced by Mike Dibb. 1972

34 Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books. 1972. p: 87

Accordingly, even if we assume the people in an image, the reality of which can be assessed also with its material value, are deeply in love with each other, what is primarily visible is the fact that they own that image, far beyond human affairs. However, we can say that what was visible to the married couple in the photograph taken in 1860's was a reality pertaining to their affair, rather than the fact that they were from the middle class and we can envisage that this situation is given a meaning by the people both in the painting and in the photograph according to this fact.



Figure 8: Unidentified Photographer, Woman seated, Holding Daguerrotype ca.1850

## CHAPTER 3

### i) Life Moments:

#### Capturing the 'Loved One'

*“In our age there is no work of art which is regarded with as much attention as a photograph of oneself, one’s closest relatives and friends, one’s sweetheart.”*

*Lichtwark, 1907.*

“In 1878 Gerge Eastman made plans for a vacation to Santo Domingo. When a co-worker suggested he make a record of the trip, Eastman bought a photographic outfit with all the paraphernalia of the wet plate days. The complete outfit was a pack-horse load as he described it. Eastman did not make the Santo Domingo trip. But he did become completely absorbed in photography and sought to simplify the complicated process. He read in British magazines that photographers were making their own gelatin emulsions. Plates coated with this emulsion remained sensitive after they were dry and could be exposed at leisure. Using a formula taken from one of these British journals, Eastman began making gelatin emulsions. He worked at the bank during the day and experimented at home in his mother’s kitchen at night. After three years of photographic experiments, Eastman had a formula that worked. He had not only invented a dry plate formula, but had patented a machine for preparing large numbers of the plates. Eastman coined the slogan, “you press the button, we do the rest.” when he introduced the Kodak camera in 1888.”<sup>35</sup>

Sontag, on this motto, remarks, “In the fairy tale of photography, the magic box insures veracity and banishes error, compensates for inexperience and rewards innocence.”<sup>36</sup> Although taking and having taken one’s photographs became easier and more common than ever with the introduction of this camera into the market, it was still expensive. However, after 12 years the Kodak Brownie was put on market and in the year 1900, 150,000 Kodak Brownie units were sold at a price of only 1 dollar, causing photography to reach all of the then existing social classes. Cultural critic Nancy West remarks that the

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35 Kodak Company. (n.d). *History of Kodak. George Eastman*. Retrieved February 17, 2012 from [http://www.kodak.com/global/en/corp/historyOfKodak/eastmanTheMan.jhtml?pq-path=2689&pq-locale=en\\_US](http://www.kodak.com/global/en/corp/historyOfKodak/eastmanTheMan.jhtml?pq-path=2689&pq-locale=en_US)

36 Sontag, p: 53



Kodak Brownie was the camera that really revolutionized or democratized photography.<sup>37</sup>



Figure 9: 1889. The Kodak Camera:  
Hands holding up camera  
with text “You Press the button”



Figure 10: Eastman Kodak Advertisement  
for the Brownie Camera, c. 1900

Beginning in the 1840's, people were even excited to see images, known or unknown, or a daguerrotype created by others. Once they got the opportunity to create images of themselves or anything they liked without necessarily being photographers after the year 1900, they surely turned towards those around them, their relatives, beloveds and the people they liked. Together with this camera and maybe for the first time in their lives, people were in a position to make decisions by pressing the shutter, being aware of what could get lost in time. The time when photography achieved a place for itself in the flow of life as a medium with the Brownie camera was probably one of the essential points which has made it indispensable. Technology historian John M. Staudenmaier, on this episode of Kodak has remarked: “The idea that you could capture warm, simple and tender moments in your own life and save them so that you can remember them by looking at them, that's a radical idea of the time.”<sup>38</sup>

Quite interestingly, George Eastman had declared far back in years that his intention was to

<sup>37</sup> *The Wizard of Photography: The Story of George Eastman*. 58 mins. Prod. by James A. DeVinney. Green Light Productions, 2000.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*.

transform the camera into a tool that would be as easy to use as a pencil and then he had described the Kodak camera as a 'photographic book'.<sup>39</sup> We can think that, besides allowing a kind of democratization for photography over social classes, this camera, in fact, is significant for it allowed the photographic apparatus to be used widely for the identities of women and children as well. Thus it was no longer required to be a powerful man in order to take photographs outside the studio using wet plates and various chemicals which were difficult to carry. Now it was possible also for women and children to take photographs on the streets or anywhere they liked. As a matter of fact, we can see this was clearly depicted in Kodak's ads as well. While the Brownie camera was named after a cartoon character, the fact that the image of 'Kodak Woman' which appeared in Kodak ads turned into an icon indicates that Kodak's target audience was mostly women and children. "The eponymous Kodak Girl was pictured roaming the world, camera in hand, and this might be one of the earliest depictions we've seen of a ballsy woman in technology."<sup>40</sup> The Kodak Woman, holding a camera and being a woman from any social class, enjoying her existence and taking photographs of anything she likes, was unfolding the possibility of her desire to be so there after, if not already in that period. Gillian Rose mentions how those Kodak ads encouraged women to take photographs.<sup>41</sup>

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39 Williams C., Rice, M., S. Johnson W. *A History of Photography: From 1839 to the Present The George Eastman House Collection*. Edited by Therese Mulligan and David Wooters. Taschen, 2005. p: 347

40 Rabinowicz, Zara Stone. (n.d) *How Marketing Tech Towards Women Hasn't Changed Much in 100 Years*. Retrieved January 30, 2012 from <http://www.chipchick.com/2011/09/female-advertisements.html>

41 Rose, G. *Family photographs and domestic spacings: a case study*. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 28:5–18. London. 2003

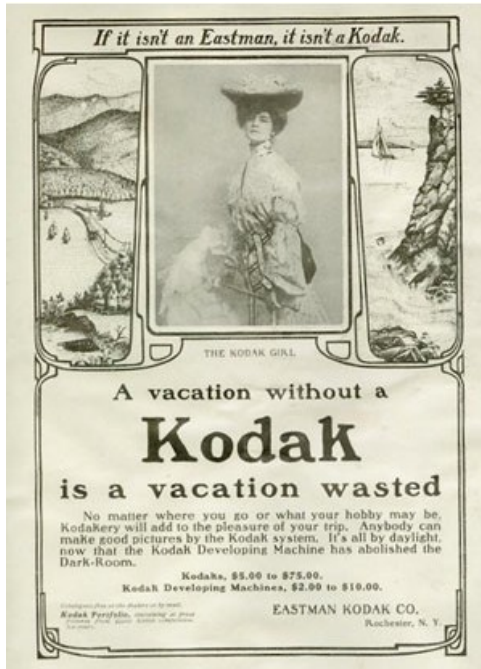


Figure 11: Circa 1900. Kodak Girl-  
Vacation without a Kodak is a vacation wasted.



Figure 12: 1913. "Take a Kodak with You"  
Kodak Girl, Blue Striped Dress/ color.

This led to the use of photography by individuals and brought it into everyone's daily life. From then on, taking photographs did not require one to be an artisan and soon after a social habit was born: taking photographs of happy moments and of loved ones. What was essential here is the statement "You'll get the kind of picture only you can take!" as was mentioned in one of Kodak's ads<sup>42</sup>. This statement reveals how the photograph taken would transform through its connections with the subject and the photographer. Moreover, if the subject of the photograph is a person, the identity of the photographer is also considerably important. This is because what we will see in the photograph shall be formed also through this connection and, in the simplest term, even the facial expression of the subject in the photograph shall vary accordingly. Thus it is revealed how the human connection which affects how the visible is seen in the photograph have effects on the human connection that we get an idea about through what is visible in the photograph.

<sup>42</sup> 1956 Kodak film-photography commercial with cuddly dog. Retrieved from [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=v1y8ybt1yRA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=v1y8ybt1yRA)

For example, in the early period Kodak snapshots below, in addition to the connections that are seen in the photograph, we feel the familiarity of the photographer for the subjects of the photograph.



Figure 13: Unidentified Photographer  
American Active, 1890's  
Conenus Lake, August 1893  
Kodak Snapshot



Figure 14: Unidentified Photographer  
American Active, 1890's  
Baby in Carriage, 1895  
Kodak Snapshot

The desire to photograph loved ones might be the main reason for amateur\* photography to have started. Roland Barthes states: "Usually the amateur is defined as an immature state of the artist: someone who cannot-or will not- achieve the mastery of a profession. But in the field of photographic practice, it is the amateur, on the contrary, who is the assumption of the professional: for it is he who stands closer to the *noeme* of Photography."<sup>43</sup>

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\*Amateur (n) 1784, "one who has a taste for (something)," from Fr. *amateur* "lover of," from L. *amatorem* (nom. *amator*) "lover," agent noun from *amatus*, pp. of *amare* "to love" (see *Amy*). Meaning "dabbler" (as opposed to *professional*) is from 1786. As an adjective, early 19c.- [www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com)

43 Barthes, p: 98



It is possible to make a connection between this statement of Barthes and Lichtwart's statement: "*In our age there is no work of art which is regarded with as much attention as a photograph of oneself, one's closest relatives and friends, one's sweetheart.*" The idea in Barthes' statement which suggests that the professional assumes the state of amateurship might be pointing out the protection of the noema of the naive image which emerges through the simpler desire to take photographs as shown in the Kodak snapshots, which the amateur spirit turns towards as he/she desires only with his/her feelings and with no professional concern. Jacques Henri Lartigue, in whose photographs this naivety is always clearly observed, remarks: "I take photographs with love, so I try to make them art objects. But I make them for myself first and foremost."<sup>44</sup>

Accordingly, we can say that what approximates the professional to the amateur is about not what is seen in the photograph, but his/her sincerity in taking it. In this regard, we can correlate, through the concept of 'sincerity', the way of seeing of the amateur spirited photographer (amateur or professional) in Barthes' statement with the way of looking of a person who is beholding a loved one's photograph as in Lichtwart's statement.

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<sup>44</sup> Think Exist. (n.d). *Jacques-Henri Lartigue quotes*. Retrieved January 15, 2012 from [http://thinkexist.com/quotes/Jacques-Henri\\_Lartigue/](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/Jacques-Henri_Lartigue/)

Just like we can correlate, through the nature of photography beside many other things, Barthes' feelings which made him write pages while beholding his mother's photograph which he named 'winter garden' and summarize his thoughts as “[...] the Winter Garden Photograph was indeed essential, it achieved for me, utopically, *the impossible science of the unique being*.”<sup>45</sup> It was these feelings that made Orhan Cem Çetin take this striking photograph with his mother.



Figure 15: Me & Ma, Orhan Cem Cetin,  
Photograph, Inkjet pigment print, 50x75 cm, (c) 2011

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45 Barthes, p: 71

## CHAPTER 4

### i) Photography and Desire: Treating the Photograph

*“Photographs can abet desire in the most direct, utilitarian way.”*

*Susan Sontag*

After all this historical breakthrough of personal use of photography, people also started to have and keep those photographs in their own way. They had personal images to live with which represented various things as we have today. Photographs, like many other belongings of human beings, probably affect the way we live, just like our way of living affects our photographs; our way of living makes things appear in our photographs. It is for certain that not all the photographs we own have that much power on us, but the photographs which tempt us to behave in a certain way are probably the ones that make us in some way feel love or at least some other feeling that comes out of love because those photographs may define who we are.

The very common practice to keep a favorite photograph is to frame it and place it somewhere you can see often. According to the frame historian Diana Day, “Framing borders existed in art long before the picture frame. The Egyptians and Greeks, among others, used borders on pottery and in wall paintings to divide scenes and ornamentation into sections.”<sup>46</sup> Just as they did, we still frame our photographs to capture scenes from our lives and sometimes set them almost as ornaments in our houses. Framing a photograph is a very naive and candid way of treating it because it is an act of unconditional appreciation. We somehow like a photograph and we exhibit it to our guests as potential viewers. We sort of curate a small exhibition by choosing some images that represent scenes from our lives or from the life of a loved one. John Berger mentions that:

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46 Day, Diana. (n.d). *A survey of Frame History. Part 1. Panel Painting*. Retrieved February 10, 2012 from [http://www.pictureframingmagazine.com/pdfs/FrameHistory/Aug98\\_pt1panelpaintings.pdf](http://www.pictureframingmagazine.com/pdfs/FrameHistory/Aug98_pt1panelpaintings.pdf)

“Adults and children sometimes have boards in their bedrooms or living-rooms on which they pin pieces of paper: letters, snapshots, reproductions of paintings, newspaper cuttings, original drawings, postcards. On each board all the images belong to the same language and all are more or less equal within it, because they have been chosen a highly personal way to match and express the experience of the room's inhabitant. Logically, these boards should replace museums”<sup>47</sup>

It is possible to impose Berger's thinking upon the photographs that surround us in our living environment whether they are framed or unframed. The act of framing a photograph can also be considered as a protection for the photographic paper which, in metaphorical terms, also serves as a protection for the loved one or the experience. It is like we are caging the photograph, not letting it breath, in order to protect it and make it more visible. Another medium for exhibiting our memory photographs are digital display frames. Digital frames allow us to display multiple photographs in the same frame. In this way, the chosen photographs may somehow involve something in common to be displayed in the same frame as a way of self expression. Even though the photographs do not involve anything in common other than the owner of the photographs, they are still perceived from a common perspective since they are visible within the same frame. Because the photographs in the digital frame perpetually replace one another, they can also create a meaning through flow of images in a short or long period of time.

After a while, in this constant flow of images, the photographs also begin to eliminate the impression of one another and after a while it can be much more difficult for us to predestine the photographs in the digital frame and there is even the possibility for them to vanish from our memory.

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47 Berger, p: 30

The decision about where to place a photograph in our living environment is also important and relevant to its meaning. In our houses, we choose spots to place our framed or unframed photographs. We sometimes pin a photograph to a board or stick it on the refrigerator or we hang up the framed photograph on a wall in our bedroom or living room. We sometimes attach a tiny photograph to the edge of a mirror that we use everyday or we put one in the bathroom. So in our houses, the placement of a photograph probably has to do with its intimacy and its potential visibility. The photographs which we decide to exhibit more impulsively, like the ones on the refrigerator or the ones we carry in our wallets, are probably the ones we want to see more frequently, but it is ironic that we do not treat them with as much attention and care as we do with the ones which are carefully placed in an elegant frame. The reason for it may be the persistence of a photograph, because generally we frame and install or predestine a photograph which we feel is going to be there forever, but if we just pin a photograph to our refrigerator it may be because that photograph feels more impermanent. Roland Barthes mentions that: “If I like a photograph, if it disturbs me, I linger over it. What am I doing, during the whole time I remain with it? I look at it, I scrutinize it, as if I wanted to know more about the thing or the person it represents.”<sup>48</sup> If we discuss the photographs that are fully visible in our living environment, Barthes' implication could be one reason for this act. We do not let all photographs surround us, but we probably let the ones which we want to know more about as Barthes points out. Photographs as objects sometimes allow us to express our feelings privately. They sometimes turn us into observers of our own life, but since they are not living beings, they do not observe us themselves; such that they provide us with the chance to come across with them without any restrictions, allowing us to decide what to do with them. In the movie called “Time of Love” (1965) by Metin Erksan, the main character falls in love with a photograph of a woman and he refuses to love the woman herself. He says “I'm in love only and only with your photograph”. His love turns to be a way of perceiving the world by a photograph. This case can be a great example of how a representation (a photograph) of a subject might become even more powerful than the subject him/herself.

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48 Barthes, p:99



Figure 16 and 17: Movie Stills from “Time of Love” directed by Metin Erksan, 1965

We can treat a photograph in many other ways. In fact, the way we treat a photograph is the way we treat or want to be able to treat what is represented in it. We keep the photographs in family albums or in our digital folders. We sometimes put photographs in boxes and bury them in the closet or if they are digital we bury them somewhere in our computers where they are kept hidden with no actual appearance. We carry them in our wallets. We use photographs as bookmarkers between pages or as screensavers or wallpapers on computer screens, or we have them printed on our mugs or our t-shirts. As a result, for most of us, no matter if the photographs are in printed or digital form, they get involved in our daily lives through how we treat or use them. Even if a person does not place a single photograph in their house or does not carry one in their wallet or use one on their digital screen, meaning there is no photograph which they attach importance to, that person is still treating their photographs by ignoring them. In fact, ignoring, refusing or destroying a photograph as a way of (mis)treating it is as common as appreciating it. This dilemma can be considered as a proof of photography's power of affecting people to behave in a certain way. When Susan Sontag said “Photographs can abet desire in the most direct, utilitarian way.”<sup>49</sup>, she may have referred to that power of photography. The desire that Sontag talks about is the feeling that makes us treat a photograph. Kissing, burning, touching, tearing a photograph, or making cut-outs from it, throwing it in trash (a real one or the one in computer), letting it make you cry or smile can be all about the desire to treat the person that the photograph represents or to treat the memory and experience of

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49 Sontag, p:16

that photograph. This interaction between a person and a photograph resembles a form of Synesthesia which is “Personification”. “Synesthesia consists of the pairing of two bodily senses by which the perception of a determined stimulus activates a different subjective perception with no external stimulus”.<sup>50</sup> “Personification is a form of synesthesia in which ordered sequences, such as ordinal numbers, days, months and letters are associated with personalities.”<sup>51</sup> “[...] 4 is honest, but...3 I cannot trust...9 is dark [...]”<sup>52</sup> can be words of a man who has synesthesia. Our lives are also sequences ordered according to our photographs too. Associating 4 with honesty might be only a little less conventional way of making a personal association than associating a photograph with a person, for example. The relationship a person assumes between number 4 and honesty and the relationship a person has with a photograph considering it as a certain person are similar. Just like a person who thinks 4 is honest would prefer to stay in room 4 in a hotel, a person who treats a photograph as a real person beyond being someone’s representation would tear it, for example, because he/she can not tear that person in reality. They are both very personal acts of making associations through personifications. Another form of connection between photographic perception and synesthesia is the realization of photographic power which creates a strong stimulus of the past through our different senses. Barthes mentions a photograph of his mother : “No anamnesis could ever make glimpse this time starting from myself (this is the definition of anamnesis)- whereas contemplating a photograph in which she is hugging me, a child, against her, I can waken myself the rumpled softness of her crepe de Chine and the perfume of her rice powder.”<sup>53</sup> As Barthes mentions here, the photograph of his mother brings him her smell, ie. some photographs affect us through our other senses. This situation resembles a form of synesthesia where the photograph is taken as an "inducer" and the smell as the “concurrent experience”, which altogether are defined

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50 Science 2.0. December 25th 2007. *Synaesthesia: Smelling A Sound Or Hearing A Color*. Retrieved February 10, 2012 from [http://www.science20.com/news\\_releases/synaesthesia\\_smelling\\_a\\_sound\\_or\\_hearing\\_a\\_color](http://www.science20.com/news_releases/synaesthesia_smelling_a_sound_or_hearing_a_color)

51 Simner J, Holenstein E . *Ordinal linguistic personification as a variant of synesthesia* . *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 19. 2007

52 *ibid.*

53 Barthes, p:64

as “Grapheme → Smell synesthesia”.

It is also interesting that the power of senses we call from memory with the help of a photograph differ. Hence, when we are looking at a photograph, one reason for us to not feel the same with others can be the fact that the power of one person’s senses differ from that of others’. A photograph can bring an intense smell to someone and a sound to someone else. Generally, even if a smell can be stronger as to take you to your past, the experience of photography can vary with the overall perception of all senses.

Printed or digital, our way of treating photographs sometimes has disparities. Since now it is much more common to take digital memory photographs, printing a digital photograph is already an act of treating it and even giving the photograph a preferential treatment by turning a digital image into an object. Since the prints become objects, they may feel as more concrete evidences of our lives and in this regard, they can abet our desire to treat them more strongly. On the other hand, digital photographs allow us to behave in a more impulsive way because they are easier to deal with and share with others. As an example, if you do not want to own a digital photograph anymore, you can get rid of it with a click unless you have not sent it to someone via e-mail, shared it in social media sites or uploaded it to an internet server. Even if you have, you can choose not to own that photograph any longer but you may not control others’ access to your photograph or prevent them from having it; but if you do not want to own a printed photograph any longer, what you have to do is a more physical and significant act. In this regard, our behaviors might be variegated depending on the photograph's medium.

No matter how, where and why we treat photographs, the main idea behind treating them is about what would really fade away with our photographs other than the photographs themselves. Barthes also asks this question and gives a ingenious answer: “What is it that will be done away with, along with this photograph which yellows, fades, and will someday be thrown out, if not by me -too superstitious for that- at least when I die? Not only “life” (this was alive, this posed live in front of the lens), but also, sometimes, how to put it? - love. In front of the only photograph in which I find my father and mother together, this couple who I know loved each other, I realize: it is love-as-treasure which is going to disappear forever; for one I am gone, no one will remain but an indifferent Nature.



This is a laceration so intense, so intolerable that alone against his century, Michelet conceived of History as love's Protest: to perpetuate not only life but also what he called, in his vocabulary so outdated today, the Good, Justice, Unity, etc.”<sup>54</sup>

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54 Barthes, p:94

## CHAPTER 5

### i) The Anti-Monument:

#### Photo sharing in social media

“The only way I can transform the Photograph is into refuse: either the drawer or the wastebasket. Not only does it commonly have the fate of paper (perishable), but even if it is attached to more lasting supports, it is still mortal: like living organisms, it is born on the level of the sprouting silver grains, it flourishes a moment, then ages...Attacked by light, by humidity, it fades, weakens, vanishes; there is nothing left to do but throw it away. Earlier societies managed so that memory, the substitute for life, was eternal and that at least the thing which spoke Death should itself be immortal: This is monument. But by making the (mortal) Photograph into general and somehow natural witness of “what has been” modern society has renounced the Monument.”<sup>55</sup>

Social media sites have become the platforms for us to answer an unasked question: “What has been going on?” in our daily lives. We feel the need for answering this question both for ourselves and for the others in different ways. Sharing personal photographs in social media sites seems to be a very common way of answering this question. So the way we exhibit our photographs on Facebook, for example, turn our photographs into anti-monuments and, as Barthes mentions, we renounce one monument as we try to create another one, through sharing them with other people. On Facebook, we consume photographs so fast that they become like tombs buried one over the other, although each was supposed to be there to make us alive in the world of social media.

Social media sites apparently being platforms for us to define who we are through what we share, the things we share become our way of presenting ourselves, ie. our identity. Via social media, we create almost a second life for ourselves and sometimes they merge with each other to such an extent that we begin to live to share in social media and we share in

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\* late 13c., "a sepulchre," from L. monumentum "a monument, a memorial," lit. "something that reminds," from monere "to remind, warn" (see monitor (n.)). Sense of "structure or edifice to commemorate a notable person, action, or event" first attested c.1600.- [http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed\\_in\\_frame=0&search=monument&searchmode=none](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=monument&searchmode=none)  
55 Barthes, p:93

social media to actually live. It is significant that facebook came up with a new layout called 'timeline' that creates the very predominant perception of real life which is based on the linearity of time. It is not a coincidence that this layout started to become mandatory for all users<sup>56</sup>. According to Dr. Özgür Uçkan, the company wants the users to be really active so that they can get the entire possible information from the users to be able to show more and more relevant advertisements.<sup>57</sup> Thus, it is possible to think that this resemblance of perception between the real life and the 'timeline' layout may serve for superior usage. According to the company's statistics, they had 845 million monthly active users at the end of December 2011, approximately 80% of their monthly active users being outside the U.S. and Canada. They had 483 million daily active users on average in December 2011. They had more than 425 million monthly active users who used Facebook mobile products in December 2011. Facebook is available in more than 70 languages.<sup>58</sup> Considering all these statistics and the possible amount of shared photographs, it would be right to say that social media encourages people to use photography and spreads the use of photography among a vast number of people from different social backgrounds. In this case, it is possible to point out that social media becomes a common and a democratic platform which allows people from any social status to share representations of their personal lives. The fact that Facebook acquired the photo sharing application 'Instagram' for one billion dollars might also demonstrate the potential of photo sharing in social media. Since the social media sites gradually get more and more widespread, the concept of privacy may slowly weaken for some users. A very striking thing about social media is that usually we can understand whether a person is single or in a relationship. For example in facebook, even if a user does not express it in his or her profile, you can usually understand it by

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56 Waught, Rob. 26 January 2012. *You WILL reveal your past! Facebook's timeline feature becomes mandatory for all users - with just 7 days to 'clean up'*. Retrieved March 10, 2012 from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2091735/Facebook-Timeline-mandatory-users--just-7-days-clean-up.html>

57 Uçkan, Dr. Özgür. Faculty of Communication. İstanbul Bilgi University. Interview by Cemre Yesil. April 2012

58 Facebook Company. (n.d). *Facebook's latest news, announcements and media resouces. Statistics*. Retrieved March 10, 2012 from <http://newsroom.fb.com/content/default.aspx?NewsAreaId=22>

looking at his/her photographs. Certainly there might be exceptions to this, but if the user is really active in facebook, their relationship status is visible via their photographs and the comments below them. Sometimes, even the profile pictures demonstrate if a person is single or in a relationship. So all this information presented by the users might demonstrate the way they choose to define themselves. Even if a user does not share anything in social media, photographs might tell very much about what kind of a person he/she is.

In terms of self-demonstration, the act of sharing personal photographs in social media sites is actually not so different than installing a photograph in your house, but the visibility and the way they are consumed are completely different. First of all, the photographs that are installed in our houses still bear the characteristics of a monument; even if the relationship between photographs and the owner transume in time, somehow photographs do not lose their function of reminding. In terms of visibility, only the people who are close enough to the photographs' owner to visit his/her house can see those photographs. The installation and sharing of photographs in houses become ritualistic. The ritual of framing and hanging a photograph on an empty wall requires so much more effort than uploading a photograph to facebook for example and this effort is enduring because of this ritualistic need. The way we share photographs with the visitors of our house also turns in to a ritualistic interaction. Whether these photographs are framed, installed or placed in a family album, the way we share them and maybe talk about them creates a form of socialization. Sharing photographs via social media also creates a form of socialization, of course, but the way we share and socialize does not have any traces of ritual and cultural characteristics even if the photograph itself is about a ritual or a cultural act. This situation creates a monotype socialization via social media. If we take it further, we can also observe that, via social media, our photographs might even visually become monotypes. For example, in the application named 'Instagram', there are some photographic filters which we can choose. In Instagram version 2.0.7, there are only 17 filters for 12 million users<sup>59</sup>. So 12 million people have 17 common filter options and if we do not count the one filter

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59 Tsotsis, Alexia. October 31st, 2011. *Instagram Now Has 12 Million Users, 100K Weekly Downloads In China Alone*. Retrieved March 14, 2012, from <http://techcrunch.com/2011/10/31/instagram-now-has-12-million-users-100k-weekly-downloads-in-china-alone/>

named 'normal' (which doesn't effect the colors of the photograph), we have 16 common filters which really effect the feeling of the photograph through use of color correction. Time reveals that photographs are stored in different ways in the real and virtual worlds. According to Dr. Özgür Uçkan, we mostly do not have any control over our photographs once they are out in the virtual world, unless we are using a very special software that prevents the data being stored by any internet server. He also mentions that this kind of software is generally used only by very qualified internet users or professionals who work in this field.<sup>60</sup> When it comes to social media, it is almost impossible to prevent it. Even if a social media user can specify his/her privacy settings, once a photograph is visible under his/her control for only one person, she/he can not have any control over that photograph's fate anymore. Once a photograph is visible in social media, it may become free to be seen or used by anyone for any reason. This situation always carries a potential to cause crisis in any kind of a relationship; not only because a user can share a photograph which is inconvenient for someone else in terms of privacy, but also because a user's photographs may sometimes be out of favor for someone that he/she is in a relationship with. Since social media keeps track of the representations from a user's life, depending on who uploaded the photographs, a user's past may become visible and if he/she doesn't make an effort to interfere, his/her online identity which is formed from the past's photographs might stay there forever. Even if the user, always has the chance to change his/her privacy settings, sometimes the user might even find himself/herself in trouble with this conglomeration of photographs because as time passes some people change and accordingly the people around them change. So when it comes to synchronize a person's live and his/her profile in social media, it might get really difficult to deal with the expiration dates of both people and of photographs. At any rate, the syndrome of “do not know what to do with the photographs” must be quite common as they came up with a new software called “X-pire” promising to “save the user from the almighty hassle of having to delete the photographs by themselves”.<sup>61</sup> The software determines digital expiration dates

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60 Uçkan, Dr. Özgür. Faculty of Communication. İstanbul Bilgi University. Interview by Cemre Yesil. April 2012

61 Savov, Vlad. Jan 16th 2011. *X-pire! software will add digital expiration dates to your*

for the photographs the user has uploaded to Facebook, Myspace and Flickr. It is humorous that on many technology trend websites, this software is referred to as a software that avoids photo-related embarrassment. An article about this software written by a journalist, namely Anthony Marcusa, who is specialized in popular culture is also significant;

“ [...] It is hard to speculate on at which point in life, be it months or years, one will not want certain pictures viewed. If there is a point in someone’s life where they feel they need to remove certain pictures from the online realm, that moment will likely be more sudden and spontaneous than foreseen. What’s more, it is hard for many people to comprehend the permanence of the Internet, as the generation that has embraced it is still very young. X-Pire should incline people to at the very least think about what their online identity will be once they die. [...] ”. <sup>62</sup>

It would not be wrong to say that, besides the effect of owning it, the act of storing a photograph in any medium is actually also out of the need to be able to control the photograph's fate, whether we can or we can not. Photographs always have a potential power to be reborn. Even a hardcopy photograph that is stored in a very hidden closet just like a dead person, always has the potential to come back alive with both possibilities; the intervention from the owner of that photograph or from anyone, depending on the lifetime of the photograph or the lifetime of its owner. In fact, even if we try to set the fate of our printed photographs, we still do not have full control over them, because most of them probably will have a longer lifetime than we have, depending on the print quality. The photographs that are for sale in second hand stores can be considered as proofs of the rare possibility to have control over a photograph's fate. If we make a quick scan to a bunch of photographs that are for sale in a second hand store, it would be quite visible that most of them used to be very precious to some people back in time and now they are travelling without any control of its owner who is probably no longer alive.

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*photos, photo-related embarrassment*, Retrieved March 13, 2012, from <http://www.engadget.com/2011/01/16/x-pire-software-will-add-digital-expiration-dates-to-your-photo/>

<sup>62</sup> Marcusa, Anthony. *[This Photo Will Self-Destruct In...” X-Pire Puts an End Date on Images](http://socialtimes.com/this-photo-will-self-destruct-in-x-pire-puts-an-end-date-on-images)*. Retrieved March 15, 2012, from [http://socialtimes.com/this-photo-will-self-destruct-in-x-pire-puts-an-end-date-on-images\\_b35620](http://socialtimes.com/this-photo-will-self-destruct-in-x-pire-puts-an-end-date-on-images_b35620)

Not only the memory photographs have the potential to be reborn in some other people's hands; the discovery of Vivian Maier's striking photographic work years after she took those photographs can be a great example for how a hidden storage locker can not hide what it contains forever, especially when the content is 100.000 negatives that are full with stories that were created by a nanny who did not dare to define herself as a photographer even if she was a great one.



Figure 18: Vivian Maier, Self Portrait, February 1955

In this regard, the transformation of a photograph is inevitable as Barthes clarifies and if we take this argument further, we can say that the only way to control a photograph's fate is to eradicate it and spirit it away.

## CONCLUSION

As the conclusion of this paper, I would like to share the process and some outputs from my practice based research which was the second wing of my thesis and finalized as a photography exhibition supplement by sound installations. As a practice based research, I visited houses of various people all of whom I personally know and took photographs of the photographs that were related to a relationship they have/had and that were still visible in their houses. I also conducted interviews with the owners of the photographs about the commitment they have for those photographs. During my visits to these houses, my mind and my project was so open to any kind of unexpected mistakes that would necessarily be mine, since I believed that they could serve more to get the stories behind each house and I hoped the mistakes would turn into serendipities. I avoided developing a conclusion that was based on any social status or any other classifications, but I tried to visit the houses of people who were different than each other in terms of age, social status, occupation, etc. and I also tried to choose people with different love relationship stories. I chose to visit people who I already knew because I wanted to ask personal questions without crossing the lines and I wanted the interviews to be like casual but sincere chats in order to provide a firm base for the sound installations of my exhibition. My real motivation for making this research was caused by a very deep connection that I had with one single photograph which made me wonder about other people's connections with their own photographs. So, personally, I just wanted to be a witness to various relationships between people and their photographs and as a photographer the only thing I could do was to try to document those relationships.

Although every visit brought me a different output to be displayed in my exhibition, the generic output from my research demonstrated that even if every single person who I visited was very different than the others, they all shared a certain approach to their photographs which was in a real harmony with the love relationship they have/had. I think that this output is very much beyond a standard relationship between an object and a person.



The title of my thesis was the conclusion sentence of my research which I took away from one of the interviews that I conducted; when I asked the interviewee about the love she had for her husband, she answered: “WE HAVE NOT LIVED THROUGH SUCH A THING” and her house was full of photographs, many of which were of her husband.

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