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Pleasant Fictions:

Henry Peach Robinson's Composition Photography

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PLEASANT FICTIONS:
HENRY PEACH ROBINSON'S COMPOSITION PHOTOGRAPHY

by

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For Sally

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Pleasant Fictions:
Henry Peach Robinson's Composition Photography

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Henry Peach Robinson (1830-1901) was one of the most prolific and vocal advocates of photography's possible status as a fine art in nineteenth-century Great Britain. While previous scholarship has asserted that Robinson applied painting theory to photographic practice and fostered a pictorial idealism, this dissertation looks at the strategies photographic techniques Robinson used to fulfill this artistic potential. It then examines the implications and limitations his theory of photographic imitation imposed upon his imagery.

Robinson's manual for artistic photography, *Pictorial Effect in Photography* (1869), blended elements from Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Discourses* (1769-1790), picturesque theory

and John Burnet's *Treatise on Painting* (1837) to encourage photographers to create more aesthetic imagery by conforming to academic pictorial standards. Robinson advocated a hybrid of fact and artifice to achieve this goal, and he produced a variety of photographic compositions by combining multiple negatives and by using painted backgrounds, dressed models and artificial props. Robinson's deliberate manipulations were significantly controversial for those within the photographic and artistic communities who viewed photography as an unmediated record of the visible world.

Robinson's strategies of pairing his images with poetry and employing genre subjects encouraged his audience to judge his photographs by their conformity to pictorial standards rather than by their fidelity to nature. Painters had used poetry to elevate the estimation of their works, and Robinson imitated this practice to promote photography as an expressive medium. Rustic genre subjects turned his photographs away from their temporal specificity and toward typologies of industry, frugality and piety. In examining these seemingly simple images of pretty maids and content cottagers, we find deeply imbedded social values regarding differences between levels of franchisement, wealth and property rights. Although poetic associations and genre subjects were common in British painting, this dissertation demonstrates that Robinson nonetheless had difficulty negotiating the balance between painting's conventionality and photography's link to external reality—evidence that he was unable to counteract completely photography's intractable documentation of its time and place.

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Introduction

During the nineteenth century photography was a hotly contested representational practice. Formally announced to the world in 1839 by Louis J. M. Daguerre in France and by William Henry Fox Talbot in England, the new medium underwent a theoretical and operational struggle, involving various economic concerns and philosophical approaches. Part of the wide-ranging debate, especially in England, was whether it could be considered a fine art. Photography was most commonly believed to be a purely mechanical process wherein an unmediated image transcribed itself through the camera onto the sensitized metal, paper, or glass support. Nevertheless, many photographers and writers asserted the creative side of photography by insisting that this image production was mediated by the photographer's method of selection. They therefore considered photography as equal to the graphic arts and even to painting.

The Victorian photographer Henry Peach Robinson (1830-1901), one of the most prominent photographers in mid- to late-nineteenth century Great Britain, was often at the center of this debate. A professional studio photographer for the majority of his career, first in Leamington, then in Tunbridge Wells, England, Robinson also created artistic photographs that he submitted to photographic exhibitions throughout Britain and Europe. Robinson was one of the few "composition" photographers, or those who posed figures to form genre or other narrative scenes. He was very successful in this endeavor, winning first place in more exhibitions than any other photographer in Europe from 1858 to 1900. Robinson was also a very prolific and influential writer on photography,

publishing nine books and over 150 articles in various British and American photographic journals during his career. His most important book on photographic theory, entitled *Pictorial Effect in Photography: Being Hints on Composition and Chiaroscuro for Photographers* (1869),¹ was extremely popular and went through four British and American editions. It was also translated into French and German. Robinson's books were manuals for how both amateur and commercial photographers could produce more aesthetic commercial and artistic photographs. Throughout his writing Robinson tirelessly promoted the new medium of photography as a creative medium rather than its popularly conceived notion as a mirror of nature.

While twentieth-century photographic historians have analyzed Robinson's written texts and some of his photographs in separate studies, very little of it discusses either how his theories affect his images, or vice versa. The overall concern of my dissertation is to explore the impact his theory of photographic practice had upon the types of images he created throughout his career. Chapter 1 presents Robinson's theory as he defined it in his books and articles. What kinds of photographs did his theory enable him to create, or restrict him from creating? What were his strategies for ensuring that his audience understood these images in the proper way? These are the most significant questions I address in Chapters 2 & 3.

¹ Henry Peach Robinson, *Pictorial Effect in Photography: Being Hints on Composition and Chiaroscuro for Photographers* (London: Piper & Carter, 1869).

Of Robinson's writings, *Pictorial Effect in Photography* was his most significant work, and it best represents his thoughts on photographic theory and practice. It is a manual for art photography that adopted well-established theories of painting to guide its readers. Robinson founded an aesthetically conservative approach upon Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Discourses* (1769-1790),² and he based his compositional instruction upon John Burnet's *Treatise on Painting in Four Parts* (1837),³ which offered painters specific models to illustrate Reynolds' more general ideas. Inspecting Robinson's use of these concepts is vital to investigating the intersection of painting theory with photography in *Pictorial Effect in Photography*. It is also crucial to understanding how to read his images. Robinson's best-known photographs were his combination prints, wherein he assembled portions of several negatives to compose one final pictorial image. This practice was very controversial, and photographers and critics of the day debated whether they were acceptably "truthful." On April 2, 1860 Robinson wrote an article for *The British Journal of Photography* detailing for the first time his combination printing process.⁴ A flurry of criticism in other photographic journals responded to his article, and a heated exchange between Robinson and these critics ensued. Combination printing continued to be a controversial matter through the 1880s. In examining Robinson's theory of photographic imitation, these debates reveal much of Robinson's philosophy before he formalized it for *Pictorial Effect in Photography*.

² Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses*, ed. with introduction by Pat Rogers (New York: Penguin Books, 1992).

³ John Burnet, *Practical Hints on Composition in Painting*, in *A Practical Treatise on Painting in Three Parts: consisting of hints on composition, chiaroscuro, and colouring: the whole illustrated by examples from the Italian, Venetian, Flemish and Dutch schools* (London: J. Carpenter, 1827).

⁴ Robinson, "On Printing Photographic Prints from Several Negatives," in *British Journal of Photography* 7, no. 115 (April 2, 1860): 94-5.

In addition to combination prints Robinson submitted other types of images to various photographic exhibitions throughout his 40+ year career. How did Robinson's theory expand to adopt these other practices, such as images that combined photographic imagery with painted backgrounds? Most previous critical scholarship has asserted that Robinson applied painting theory to photographic practice, and that after a careful delineation between factual and artistic "truths," he ultimately favored the painterly notion: an artistic idealism through selection and conventional academic composition. While this assessment is generally correct, there is much more to be explored. My analysis goes further to say that Robinson's reliance upon artistic conventions all but obliterated nature from his images—only in this way would Robinson's adoption of various photographic compositional techniques be appropriate or even possible. Robinson's insistence upon the photographer's total control over his image forced him into this paradoxical theoretical position. Once I establish in Chapter 1 this theoretical platform from which Robinson operated, I then explore in the following chapters two pictorial strategies—pairing his images with poetry, and employing genre as subject matter—to validate his theories and to achieve the artistic potential he saw in photography.

State of Current Research and Methodology

While the general surveys of the history of photography briefly discuss and illustrate Robinson's works, surprisingly little has been written about this photographer by

twentieth- and twenty first-century scholars. The starting point for any study of Robinson is Margaret Harker's *Henry Peach Robinson: Master of Photographic Art, 1830-1901* (1988).⁵ The only published monograph, it contains a careful biographical record. Harker has done extremely thorough research that would be vital to a future catalogue raisonné. She has listed all of his works that he exhibited throughout his lengthy career, and she has located many of these prints in various collections throughout Europe and the United States. However, she offers analysis of only a few photographs and does not explore his photographic theories very deeply. In short, it is an ideal book to serve as a basis for future scholarship.

Several theses and dissertations discuss Robinson's images and writing. Of these, the lengthiest consideration of Robinson's work is David Harris' M.A. thesis "H.P. Robinson's *Pictorial Effect in Photography: Being Hints on Composition and Chiaroscuro for Photographers, 1869*" (1981).⁶ Harris analyzes Robinson's book by tracing the various eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources for his theories. While this dissertation is a useful exploration of *Pictorial Effect*, Harris does not look at Robinson's images at any length to compare to his theory. Katherine DiGiulio's Ph.D. dissertation "Narrative Photography Exhibited in Britain 1855-1863" (1986) provides a good discussion about the broader world of artistic and photographic theories in

⁵ Margaret Harker, *Henry Peach Robinson: Master of Photographic Art, 1830-1901* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988).

⁶ David Harris, "H.P. Robinson's *Pictorial Effect in Photography: Being Hints on Composition and Chiaroscuro for Photographers, 1869*," M.A. Thesis, University of New Mexico, 1981.

nineteenth-century Britain and France.⁷ Robinson figures prominently in her dissertation, and she has come to excellent conclusions about the role of the model and theatrical poses in narrative photography. The scope of time she considers is not as broad as mine, so she necessarily cuts her analysis of Robinson's career well short of the bulk of his writing and some of his more interesting photographic work. Indeed, little scholarship looks at any of Robinson's work after his *Sleep* of 1867 despite the fact that he continued to photograph until the end of the century. This lack of attention is undoubtedly because of the greater variety of his early work, such as *Fading Away* (1858) and *The Lady of Shalott* (1861), as compared with his later imagery, which, with a few notable exceptions, rarely strayed beyond genre subjects. Robinson, however, explored a certain range of themes through his genre photographs, and I have found some of his previously ignored work to be of real interest.

Mary Warner Marien's *Photography and its Critics: A Cultural History, 1839-1900* (1997) includes a chapter on art photography as part of an evaluation of nineteenth-century American and European writing about photography.⁸ Marien discusses Robinson in the context of a discussion of mid-nineteenth century British photography's relationship to the fine arts. She bases her analysis of the types of artistic photography being practiced upon Jabez Hughes' 1861 article "On Art Photography" in which he distinguished between "art photography" and "high art photography." Art photography

⁷ Katherine Mary DiGiulio, "Narrative Photography Exhibited in Britain 1855-1863," Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1986.

⁸ Mary Warner Marien, *Photography and its Critics: A Cultural History, 1839-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

was simply photographs well composed for pictorial effect, whereas high art photography aimed to instruct and ennoble the viewer. The difference between the two types was that art photography seemed to have little standard outside of photography while high art photography looked to conventional painterly precepts. Marien posits rightly that Robinson was the leading theoretician of high art photography; she also places his success upon his own theoretical reliance upon painting. Marien concludes that Robinson ultimately rejected anachronistic photography (images of scenes that could not exist in life) as an attempt to clarify the bounds of photography in relation to painting. I would question this assertion, instead proposing that Robinson simply was begrudgingly acknowledging the medium's constraining ties to what was in front of the lens.

Lindsay Smith's various publications are useful in considering Robinson in the larger context of realism in the nineteenth century. In her article, "The Politics of Focus: Feminism and Photo Theory" (1992), she carefully examines the spatial distortions of Robinson's combination prints in terms of a critique of the Cartesian geometric perspectival model of vision that emerged in the nineteenth century.⁹ She writes: "The effect of combination printing is such that it subverts one of the main tenets of that fine-art tradition, the authority of geometrical laws of composition.... The 'look' of combination photographs, the appearance of their readiness to 'fly apart' (together with

⁹ Lindsay Smith, "The Politics of Focus: Feminism and Photography Theory," in *New Feminist Discourses: Essays in Literature, Criticism, and Theory*, ed. Isobel Armstrong, (London: Routledge, 1992).

their cultural positioning) indicates that they did not function simply to sanction the type of perceptual mastery that a replication of geometrical perspective seemed to offer.”¹⁰

While poorly-made combination prints can distort a traditional sense of perspective through errors in construction, Robinson made every effort to prevent this distortion from occurring. Robinson’s photographic theory, in fact, was based upon traditional academic conventions of painterly practices, such as composition, chiaroscuro, and depiction of space. His goal was to have his combination prints be indistinguishable from single-negative photographs. My analysis asserts that Robinson employed two pictorial strategies (depicting poetic and genre scenes) in part to produce subjects whose narrative coherence would counteract any tendency to “fly apart” that the viewer might sense in its construction. In order for combination printing to effectively participate in any critique of geometric perspectival models, either the producers or the consumers of such images would have needed to support this goal. Robinson did not participate in this kind of critique, and neither did any of his supporters nor his harshest critics. While some critics supported combination printing as a theoretically justified practice, they did so because it was a technological necessity for producing composition pictures. All of these photographers and critics would have gladly seen this technique disappear had photography’s technological evolution progressed to the point of panchromatic sensitivity and quick exposure times. Although combination printing’s odd production of scale and focus may, for us today, challenge Cartesian geometric perspective, and while this type of

¹⁰ Ibid., 22.

questioning may have been prevalent in the mid-nineteenth century in other circles, none who supported or produced combination prints approached the technique in this light. I feel that Smith's analysis is therefore not historically appropriate.

John Taylor has recently revived Smith's arguments in an effort to understand how a nineteenth-century viewer would have looked at and understood Robinson's *A Holiday in the Wood* [Plate 13].¹¹ Following Smith's opinion of combination printing, he evaluates its effect as producing "no perspective, no connection between groups of figures and no connecting lines of sight between different groups."¹² He likens it to viewing a stereograph wherein "objects in different planes are thrown into relief and appear to be distinctly separate from objects in different planes."¹³ Taylor also agrees that combination printing (quoting Smith): "produces the means by which the heightened effects of three-dimensionality characteristic of stereoscopy could be assimilated to a single photographic image."¹⁴ While Taylor is quick to point out that the relationship between stereoscopy and combination printing is not causal, he agrees with Smith that both were critiques of single-point perspective. Taylor also asserts that the reason Robinson's combination printing was so acceptable was that Robinson's audience was used to stereoscopy.

¹¹ John Taylor, "H.P. Robinson, 'A Holiday in the Wood,'" in *Source* 38 (Spring 2004): 24-27.

¹² *Ibid.*, 27.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

This seems wrong on all counts. The comparison of combination printing to stereoscopy is only superficially proper. While the two techniques did involve combining multiple viewpoints into one pictorial experience, they produced images that looked and functioned very differently. Beyond the obvious difference that stereoscopy required a special viewer, the pictorial spaces they presented were very different. While Taylor claims that combination prints produced flat planes, they differed from stereographs in terms of their focus. The two lenses of stereo cameras were positioned at equal distances from the objects at which they were pointed, thus the focal quality was consistent between the two halves of the stereograph. In fact, they had to be consistent in order for the stereo effect to be successful. Combination prints, as my dissertation discusses, were subject to varying depths of field between exposures. Thus within one combination print we sometimes see various depths alternate in and out and back into focus. This was not possible in stereoscopy. Taylor's next assertion, that a viewer in 1860 approached and accepted combination prints because of his or her prior acceptance of stereoscopy, is also not borne out by contemporary criticism. Firstly, combination printing was not widely accepted, and no commentary draws any connection between the two practices. Nor do any critiques of combination printing compare it (either favorably or not) with stereoscopy. Robinson himself was critical of stereoscopy and its three-dimensionality, writing in *Pictorial Effect*: "There is no doubt that a certain amount of relief is of advantage to a picture, but to strive too much for this quality would be sacrificing a much greater advantage—breadth—for the sake of an effect which could not, in a picture, be

made to compete with the perfect manner in which it is given in a toy—the stereoscope.”¹⁵

As indicated by the arguments above, my emphasis is to stay close to the published reactions to his works to inform my interpretations. In some cases I have reached beyond these rather reductive judgments and analyzed his photographs with contextual clues of the day—by looking at the poems he cited as bases for some photographs and through looking at Robinson’s political and social world in England. I have given strong consideration to what meaning Robinson ascribed to his works, both written and pictorial, and to his methods, rather than extrapolating what the look of his photographs could signify for us today. Brian Lukacher interprets *Fading Away* in the following manner: “*Fading Away* presents an image of mortality that can be viewed alternately as an incriminating paradigm of Victorian bathos and the nineteenth-century cult of the beautiful death, or as an eerie visualizing of Roland Barthes’s solemn pronouncement that death is the *eidos* of photography.”¹⁶ Once again, one may view *Fading Away* this way, but my dissertation instead focuses upon what Robinson intended, which was to attempt to adopt this powerful (and familiar) theme of death into a narrative photograph. Lukacher is certainly correct in drawing upon the conflict inherent in this photograph of a model pretending to be dying of consumption, but this conflict is less of an “incriminating paradigm” than a miscalculation on Robinson’s part regarding the

¹⁵ Robinson, *Pictorial Effect in Photography*, 116-7.

¹⁶ Brian Lukacher, “Powers of Sight: Robinson, Emerson and the Polemics of Pictorial Photography,” in *Pictorial Effect, Naturalistic Vision: The Photographs and Theories of Henry Peach Robinson and Peter Henry Emerson*, ed. Ellen Handy (Norfolk, Va.: Chrysler Museum, 1994), 32.

persuasively “truthful” aspect of photography for the general public. If anything, this image is an incrimination of photography’s attempt at narrative fiction.

In my analysis of Robinson’s work and career, *Fading Away* played a crucial role in shaping the types of photographic work he did—these two paths I have identified as the link with poetry and genre subject matter. It was the critical reaction to this work that gave him valuable insight into the challenges of creating artistic photography. *The Lady of Shalott* and then *Sleep* complete this cycle of poetic works about death that he hoped would fulfill one of the main objectives of art by evoking sentiment in the viewer. As we move from *Fading Away* to *Shalott* and then *Sleep*, we see Robinson evolving a more complex interpretation of the relationship between text and image. In the cases of *Shalott* and *Sleep* I have interpreted their meaning through reading the entire poems on which these photographs are based. In *Shalott* I see an allegory for Robinson’s creative process as artist-photographer, following the popular interpretation of Tennyson’s poem. *Sleep* emerges as a sophisticated interpretation of Arnold’s poem—its meaning becomes increasingly complex as one views it in the context of its title, the passage of the poem Robinson quotes, and then the poem in its entirety.

The other strategy Robinson pursued to make his works read as pictures was to adopt genre subject matter, which I discuss in Chapter 3. While previous literature has seen Robinson’s genre subjects as thoroughly bucolic and thereby unfruitful for analysis, I believe that they have a variety of theme and that they reveal a great deal about

Robinson's photographic project. I explore what types of images he was able to construct and what sources served as thematic inspiration. Robinson's genre photographs closely follow the most popular themes of genre painting, so I trace these themes through his career. While I acknowledge that these images do not accurately reflect the state of existence for the rural poor during this time, this type of analysis has been conducted successfully by previous scholars of English rustic imagery such as Michael Rosenthal and Ann Bermingham.¹⁷ Instead, I see these images as embodying the attitudes of polite society towards the rural poor and the challenge these attitudes faced towards the end of the century by the increasing rights of the working poor. Given the changing context of game and poaching laws in particular, some of Robinson's images are particularly interesting to examine. Following the changing attitudes towards the rural poor in British society, there was also a shift regarding the practice of using models to portray them in photography. With the advent of the photographic movement known as Naturalism, Robinson was sharply criticized for this practice. My dissertation concludes with a consideration of Robinson's models in regard to his theory of photographic imitation.

Aesthetic theory – Joshua Reynolds

Because Robinson was one of the more significant photographic writers of his day, it is necessary to consider from what sources he drew his theories of photographic art.

Although Robinson spent his professional career as a commercial photographer, while he was growing up in Ludlow he had hoped to become a painter. Robinson received no

¹⁷ Michael Rosenthal, *Constable: The Painter and His Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press,

formal art instruction, but he sought tutoring lessons from a local gentleman who was a former student at the Royal Academy. Robinson adopted the standard academic principles of artistic composition based upon the eighteenth-century *Discourses* of Joshua Reynolds and the more contemporary writings of John Burnet. Robinson's primary work on photographic imitation, the 1869 book *Pictorial Effect in Photography*, is largely a reworking of these painterly guidelines for the commercial and amateur photographer.

On the title page of *Pictorial Effect* Robinson quoted the following passage from Sir Joshua Reynolds: "As our art is not a divine gift, so neither is it a mechanical trade. Its foundations are laid in solid science: and practice, though essential to perfection, can never attain to that which it aims unless it works under the direction of principle."¹⁸

Robinson relied heavily upon Reynolds' late eighteenth-century theory for his book, indeed quoting him more than he does any other writer.¹⁹ His quotation above became a guiding principle as an approach to teaching photographic art, for the practicing photographer.

Reynolds, as the founding President of the Royal Academy in the mid-eighteenth century, sought to standardize art theory and to distill its essentials for the Academy's students.

As Reynolds emphasized in his *Discourses on Art*, a series of fifteen lectures delivered between 1769 and 1790, the Academy's mission was to give students of art a language

1983), and Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

¹⁸ Robinson, *Pictorial Effect in Photography*, 3.

¹⁹ David Harris has traced all of the source material for *Pictorial Effect in Photography* in his M.A. Thesis, cited above.

based upon its venerable tradition. Painting's acknowledged masterpieces could provide, through proper study, a set of principles that the student could then apply when painting from life. Thus the beginning stage for an art student was to copy and study past art to learn these principles. For Reynolds art was the ideal imitation (representation) of nature. Nature, while the ultimate source of art, was itself not ideal—it contained blemishes and defects that were not acceptably aesthetic. The artist, with proper training, could learn to select the properly aesthetic portions of nature to imitate. Reynolds thus encouraged students to go out into nature and selectively copy and “collect” different aesthetic bits of nature. The student would then combine several of these using the principles of composition, lighting, etc., from their study of great art. After gaining the proper training in the grammar of art and experience of collecting subjects for imitation, the last phase of the student's training was to understand how some of nature's “perfections,” while pleasing in isolation, were incompatible with each other and unable to be combined into a successful work of art.

In Reynolds' Academy, students were to gain the maturity to learn how best to combine these various selections in a way that was unique to the individual. The path to this education was via past art; if one studied and learned from masterpieces of the past, one could learn how these artists successfully blended their selections. As Reynolds advised: “The more extensive, therefore, your acquaintance is with works of those who have excelled, the more extensive will be your powers of invention; and what may appear still

more like a paradox, the more original will be your conceptions.”²⁰ A student’s talent lay in his ability to synthesize selections and to depict the essence of his subject. This reduction required that the student leave out the details of the objects he was depicting. Because rendering detail was considered to be directly copying, and not imitating, nature, it was considered to require less of the artist’s skill. By studying how previous artists accomplished this higher task of blending, the student could develop his own unique approach. Genius lay in this unique expression of an understanding of the whole, rather than in representing the details as nature presented itself.

This education, through formal instruction and through study of past art, was a laborious process for the student, and Reynolds emphasized the necessity of industry. He wrote in his Second Discourse: “Excellence is never granted to man, but as the reward of labor,” and later: “You must have no dependence on your own genius. If you have great talents, industry will improve them; if you have but moderate abilities, industry will supply their deficiency.”²¹ Students could not simply rely upon nature to provide beautiful subjects, because of its imperfections. Through hard work the student could learn how to balance the combination of nature and artistic convention that Reynolds promoted. As he wrote: “Thus the highest beauty of form must be taken from Nature, but it is an art of long dedication and great experience, to know how to find it.”²²

²⁰ From Reynolds’ Second Discourse, Sir Joshua Reynolds, *The Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds; Illustrated by explanatory notes and plates by John Burnet* (London: James Carpenter, 1842), 20.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 29, 32.

²² From Reynolds’ Sixth Discourse, Sir Joshua Reynolds, *The Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 99.

From this emphasis on labor to a reliance upon past art that offered acceptable guidelines of selection and composition, Reynolds served as a model for Robinson's photographic theories in his own writing, particularly in *Pictorial Effect*. Reynolds' *Discourses* sought to teach the art student how to see like a painter, or to be able to discern what was adaptable from nature and what were compatible selections to unite in a picture.

Robinson set the same task out for his readers. Selection was particularly important for photographers, in Robinson's view, because they were unable to alter the scene before them to the extent that a painter could. As Robinson wrote in *Pictorial Effect*:

"Photographers... have not the facilities which other artist possess, of making material alterations in landscapes and views embracing wide expanses, neither have they so much power of improvement in figures subjects."²³ Robinson and Alfred H. Wall, the two leading photographic art writers of the day, emphasized that not every scene in nature was beautiful and that in order to create pleasing images one had to look for the best view or the best angle to achieve the best composition. These two photographers had different approaches to this end, which will be explored further in Chapter 1.

In his Third Discourse Reynolds, who had encouraged rudimentary students to copy nature as closely as possible to increase their mechanical dexterity, cautioned the advanced student not to produce pictures that were mere copies of a scene:

I will now add, that Nature herself is not to be too closely copied.... A mere copier of nature can never produce anything great; can never raise and enlarge the conception, or warm the heart of the spectator. The wish of the genuine painter must be more extensive: instead of endeavouring to

²³ Robinson, *Pictorial Effect in Photography*, 11.

amuse mankind with the minute neatness of his imitations, he must endeavour to improve them by the grandeur of his ideas; instead of seeking praise, by deceiving the superficial sense of the spectator, he must strive for fame, by captivating the imagination.²⁴

Reynolds' disparaging comments regarding minute neatness were particularly important for Robinson and other artistic photographers who struggled against what they viewed as the common abuse of photography's ability to capture detail. Robinson's comments strongly echo those of Reynolds: "It is a too common occurrence with photographers to overlook the inadaptability of a scene to artistic treatment, merely because they think it lends itself to the facility, which their art possesses, of rendering, with wondrous truth, minutiae and unimportant detail. To many this rendering of detail, and the obtaining of sharp pictures, is all that is considered necessary to constitute perfection."²⁵ According to Robinson, by simply capturing detail without an eye for the aesthetics of a given scene, the common photographer could not create images that conveyed the mind of the artist. As we shall see in more depth in Chapter 1, it was extremely important to Robinson for photographs to somehow demonstrate the artist's mind at work, particularly via the control that he encouraged photographers to have over their compositions. While Robinson's practice of combination printing can be seen simply as a literal adoption of Reynolds' principle of selection and combination, the most significant aspect of Reynolds' theory on Robinson was his exhortation that art was not merely imitation, but was under the direction of the artist's imagination.²⁶

²⁴ From Reynolds' Third Discourse, Sir Joshua Reynolds, *The Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 36-7.

²⁵ Robinson, *Pictorial Effect in Photography*, 11.

Aesthetic theory – John Burnet

At the end of his career, Robinson reminisced about the books that had had the greatest influence upon him. Thinking about his early self-training in painting, Robinson cited John Burnet's *Practical Hints on Composition* as one of two key books of his adolescence.²⁷ Burnet (1784-1868) had, in fact, published an edition of Reynolds' *Discourses* in 1842, to which he added comments and illustrations.²⁸ Burnet's principle works, published in the 1820s, were published after 1827 together as *A Practical Treatise on Painting in Three Parts: consisting of hints on composition, chiaroscuro, and colouring: the whole illustrated by examples from the Italian, Venetian, Flemish and Dutch schools*, also published by J. Carpenter of London.²⁹

Robinson's choice to cite Burnet, and not Reynolds, as a strong influence upon his adolescence is generally a minor distinction, for Reynolds served as the foundation of Burnet's writing. Burnet's commentary on Reynolds' *Discourses* consisted primarily of citing references that Reynolds had made in his lectures and re-emphasizing Reynolds' points. Burnet, for example, specifically encouraged landscape painters to study the "great book of Nature" as much as past works of art; yet, as with Reynolds, it was important to realize that nature could not be directly copied for good composition. "A painting is a complete whole," Burnet wrote in a note to Reynolds' Fourteenth Discourse

²⁶ From Reynolds' Thirteenth Discourse, Sir Joshua Reynolds, *The Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds*.

²⁷ Robinson, "Autobiographical Sketches, Chapter IV," in *The Practical Photographer* 8, no. 92 (August 1897), 231.

²⁸ Reynolds, *The Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds*.

²⁹ After 1837, Burnet's *Treatise* expanded to four parts with the addition of the *Essay on the Education of the Eye with Reference to Painting*.

on Gainsborough, “which is seldom the case in Nature; therefore, a knowledge of what to add, or what to take away, can only be learned from the compositions of our predecessors.”³⁰ While maintaining Reynolds’ close relationship between nature and art, Burnet emphasized the direct study of nature to a greater degree than Reynolds. In his Sixth Discourse, Reynolds cautioned his students that while men of great talent were able to transcend some rules, they still followed general principles. In his commentary, Burnet added that one could better determine where these artists had departed from the general rules by closely observing nature. He wrote: “In contemplating the works of those who have preceded us, for the purpose of deducing rules for our own guidance, it is necessary to keep Nature constantly in view, as the only test of the correctness or propriety. By this comparison alone, can we discern the cause of their departure from the common track.”³¹

John Burnet based his *Practical Treatise* upon the fundamentals established by Reynolds, going so far to write that Reynolds’ *Discourses*: “if properly understood, render all other writings on the subject of painting superfluous.”³² Burnet’s *Practical Hints on Composition in Painting* would have been particularly appealing for a young aspiring painter such as Robinson, for it contained simplified reproductions of paintings as tangible illustrations of Reynolds’ more general principles [Plate 1]. In Burnet’s words, the function of these reproductions was “to render apparent to the young artist what he

³⁰ Burnet, from note 1 of Discourse XIV in Sir Joshua Reynolds, *The Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 240.

³¹ Burnet, from note 5 of Discourse VI in Sir Joshua Reynolds, *The Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 95.

³² Burnet, *Practical Hints on Composition in Painting*, 2.

will find wrapped up in theoretical disquisition.”³³ For example, Burnet compared figures 3 and 4 in Plate 1 in terms of Reynolds’ advice:

In these compositions Potter has made use of the sky as a background, by which mode the high lights of his group have more value, and it is rendered less harsh and cutting; which is the case with his famous picture of the Bull [Fig. 3], the figures in which are brought up against the light side of the sky. If deception and strong relief were all he aimed at, he has gained them both, though at the expense of some of the higher qualities of the art, “a melting and union,” as Reynolds terms it, of the figures with the background. The art is now too far advanced to allow us to be gratified with violent contrast; and a *small portion* of the group coming firm off the ground [Fig. 4], is found to be sufficient to give the appearance of natural solidity to the whole.³⁴

This kind of illustrated comparison was extremely effective in instructing students how to examine works of art by focusing their attention upon a specific aspect of composition within a given work of art. Robinson must have found this method particularly instructive, for *Pictorial Effect* is filled with dozens of this type of didactic illustration.

Aesthetic theory – John Ruskin

The other key book Robinson cited as being particularly influential in his adolescent artistic career was the first volume of John Ruskin’s *Modern Painters*. Looking back more than fifty years, Robinson contrasted these books: “The one [Ruskin] sent me direct to nature for everything, the other [Burnet] taught me that nature was only the foundation of art. The one corrected the other.”³⁵ A thorough analysis of Ruskin’s complex and evolving aesthetic theory lies beyond the scope of this dissertation. Since Robinson

³³ Ibid., 3.

³⁴ Ibid., 5.

³⁵ Robinson, “Autobiographical Sketches, Chapter IV,” 231.

credited only the first volume of *Modern Painters* with influencing him, we can limit our examination to this volume at this point. Below, Ruskin's theory of the Picturesque, which was the focus of his fourth volume of *Modern Painters*, will be discussed in light of Robinson's writing and imagery.

The year after Ruskin first published his initial volume of *Modern Painters*, he published a second edition (1844) that contained a lengthy preface responding to some of his critics. In it, Ruskin summarized and clarified his theory of art as it had developed to that point. Ruskin felt this preface was significant enough to be included in all subsequent editions of the book during his lifetime.³⁶ Ruskin concluded this preface with a simple statement regarding the purpose of *Modern Painters*, Volume 1: a defense of Turner. He wrote: "For many a year we have heard nothing with respect to the works of Turner but accusations of their want of *truth*. To every observation on their power, sublimity, or beauty, there has been but one reply: They are not like nature. I therefore took my opponents on their own ground, and demonstrated, by thorough investigation of actual facts, that Turner *is* like nature, and paints more of nature than any man who ever lived."³⁷ Ruskin felt that Turner's art expertly blended two most important characteristics of effective art—imagination and essentially truthful renditions of nature's forms.

³⁶ See note one, from the Preface to the Second Edition (1844) of *Modern Painters*, Vol. I, in *The Works of John Ruskin, Library Edition*, eds. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, vol. 3 (London: G. Allen; New York: Longmans, Green and co., 1903-1912), 7. This edition hereafter cited as Ruskin, *Works*.

³⁷ Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Vol. I, in *Works*, vol. 3, 51-2.

For Ruskin, art was to be based upon observation of nature, rather than upon observation of convention. At the end of *Modern Painters*, Volume 1, Ruskin derided the prevalence of convention in contemporary painting: “We have too much picture-manufacturing, too much making up of lay figures with a certain quantity of foliage, and a certain quantity of sky, and a certain quantity of water; a little bit of all that is pretty, a little sun and a little shade, a touch of pink and a touch of blue, a little sentiment and a little sublimity.”³⁸

While the art of the past was useful for Ruskin, he felt strongly that it should not be relied upon to the same extent as in Reynolds’ *Discourses*. He wrote:

The picture which is looked to for an interpretation of nature is invaluable, but the picture which is taken as a substitute for nature had better be burned: and the young artist, while he should shrink with horror from the iconoclast who would tear from him every landmark and light which have been bequeathed him by the ancients...may be equally certain of being betrayed by those who would give him the power and the knowledge of past time, ...who would thrust canvas between him and the sky....[S]uch conventional teaching is the more to be dreaded, because all that is highest in art, all that is creative and imaginative, is formed and created by every great master for himself, and cannot be repeated or imitated by others.³⁹

Ruskin’s emphasis upon this observation of nature led also led him to sharply disagree with Reynolds’ recommendation of generalizing form. He wrote: “Hence the frequent advice given by Reynolds and others, to neglect *specific* form in landscape, and treat its materials in large masses, aiming only at general truths....[W]e are told that ‘the landscape painter works not for the virtuoso or the naturalist, but for the general observer of life and nature.’”⁴⁰ Yet, Ruskin insisted, the specific was needed in rendering the forms of nature, and should not be generalized too much. To illustrate, Ruskin contrasted

³⁸ Ibid., 624.

³⁹ Ibid., 12.

the expectations of rendering animals versus plants. Painters needed to be able to portray animals accurately enough so that the species could be determined, whereas Reynolds [Ruskin asserted] had no such expectations of the depiction of landscape. Ruskin demanded that the distinctions between trees, rocks, etc. be carefully observed so that they could all be recognized and so paintings could appear more natural. For this reason, Ruskin recommended to students of art to study nature extremely carefully: “[E]very class of rock, earth, and cloud, must be known by the painter, with geologic and meteorologic accuracy....[E]very geological formation has features entirely peculiar to itself; definite lines of fracture, giving rise to fixed resultant forms of rock and earth; peculiar vegetable products, among which still farther distinctions are wrought out by variations of climate and elevation.”⁴¹

Ruskin, however, recommended that this painstaking study was to be undertaken only to serve as a basis for imaginative art. Details of rocks and plants were not to be transcribed literally onto the canvas. Ruskin criticized painters who endeavored “to paint the separate crystals of quartz and felspar [sic] in the granite, and the separate flakes of mica in the mica slate.”⁴² Instead, Ruskin felt that this study would enable the painter to present “the bold rendering of the generic characters of form in both rocks.”⁴³ The successful artist could bring these details together through breadth and unity that would show their idealized form. He wrote: “Details alone, and unreferred to a final purpose,

⁴⁰ Ibid., 28.

⁴¹ Ibid., 38.

⁴² Ibid., 36.

⁴³ Ibid.

are the sign of a tyro's work, he loses sight of the remoter truth, that details perfect in unity, and contributing to a final purpose, are the sign of the production of a consummate master."⁴⁴ For Ruskin, the artist's mind was critical in its function to render more generally what he saw literally and in great detail. There should not be as much "generalization" as Reynolds advocated, but enough to convey properly the authentic animal, vegetable or mineral. He wrote:

It is not detail sought for its own sake, not the calculable bricks of the Dutch house-painters, nor the numbered hairs and mapped wrinkles of Denner, which constitute great art, they are the lowest and most contemptible art; but it is detail referred to a great end, sought for the sake of the inestimable beauty which exists in the slightest and least of God's works, and treated in a manly, broad, and impressive manner. . . . [T]his greatness of manner chiefly consists in seizing the specific character of the object. . . while he utterly rejects the meaner beauties which are accidentally peculiar to the object, and yet not specifically characteristic of it.⁴⁵

When Ruskin advised his readers to reject those "meaner beauties which are accidentally peculiar to the object," he was referring to those characteristics that described an individual rock or tree. He wrote: "The true ideal of landscape is precisely the same as that of the human form; it is the expression of the specific—not the individual, but the specific—characters of every object, in their perfection. There is an ideal form of every herb, flower, and tree, is that form to which every individual of the species has a tendency to arrive, freed from the influence of accident or disease."⁴⁶ Ruskin thus encouraged his readers to chart a path between Reynolds' generalization and the

⁴⁴ Ibid., 32.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 27.

depiction of individual objects. As George Landow has characterized it, Ruskin advocated a “path through fact to [the] imagination.”⁴⁷

After this review of Ruskin’s theory that he presented in the first volume of *Modern Painters*, it is interesting to consider Robinson’s use of it in his own theoretical work, *Pictorial Effect in Photography*. As we have seen in the context of Reynolds’ writing, Robinson, like Ruskin, criticized those who sought detail for its own sake. The direct transcription of nature to the canvas or photographic plate denied the capability and duty of the artist to subtly compose, alter and improve natural form. Indeed, there was a certain amount of common ground that Ruskin shared with Reynolds, although he differed with the great Academician in terms of degree. Although Robinson credited Ruskin’s first volume of *Modern Painters* with so much influence, his quotations of Ruskin in *Pictorial Effect* could all have been drawn from Reynolds’ *Discourses*. These references emphasized: 1) that the artist’s senses must be educated in order to see nature properly; 2) that the painter should not render too much detail in his works; and 3) that one should not depict too much relief in an effort to convey figures in three-dimensional form. Robinson did not adopt Ruskin’s contempt for convention, nor did he place a similar emphasis upon the ability of individual talent to supersede these conventions. Indeed, as we shall see, Robinson’s photographs, particularly his genre imagery, were extremely conventional. Ruskin famously recommended that young artists “should go to Nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly...rejecting

⁴⁷ George Landow, *The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin* (Princeton: Princeton University

nothing, selecting nothing and scorning nothing; believing all things to be right and good, and rejoicing always in the truth.”⁴⁸ But this was only a beginning step in the student’s education, and great artists were able to blend in harmonious fashion the specific characteristics of natural form rather than copy their individual characteristics. As we shall examine further in Chapter 1, Robinson favored Reynolds’ theory of selection because of an acknowledgment that a photographer could not significantly alter the scene in front of him. Photography could not avoid rendering the individual rock rather than Ruskin’s “specific” type of rock.

The Picturesque

Robinson’s theory encouraged photographers to go out into the landscape and see like a painter by selecting the aesthetic views to reproduce. As he wrote in *Pictorial Effect* “Photography, it has been said, can but produce the aspects of nature as they are; and ‘nature does not compose: her beautiful arrangements are but accidental combinations.’ But it may be answered, that it’s only the educated eye of one familiar with the laws upon which pictorial effect depends who can discover in nature these accidental beauties, and ascertain in what they consist.”⁴⁹ This advice closely correlates to the aesthetic principles of the Picturesque movement, which had evolved from its beginnings in the mid eighteenth century as a theory of landscape gardening and estate design to a more popular mode of aesthetic appreciation of landscape through study of landscape painting. Indeed,

Press, 1971), 24.

⁴⁸ Ruskin, *Modern Painters, Vol. I*, in *Works*, vol. 3, 624.

⁴⁹ Robinson, *Pictorial Effect in Photography*, 12.

the young art of photography was well suited to adopt the guiding principles of the Picturesque, and the technology of picture taking was adept at capturing those rough and variable surfaces that were so favored by the Picturesque writers and painters. As Robinson began his chapter in *Pictorial Effect* called “The Faculty of Artistic Sight:”

It is an old canon of art, that every scene worth painting must have something of the sublime, the beautiful, or the picturesque. By its nature, photography can make no pretensions to represent the first, but beauty can be represented by its means, and picturesqueness has never had so perfect an interpreter. The most obvious way of meeting with picturesque and beautiful subjects would be the possession of a knowledge of what is picturesque and beautiful; and this can only be attained by a careful study of the causes which produce these desirable qualities.⁵⁰

The Picturesque movement was pioneered in the 1740s by William Gilpin and became clearly distinguished as its own aesthetic concept in the 1790s by Uvedale Price, Gilpin and others.⁵¹ It then became a ubiquitous, and progressively less well-defined, concept as the nineteenth century progressed. One indication of the lack of specific meaning of the term “picturesque” can be seen as late as 1867 in an article written for *The British Journal of Photography* by Alfred Wall in which he tried to define it. He wrote: “Perhaps there is not a more vague word in our language than the word ‘picturesque,’ and yet all of us who have any eye for beauty feel and recognise the effects it stands for, whether we witness them in nature or in art.”⁵² The Picturesque began in the eighteenth century as a way of describing grand estate gardens that contained views designed to

⁵⁰ Ibid., 15.

⁵¹ My examination of the Picturesque movements relies heavily upon Malcolm Andrews’ Introduction to the three-volume publication *The Picturesque: Literary Sources & Documents* (Robertsbridge: Helm Information, 1994).

⁵² Alfred H. Wall, “On Taking Picturesque Photographs,” in *The British Journal of Photography* 14, no. 364 (April 26, 1867): 195.

evoke certain landscape paintings in the minds of those who walked through them. This emphasis on a pictorial aesthetic signaled a shift in emphasis within garden design. Before the 1740s gardens had often been designed with the aim of exemplifying moral questions, conveyed by the insertion of sculpture with poetical inscriptions or other architectural or iconographic devices. Works such as William Shenstone's *Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening* (1764) encouraged estate owners to shape their gardens with landscape painting in mind instead. Simply put, the shift turned the landscape from a site wherein moral questions may be raised and answered to one that afforded visual pleasure. Malcolm Andrews has pointed out that: "as pictorial criteria predominate [in mid-eighteenth century garden design], so alternative criteria (such as agricultural efficiency, variety of garden architecture) are subordinated."⁵³ Modern scholarship, best exemplified by the writings of John Barrell and Ann Bermingham, has placed particular emphasis on the shift in painting (and landscape design) from a moral to a pictorial concern as an act that displaced any responsibility for the laboring poor working in the landscape through a process of aesthetization—a distancing effect resulting from the act of seeing laborers purely in terms of their visual appeal.⁵⁴ The validity of this analysis can be supported early in the course of the Picturesque aesthetic in William Gilpin's *A Dialogue upon the Gardens...at Stow* (1748). Callophilus, one of Gilpin's characters in his *Dialogue*, gives voice to a distinction between moral and visual beauty:

But cannot you make a distinction between natural and moral Beauties?
Our social Affectations undoubtedly find their Enjoyment the most

⁵³ Andrews, Introduction to *The Picturesque: Literary Sources & Documents*, 7.

⁵⁴ Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*; John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting 1730-1840*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

compleat when they contemplate, a Country smiling in the midst of Plenty, where houses are well-built, Plantations regular, and every thing the most commodious and useful. But such Regularity and Exactness excites no manner of Pleasure in the Imagination, unless they are made use of to contrast with something of an opposite kind.⁵⁵

The moral distance seen here is developed into major one of the major aesthetic impulses of the Picturesque—the taste for deformity and decay, exemplified best by depictions of ruins (first of churches, abbeys, and other ecclesiastical architecture, then later of cottages). Andrews sees two concurrent aesthetic trends within Picturesque taste: that for “improved” nature and that for wilder countryside, and he links them, respectively, with neo-classical and romantic aesthetics.

The Picturesque movement was given more formal structure by Edmund Burke’s *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757). Burke distinguished between two visual concepts: the *sublime* characterized scenes that were vast, exceedingly rugged and dark, or marked by sharp contrasts, and the *beautiful* or those elements, such as smoothness and delicacy, that caused love. In broad terms the sublime fostered a kind of terror, although it is important to add that this “terror” was fundamentally pleasurable because it was always seen from a safe distance. As Andrews points out, Burke’s *Enquiry* also systematized a move, already indicated by Gilpin’s *Dialogue*, away from the neoclassical emphasis on utility as the standard of beauty.⁵⁶ Burke replaced this intellectual appraisal with the more immediate and

⁵⁵ [William Gilpin], *A Dialogue upon the Gardens...at Stow*, 1748, as excerpted in Malcolm Andrews, *The Picturesque: Literary Sources & Documents*, 72-3.

⁵⁶ Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760 – 1800* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1989), 55-6.

instinctual responses of the beautiful and the sublime. The Picturesque, as formally defined by William Shenstone in his *Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening* (1764), and then further articulated in both Gilpin's *Three Essays* (1792) and Uvedale Price's *Essay on the Picturesque* (1794),⁵⁷ occupied the middle ground between Burke's two terms by describing variety and novelty. This middle ground was a wide territory, leaving space for the two aesthetic trends of "improved" (variety) vs. "wild" (ruined) nature as Andrews has indicated. Price's *Essay* considered both of these elements, but favored the latter for discussion. He focused his attention not on the Gothic ruin but on the more humble realm of the cottage, mill and barn. Price described these items not merely as colorful and irregular structures, but he particularly prized them in their ruined state. This characterization also applied to the people in these spaces, for Price discussed not the industrious working poor, but the more dilapidated gypsies and beggars. Price's writing signaled the peak in the Picturesque interest in the "derelict and obsolescent" of the 1790s.⁵⁸

This aspect of the Picturesque was later humorously recounted by Wall, who wrote in the 1860s: "It is to the effect of such teachings we must attribute, I suppose, that artificiality and affectation of roughness which was so fashionable about sixty years ago, or thereabouts, when artists not only made their works picturesque, by painting them

⁵⁷ William Shenstone, *The Works in Verse and Prose of William Shenstone, Esq.*, ed. Robert Dodsley (Edinburgh, A. Donaldson, 1765); William Gilpin, *Three Essays: on Picturesque beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape: to which is added a Poem, on Landscape Painting*, 2nd ed. (London : printed for R. Blamire, 1794); Sir Uvedale Price, *Essays on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; and, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape* (London: Printed for J. Mawman, 1810).

roughly, by extravagantly rugged and jagged rocks, light and shade unlike anything in nature, ruins of the most approved and latest invention...but also induced them to become picturesque in themselves by allowing their hair...to fall in dishevelled masses on their shoulders, and to affect a slovenliness and carelessness in their apparel which has now-a-days rendered them butts for a thousand shafts of ridicule and mockery.”⁵⁹

Eighteenth-century artists did not unanimously share Price’s favor of dilapidation. Andrew’s discussion of the Picturesque is particularly useful to a consideration of Robinson’s photography because he recognizes that another vein of more orderly and neoclassical art, one that emphasized *variety* more than *ruin*, continued throughout this period. As he writes: “Portrayals of humble and rustic life in the literature and painting of the late eighteenth century tend to be more sentimentally appealing [than Price’s preferred scenes of decay].”⁶⁰ Recognition of these concurrent tastes also lies in a passage about cottage scenery written by J. T. Smith in his *Remarks on Rural Scenery* (1797).

Cottage scenery may be divided into two classes, namely the *neat* and the *neglected*: It is a maxim that in poverty, nothing will more easily, or more universally excite the attentions of benevolence, than the appearance of neatness and cleanliness: The regular, white-washed or new brick wall—the glaring red chimney-pot—the even thatch’d room—the equidistant groups of sweet pea—and the jasmin prudishly trimmed up into solid columns and cubes, stiff as a chimney, and hiding perhaps some picturesque feature...all tend to impress an idea of frugal propretè, and

⁵⁸ Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, 59.

⁵⁹ Wall, “On Taking Picturesque Photographs,” 196.

⁶⁰ Malcolm Andrews, Introduction to *The Picturesque: Literary Sources & Documents*, 24.

will be sure to call forth the praises of the good *housewife* and the thrifty *aeconomist*.⁶¹

Although Smith agrees with Uvedale Price by asserting the greater artistic appeal of the *neglected*, he sets off this preferred style against what must have been a widespread, though conservative, taste for these *neat* cottage scenes. This taste continued well into the nineteenth century, and it is within this conservative tradition that Robinson found his successful artistic photographic style of neat and sentimental cottages and cottagers.

Andrews traces the changes that the Picturesque experienced through the nineteenth century, and he identifies a distinctly new type of Picturesque: a moral version that tried to break through the emotional distance created by the aestheticizing of the rural poor's decrepit living conditions. Andrews identifies writers such as Charles Dickens and George Eliot who disparaged the taste for ruin and dilapidation as thoroughly amoral. Eliot, in her 1872 novel *Middlemarch*, described a neglected farmyard in the following manner: "It is true than an observer, under that softening influence of the fine arts which makes other people's hardships picturesque, might have delighted with this homestead."⁶² Later in the same paragraph she wrote: "All these objects under the quiet light of a sky marbled with high clouds would have made a sort of picture which we have all paused over as a 'charming bit', touching other sensibilities than those which are stirred by the depression of the agricultural interest, with the sad lack of farming capital, as seen

⁶¹ J. T. Smith, *Remarks on Rural Scenery*, as excerpted in Andrews, *The Picturesque: Literary Sources & Documents*, vol. 3, 162.

⁶² As quoted in Andrews, *The Picturesque: Literary Sources & Documents*, vol. 3, 155.

constantly in the newspapers of the time.”⁶³ Eliot thus criticized the privileged Picturesque aesthetic as not only false, but also markedly out of date. For her part, Eliot criticized the overly “neat” and sentimental depictions of the poor as well, not for being amoral, but for being false. In her article “The Natural History of German Life” (1856) she wrote:

The notion that peasants are joyous, that the typical moment to represent a man in a smock-frock is when he is cracking a joke and showing a row of sound teeth, that cottage matrons are usually buxom, and village children necessarily rosy and merry, are prejudices difficult to dislodge from the artistic mind, which looks for its subjects into literature instead of life. The painter is still under the influence of idyllic literature, which has always expressed the imagination of the cultivated and town-bred, rather than the truth of rustic life.⁶⁴

John Ruskin also participated in a critique of Picturesque aesthetics, writing in the fourth volume of his *Modern Painters* (1856): “[T]he modern feeling of the picturesque, which, so far as it consists in a delight in ruin, is perhaps the most suspicious and questionable of all the characters distinctively belonging to our temper, and art.”⁶⁵ In the first chapter of this volume of *Modern Painters* Ruskin developed the idea of two types of Picturesque: the low (or “surface-picturesque”) and the high (or “noble,” also called “Turnerian” picturesque). For Ruskin the surface-picturesque was “lower,” aesthetically speaking, because its broken surfaces and roughness could be employed by artists to display their technical skills rather than convey higher forms of the beautiful in nature. Moreover, the lower version ignored, or at least failed to acknowledge, “the pathos of character hidden

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ George Eliot, “The Natural History of German Life,” reprinted in *Essays of George Eliot*, ed. Thomas Pinney (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 269.

⁶⁵ Ruskin, *Modern Painters, Vol. IV* (1856), in *Works*, vol. 6, 9.

beneath” the aesthetically broken surfaces of ruins, hovels, or attire.⁶⁶ The surface-picturesque thus neglected the impact of a given scene upon its actual inhabitants. In a footnote, Ruskin related a scene from a walk he had taken in Amiens two years prior:

All exquisitely picturesque, and no less miserable. We delight in seeing the figures in these boats, pushing them about the bits of blue water, in Prout’s drawings; but as I looked today at the unhealthy face and melancholy mien of the man in the boat...and of the people, men and women, who sat spinning gloomingly at the cottage doors, I could not help feeling how many suffering persons must pay for my picturesque subject and happy walk.⁶⁷

In contrast to Ruskin’s sympathetic view, the typical “hunter of the picturesque,”⁶⁸ although “gifted...with strong artistic instincts and capacities for the enjoyment of varied form, and light and shade, in pursuit of which his life is passed,” was “not broad in thought; somewhat selfish, and incapable of acute sympathy with others.”⁶⁹ The most sentiment the lower Picturesque could inspire in its viewer was nostalgia. Ruskin went on at length about the stark contrast between reality and the desires of the surface-picturesque. He described such an artist in bitterly ironic terms:

Poverty, and darkness, and guilt, bring in their several contributions to his treasury of pleasant thoughts. The shattered window, opening into black and ghastly rents of wall, the foul rag or straw wisp stopping them, the dangerous roof, decrepit floor and stair, ragged misery, or wasting age of the inhabitants, —all these conduce, each in due measure, to the fulness of his satisfaction. What is it to him that the old man has passed his seventy years in helpless darkness and untaught waste of soul? The old man has at last accomplished his destiny, and filled the corner of a sketch, where something of an unshapely nature was wanting.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Ibid., 15-16.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 24n.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 21.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 19-20.

The noble, or Turnerian, picturesque is aptly described by George Landow's summary of Ruskin's admiration of Samuel Prout: "Prout, in other words, does not unfeelingly depict signs of age and decay chiefly for the sake of interesting textures, but rather employs these textures and other characteristics of the picturesque to create deeply felt impressions of age nobly endured."⁷¹ For Ruskin, the difference between the two types of picturesque lay in the attitude of the painter. While one could depict worn and decayed surfaces in both types of picturesque, if he approached these signs of age while maintaining the object's (or person's) continued utility and dignity, this character would raise the image's sentiment to a more engaged level of sympathy. Ruskin, in a passage in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*, described the tower of Calais church in archetypal terms for his Turnerian picturesque: "the record of its years written so visibly, yet without sign of weakness or decay...not, as ruins are, useless and piteous, feebly or fondly garrulous of better days; but useful still, going through its own daily work, —as some old fisherman beaten grey by storm, yet drawing his daily nets."⁷²

Ruskin's characterization of the surface-picturesque served as an expression of the British character. It was not only an affection for the merely useless broken surface of the conventional picturesque ruin, but was typical of what Ruskin saw as a peculiarly English obsession: the constant renewal and renovation of its ancient buildings. Ruskin denounced "the spirit of well-principled housemaids everywhere, exerting itself for

⁷¹ Landow, 229.

⁷² Ruskin, *Modern Painters, Vol. IV*, in *Works*, v. 6, 11.

perpetual propriety and renovation, so that nothing is old, but only ‘old-fashioned.’”⁷³ In an earlier series of articles called *The Poetry of Architecture* (1837), Ruskin wrote that its cottagers embodied this English spirit. Evoking the same contrast that J. T. Smith had made in his *Remarks on Rural Scenery* (1797), Ruskin compared the “finished neatness” of the English cottage versus the “look of neglected beauty” of its French counterpart.⁷⁴ He wrote: “England is a country of perpetually increasing prosperity and active enterprise; but, for that reason, nothing is allowed to remain till it gets old. Large old trees are cut down for timber; old houses are pulled down for the materials; and old furniture is laughed at and neglected. Everything is perpetually altered and renewed by the activity of invention and improvement. The cottage, consequently, has no dilapidated look about it; it is never suffered to get old; it is used as long as it is comfortable, and then taken down and rebuilt.”⁷⁵ Ruskin damned this peculiarly English “spruceness” as typical of the nation’s emotional remove, even to the point of being morally deficient:

Abroad, a country-house has some confession of human weakness and human fates about it...the garden is a little run to waste—since Mademoiselle was married nobody cares much about it; and one range of apartments is shut up—nobody goes into them since Madame died. But with us, let who will be married or die, we neglect nothing. All is polished and precise again next morning; and wither people are happy or miserable, poor or prosperous, still we sweep the stairs of a Saturday.⁷⁶

In this passage, Ruskin uses a masterful stroke of irony—by “neglecting nothing,”

Ruskin’s English neglect human compassion.

⁷³ Ibid., 13.

⁷⁴ Ruskin, *The Poetry of Architecture* (1837) in *Works*, v. 1, 16.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 14-5

⁷⁶ Ruskin, *Modern Painters, Vol. IV*, in *Works*, v. 6, 14.

For Ruskin, the Turnerian picturesque emphasized the continuity of the past with the present, which he identified as more Continental in approach. Writing about the European attitude towards its old buildings, Ruskin praised this continuity: “No one wonders at it, or thinks of it as separate, or of another time; we feel the ancient world to be a real thing, and one with the new: antiquity is no dream.”⁷⁷ Seen in terms that we have used above, we might describe Ruskin’s Turnerian picturesque as more emotionally honest and connected than the lower version—one that sought to collapse the distance inherent in the surface-picturesque between the viewer and the viewed.

In his photographs Robinson rejected this contemporary picturesque in favor of more conservative one, a practice that many of Robinson’s photographic contemporaries followed. By the time photography emerged as a widespread aesthetic practice in the 1850s and 1860s, Dickens’ and Eliot’s critique of the taste for dilapidation had already begun. Photography would have been an ideal medium for depicting scenes of ruined castles and dilapidated cottages, and indeed, photographers such as Roger Fenton and others photographed abbeys and castles. However, photographers rarely ventured to the villages and forests to depict the broken down hovels of the peasantry or communities of gypsies. It is likely that these places did not appeal to photographers because of their medium’s comparative inability to mediate and distance the viewer from the appearance of being in front of the actual scene. Only much later in the century with the work of Emerson did photography extensively explore the laboring poor in the countryside.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 13.

Robinson made images of peasant girls and cottage interiors the mainstay of his artistic oeuvre. To achieve critically and popularly successful images, Robinson drew heavily upon the early manifestation of Picturesque aesthetics as one characterized by “variety” rather than “ruggedness.” As we shall see in Chapter 3, his cottage scenes of the 1860s through the 1880s would have fit well within the *neat* aesthetic world of cottage scenes that J.T. Smith described in 1797. Taste for his images also drew upon images of the rustic poor that were promoted by the reformist religious societies of his day, which will also be discussed in Chapter 3.

Robinson’s reliance upon Reynolds revealed a conservative mode of thought much more aligned to neoclassical aesthetics than to romantic aesthetics. Although Picturesque taste had largely shifted away from its early emphasis on variety toward a taste for ruggedness, and then later toward a more socially concerned practice of depicting the poor, Robinson preferred to model his practice and teaching upon one of the Picturesque’s earliest tenets: to learn (like a picturesque tourist) how to look at the landscape like a painter in order to appreciate its aesthetic possibilities. *Pictorial Effect in Photography* thus adopted the principles of the Picturesque most sympathetic to Robinson’s aesthetic program.

Aesthetics in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw a proliferation of styles, a plurality of pictorial possibilities. While the leading practitioners of the Picturesque aesthetic favored rugged views in the eighteenth century, and then formed a morally-informed manifestation in the nineteenth century, a taste for neat cottages and

sentimentally pretty peasant girls persisted. It is this last, conservative, trend that Robinson relied upon when conceptualizing and practicing his theory of photographic art.

Chapter 1: Defining the Fictive Space

Introduction

Efforts to define the possibilities and parameters of artistic photography in England began to coalesce in the early 1850s with the emergence of photographic societies and journals.¹ Commentary in these journals by various art and photography critics and journal editors combined with views by photographers of every stripe, from commercial to amateur, from scientific to those with artistic pretensions. Opinions varied as widely as their writers' occupations and preoccupations for the medium. The most active period of this critical interaction in the nineteenth century took place from the mid 1850s through 1863. Thereafter, there were bursts of attention focusing on artistic photography, particularly around 1868 (coinciding with Robinson's serial publication of *Pictorial Effect in Photography*) and between 1886 and 1892 (coinciding with the emergence of Naturalism and its leading proponent, Peter Henry Emerson).

Not merely academic and abstract, these debates had real impact not only upon what direction creative photography would take, but also on photography as a medium in general. These discussions shaped such matters as what types of lenses were developed, what types of cameras were designed and what became the most widely used negative and printing processes. Of course, these discussions were not the only influences on such

¹ The Photographic Society of London was formed early in 1853; thereafter many photographic societies formed. The first photographic journal was published by the Photographic Society of London. The other most prominent journals of the day were *The British Journal of Photography* (originally the organ of the Liverpool Photographic Society) and *Photographic News*, which was always an independent paper.

matters, for commercial pressures also had their effect upon every aspect of the growing picture-making industry. Indeed, many of the commercial photographers did not join photographic societies, nor did they read or contribute to the photographic journals of the day. Despite this economic influence, one should not underestimate the power these societies and journals had upon photography's evolution in its first half-century.

One of the key debates surrounding artistic photography concerned the medium's expressive capabilities. Could photography be used to represent something more than simply what was generally believed to be a faithful copy of what was located in front of the camera's lens? Could it be a Fine Art, or High Art? During the course of these discussions, there were different types of people who held similar positions.² Some painters-turned-photographers believed that photography had little chance of becoming a well-respected pictorial medium, capable of hanging in galleries side by side history with painting. Other, more scientifically-minded practitioners, felt that photography was making great leaps in artistic progress, and was only limited by the imagination. It all depended upon what one viewed to be at stake. For example, some scientifically-minded photographers could be generous with their artistic claims for photography since these images had no direct impact upon their profession. Additionally, there were many artists and art critics who felt quite the opposite: photography could never be an art because of

² Specific citations of these points of view can generally be found throughout this chapter. George Shadbolt's editorials for *The Liverpool & Manchester Photographic Journal* (later *The British Journal of Photography*) lay bare a scientific photographer (who specialized in microphotography) who felt that artistic photography was possible and that combination printing was legitimate. There are many citations throughout this chapter (particularly from *The Art-Journal*) that serve to point to those critics and artists who felt that photograph could not be artistically considered.

its mechanical nature. In this, they agreed with the majority of scientific photographers, who felt everyone should pay more attention to the proper function of photography—depicting things as accurately as possible.

It is difficult to compare directly various writers' evaluations because they had different benchmarks of success and failure. For many painters and art critics, photography's lack of color and its inconsistent print quality were enough to prohibit altogether any serious consideration of its expressive or pictorial worth. By contrast, for many photographers and photography critics these handicaps were implicitly accepted, and their discussions focused upon other characteristics—always assuming that these technical issues would be solved sooner or later. Ultimately, the greatest difference in benchmarks was between those who felt that photography's goal was to look like the outside world and those who felt that photography should be shaped pictorially to appear like the other graphic arts. Furthermore, the many photographers and writers who advocated and promoted photography as a creative and expressive medium differed with each other regarding what type of imagery would be the most effective way of convincing a doubting public that photography could be artistic. There were additional disagreements as to the proper ambition of photography, or how "high" an art it could be.

Robinson's first efforts at defining photography's artistic parameters came through the refinement of his combination printing technique. Robinson used combination printing to construct entire compositions, rather than in what became the more customary way of

“putting in” skies into landscape photographs.³ From the emergence of his first exhibited example, *Fading Away*, in 1858, Robinson was both strongly praised and criticized for his combination work. This discussion crystallized for many the debate over the artistic status of photography. With some significant exceptions, those who felt that photography could be an expressive medium generally supported Robinson; those who emphasized photography’s usefulness to science through its precision, did not. As we shall see, combination printing was only the most celebrated manifestation of Robinson’s views on artistic photography. Robinson’s theory of photographic imitation, what I call his “fictive space,” allowed him to produce works by other techniques, including using artificial, rather than natural, elements. He also produced for exhibition several genre portraits that used painted backgrounds.

Combination Printing

After wet collodion’s invention in 1851 it became the dominant negative process over the next few years.⁴ While the process was much more cumbersome to employ than its immediate predecessor, waxed paper, it had several important advantages: the glass negatives were more durable, clearer, and they had faster exposure times. These factors enabled photographers to use collodion negatives for all types of work, from portraiture to landscapes. By the time Robinson entered the photographic scene in the mid-1850s, he

³ An unidentified critic for the *Art-Journal* wrote that he thought that already many landscape photographs in the 1857 Photograph exhibition were being done by this technique. Unidentified Author, “Photographic Exhibition,” in *The Art-Journal* 3 (February 1, 1857): 40.

⁴ By the Photographic Society’s third exhibition in January 1856, roughly 75% of the 606 works exhibited were printed from collodion negatives. Robert Hunt, “Photographic Exhibitions,” in *The Art-Journal* 2 (February 1, 1856): 49-50.

was exclusively using collodion negatives and making albumen prints for exhibition and sale.⁵

Unfortunately, wet collodion's color sensitivity was not greatly improved over the paper processes, and none of these early processes were evenly sensitive to the full spectrum of visible light. As a result, most landscape negatives were properly exposed for *either* land or sky, but rarely both. Many photographers exposed their negatives for the land, producing negatives with overexposed skies. These skies would be very white, possibly with traces of clouds or other variation in tone due to uneven coating or poor chemistry. To improve the look of these overexposed skies when printing, many photographers took to "blacking out" the sky on their negatives by brushing black ink over the entire sky.⁶ Plate 2, *Old Manchester* by Messrs. George Grundy & Son (undated), demonstrates this method of blacking out. (To make the procedure clear, I have chosen an example where some of the blacking material has come off the negative.) This intervention created a clear white sky in the print. Despite the aesthetic appeal of these white skies compared to what a poorly exposed negative produced, this practice was sometimes criticized. As the photographic colorist and critic Alfred H. Wall recalled in 1885: "By thus leaving nothing at all where air and light should play their most important and prominent parts, it

⁵ Robinson seems to have used salted paper for his combination print sketches in the Gernsheim Collection. It is unknown whether he used collodion or paper negatives, though the use of models in these works would imply that he used the faster wet plate process. For those prints to be exhibited or sold, however, he only used albumen printing.

⁶ For a discussion of this technique, see Mark Haworth-Booth, *Camille Silvy: River Scene, France* (Malibu: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1992).

was actually believed by whole hosts of operators that a landscape photograph was wonderfully improved!”⁷

During the mid 1850s, photographers discovered that they could use combination printing to create effective skies for their landscapes. Because photographers could not take the sky and the land successfully on the same glass negatives, they used two, properly exposing one for the land and the other for the sky. The photographer then printed these two negatives onto the same piece of paper, resulting in a landscape print composed from two negatives. Photographers printed these two negatives one at a time, masking out the section of the paper that was not being printed with a given negative. [Plates 3 & 4]

Here is one such procedure from Robinson. In the first image, Robinson has printed a landscape negative without the aid of clouds. For the second, he has obtained a negative with clouds and printed it with the first negative. The difficulty lay in the technique of printing twice onto one sheet of paper while creating the illusion that it had been printed from a single negative. If not done carefully, the border between the two negatives would be plainly visible.

Yet combination printing could be used to assemble multiple negatives for any subject, not just landscapes with skies. One of the earliest examples dates from 1854-5.⁸ In

⁷ Wall, “Artistic Feeling in Photography: Part VI—On the Treatment of Skies and Clouds,” *The Photographic News* 29, no. 1414 (October 8, 1885): 645.

⁸ Roger Taylor lists this exhibition opening possibly on January 11, 1855. It is therefore likely that the photograph was produced in 1854. Roger Taylor, *Photographs Exhibited in Britain, 1839-1865: A Compendium of Photographers and Their Works* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, Library and Archives, 2002).

March 1855, a correspondent to *The Liverpool Photographic Journal* commented on some of the works in the second annual exhibition of the London Photographic Society. Among these was exhibit #628, by Oscar Gustav Rejlander, a Swedish-born photographer working in Wolverhampton, England. This critic wrote: “A curious result is obtained by Mr. O. J. Rejlander [sic], in which a group is made up in one print from five distinct negatives but the edges of each have by some ingenious management been so shaded in, as to give no clue to the composite nature of the picture; the grouping is very natural, and the effect good.”⁹ None of the other journals mentioned this work, nor did this critic’s notice elicit any published reaction.

The debate over combination printing emerged two years later in Britain when Rejlander exhibited a combination printed landscape at the Photographic Society exhibition. One critic wrote for *The Illustrated London News* that “his landscape, which is printed from several negatives, is pretty, but must not be commended, as it is false to nature.”¹⁰ A critic for *The Art-Journal*, in commenting on the exhibition as a whole, agreed. “There are many charming pictures, showing peculiar atmospheric effects. We look at those with great pleasure, but with some doubt...Beautiful as are some of skies, with their heavy and their illuminated clouds...we desire to be assured that the photograph is a true representation of the natural condition of the air and earth at the time the photograph was taken. We cease to value a photographic picture if it is not true.”¹¹ Photography’s

⁹ J.B.E., “Correspondence,” in *The Liverpool Photographic Journal* 2, no. 15 (March 10, 1855): 43.

¹⁰ Unidentified Author, “Photographic Society Exhibition,” in *The Illustrated London News* 30, no. 841 (January 24, 1857): 61.

¹¹ Unidentified Author, “Photographic Exhibition,” in *The Art-Journal* 3 (February 1, 1857): 40.

“truth,” in this case, meaning its factual depiction of nature, was the central tenet of the most prevalent view of photography. Indeed, whether an aesthetically pleasing photograph could acceptably be an image if it were not strictly the “truth” was the most predominant debate of nineteenth-century photography. Despite the fact that Rejlander’s landscape was considered “pretty,” it was unacceptable to these critics.

Later that year Rejlander produced a combination print from over thirty negatives for the Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition entitled *The Two Ways of Life* [Plate 5]. It was as ambitious in its subject as it was in construction. The work depicts, as a contemporary critic called it: “the choice of Hercules with a difference.”¹² In the center of the image a man leads his two sons into a hall full of people; those on the left represent Vice, while those on the right represent Industry and Virtue. The critic for *The Athenaeum*, commenting only on the subject, felt that it was worthy of emulation: “Such works as these are especially valuable now as experiments in the new art, and deserve all encouragement.”¹³ There was, however, a great deal of criticism of the work focusing on different aspects. For example, many objected to its subject matter for its intrusion into the realm of High Art; others criticized it for depicting nude female models, whom they assumed to be prostitutes.¹⁴ Because of this controversy, this work was subsequently

¹² Unidentified Author, “Fine Arts: New Publications,” in *The Athenaeum* no. 1551 (July 18, 1857): 914.

¹³ Unidentified Author, “New Publications: *The Two Ways of Life*,” in *The Athenaeum* no. 1551 (July 18, 1857): 914.

¹⁴ See especially Unidentified Author, “The Photographic Exhibition,” in *The Art-Journal* 21 (April 1, 1858): 120-1. For commentary on the nude subjects, see Unidentified Author, “The Exhibition,” in *Journal of the Photographic Society* 4, no. 66 (May 21, 1858): 207-8; and Thomas Sutton, “On Some Uses and Abuses of Photography,” in *Journal of the Photographic Society* 8, no. 129 (January 15, 1863): 202-6.

rejected from the 1858 Edinburgh Photographic Exhibition, although a study for the work was admitted.

The Photographic Society of London, however, did accept this controversial work to their 1858 exhibition. They also invited Rejlander to read a paper about the image.¹⁵

Rejlander described his dual intent in creating it: 1) he wanted to show painters how photography could be used to produce studies for their compositions, and 2) he wanted to show that photography could overcome the limitation of focusing on figures in a single plane through combination printing.¹⁶ Rejlander also was working against comments made primarily in *The Art-Journal* that it was not necessary to review individual works in a photograph exhibition (as painting exhibition reviews did) because photographers, unlike painters, required little judgment to make their pictures. For Rejlander combination printing was justified because it was done to overcome photography's technological shortcomings. Rejlander concluded by stating that he believed that photographs would eventually be judged by the merits of their images, not by the methods of their production. This opinion was echoed in years to come by Robinson in response to criticism of his own methods.

Interestingly, Rejlander felt it important to stress that combination printing was a completely “photographic” manipulation. While he believed that photographers could be

¹⁵ Oscar G. Rejlander, “On Photographic Composition; with a Description of ‘Two Ways of Life,’” in *Journal of the Photographic Society* 4, no. 65 (April 21, 1858): 191-6.

¹⁶ The lens' ability to focus upon objects in more than one plane is one that was debated much in the next few years.

allowed to mask out parts of negatives and dodge and burn their prints, he did not think that touching up prints by hand was acceptable because it wasn't in the realm of pure photographic operation: "yet I must combat not alone that writer and others expressing similar views as to the right of the photographer to do as he likes with his own as long as he sails not under false colours....we must not paint upon the positive and still call it a photograph."¹⁷ For Rejlander, the photographer could manipulate the light reaching the print through the negative; however, no touching up of the prints was to be allowed. Rejlander closed his presentation by hoping that his work would serve as a catalyst for artistic photography.

Rejlander's large work, while controversial on grounds of its subject matter, scarcely raised an eyebrow in terms of its technique. One critic for *The Athenaeum*, in a lengthy favorable review of the work, merely mentioned that "Mr. Rejlander continues his studies of composition by means of many negatives printed into one group" without leveling any judgment.¹⁸ A writer from *The Art-Journal* even reported that the work was being unfairly criticized because many objected to the impropriety of photographing the entire group with *one* negative (thus requiring the co-mingling of prostitutes with gentlemen).¹⁹ The writer thought this misunderstanding was a "strange misconception," and patiently explained that the figures were taken with separate negatives. There was no criticism of the technique.

¹⁷ Rejlander, "On Photographic Composition; with a Description of 'Two Ways of Life,'" 193. For this dissertation I will maintain the British spelling in all quotations.

¹⁸ Unidentified Author, "Fine-Art Gossip," in *The Athenaeum* no. 1539 (April 25, 1857): 538.

¹⁹ Unidentified Author, "Photographic Exhibition," in *The Art-Journal* 5 (February 1, 1859): 46.

The Two Ways of Life was a crudely put-together image, according to Rejlander, who wrote that he constructed it in only a few months. Rejlander was inventing his own technique for combination printing, and according to his paper, he was disappointed in the print quality of the final image. Perhaps the lack of technical criticism was due to the distraction of the other controversies; perhaps critics felt the technical defects were self-evident. In any case, no one challenged the composite printing of this work despite it being shown in several exhibitions between 1857 and 1860.

In March 1860, the Photographic Society of Scotland asked Robinson to give a paper about how he had created some of his combination prints in their annual exhibition. Robinson began his talk by citing the artistic precedent of Zeuxis of Heraclea, who painted a picture of Helena by selecting to paint from different parts of the bodies of five beautiful village girls. Robinson asserted that this was no different than combination printing: “to take the best and most beautiful parts you can obtain suitable for your picture, and join them together into one perfect whole.”²⁰ Robinson described his combination printing technique in some detail in his paper. A more concise account of combination printing was published by Berwick and Annan in 1855, so I will quote it here to explain the process. To accompany this text, I illustrate a combination print from 1886-7 that Robinson used as a photographic sketch for his 1887 work *Carolling* [Plate 6]. For the purposes of illustration, I have outlined the borders between the two negatives

²⁰ Robinson, “On Printing Photographic Prints from Several Negatives,” 94.

he used [Plate 7]. I have also digitally altered the reproduction to approximate how each step would have appeared.²¹

It is printed from two different negatives. First a landscape or some other favourite view is to be taken in the usual manner..., using the landscape lens in order to obtain fine definition and distinctness of detail. Another negative is then to be taken of some individual or individuals to be introduced into the view....The portrait negative is to be taken in the shade, in the same manner as portraits are usually taken, with portrait lenses. A copy of this latter negative is then printed and the figure thereon very accurately and neatly cut out of the sheet [Plate 8], and after soaking it well in China ink, it is pasted on the landscape negative in the most convenient and telling position [Plate 9]. The rest of the sheet from which the figure is cut is also blackened with China ink and pasted on the portrait negative [Plate 10], covering all except the figure.²² A copy of the landscape is then printed with the blackened figure on it, which of course will leave a white untouched space, the shape and outline of the figure [Plate 11]. The copy of the landscape is then placed over the portrait negative, the white space being made to fit very accurately the figure on the portrait negative, and then printed to the desired intensity [Plate 6], having of course all the other parts of the picture except the figure carefully excluded from light. The great difficulty in this process is in making the figure fit accurately in the white space; but when this is done the effect is very fine indeed, the rotundity and relief given to the figure far surpassing that obtained from artificial backgrounds.²³

While Robinson described his technique of placing the “joins” (the intersection of different negatives) in unobtrusive places, he also wrote that he had adopted Zeuxis’ technique much more literally—for his work *Ophelia* Robinson combined the body of one model and the head of another.

²¹ Because the two negatives used for this image do not survive, I am unable to reproduce the unprinted portions of the figure and landscape negatives. The figure and the landscape, therefore, could have been located at different positions on the original negatives than my illustrations would imply.

²² Robinson, rather than using China ink to turn his printed proofs black, simply did not fix the prints, so that continued exposure to light would blacken them. He must have cut the print before its image was lost.

Critics derided Robinson and other combination printers for having too much time to hunt after the landscape scenes in their pictures; moreover, they argued it would be a tremendous amount of work to bring one's models and accessories into the countryside all for one or two images. In response, Robinson revealed that he had formed most of his recent combination prints in his back yard: "In this I have thrown up a bank, and partly covered it with wild flowers and ferns; the other part consists of an imitation of a mountain spring, covered with honeysuckle, brambles, &c...At the foot of the bank is a hole caused by the removal of earth to make this bank; into this runs the waste water from a print-washing apparatus which forms a river."²⁴ In effect, Robinson created an outdoor studio lot in which he could concoct the foregrounds for different combination prints. Robinson revealed all of these details to demonstrate that a photographer could expediently create a variety of scenes close to home, yet he ironically bore out the criticism that this type of photography took a great deal of effort. Robinson also sought to dispel any concern that the actual practice of printing these combinations took real expertise or a great deal of work: "This operation is easily performed after a little practice; in fact, all my composition pictures are printed by boys."²⁵

Robinson was asking much from his audience to accept the effect of home-spun mounds of dirt as mountains, the run-off from a print-washing machine as a river, and wild flowers and ferns as a heath. Indeed, one photographer responded to Robinson's article

²³ Berwick and Annan, "Miscellaneous: Berwick and Annan's Method of Double Printing," in *Journal of the Photographic Society* 2, no. 34 (Sept. 21, 1855): 233.

²⁴ Robinson, "On Printing Photographic Prints from Several Negatives," 94.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

by ridiculing him for proffering these crude and decisively unconvincing substitutes.²⁶ By revealing that studio assistants rather than he printed these combination prints, Robinson was making a point. In trying to de-emphasize the physical aspects of the work by revealing its mechanical production and its physically elaborate staging, Robinson was attempting to emphasize the works' conceptualization by an artistic imagination. In effect, he expected the viewer to suspend recognition of the "reality" of the photograph and to take it for what it was *trying* to represent. He was asking the viewer to accept these fictions rather than to believe them as facts. For Robinson, the process of imagining and planning the work was more important than its execution, and he expected his audience to use their imagination in viewing the subject. This reliance upon the imagination, for Robinson, brought these photographs out of the realm of the every day and into an aesthetic realm. As Robinson wrote: "for a subject must be imagined, and imagination is art."²⁷

The annual exhibition of the Photographic Society of London, held from January 13 to March 24, 1860, contained many of the same works by Robinson that had appeared in the Photographic Society of Scotland exhibition. Shortly after Robinson published his paper on combination printing, Alfred H. Wall reviewed Robinson's works in the exhibition for

²⁶ Michael Hannaford, "Photographic Gossip," in *The British Journal of Photography* 7, no. 117 (May 1, 1860): 140. Hannaford was a council member of the South London Photographic Society, along with Wall. As listed in the 1861 *Photographic News Almanac*, "This Society especially aims at art cultivation in connection with Photography." (p. 22).

²⁷ Robinson, "On Printing Photographic Pictures from Several Negatives," 95.

Photographic Notes.²⁸ Wall's criticism was direct: "In all his productions the patchwork process he adopts is more or less apparent, and a very unpleasant and destructive effect is produced by the appearance of hard outlines, where cut-out figures stick against the cut-out distance."²⁹ He also harshly criticized Robinson's home-made landscape: "the ingenious fraud he has been practising on the public, of manufacturing mountains, rivers, &c., out of the material at hand in 'his small back yard.'"³⁰ Wall then concluded: "Photographs have been pardoned many faults on the ground of their redeeming merit--*truth*. When it is confessed that this is wanting, what contemptible sham its productions become."³¹

Wall consistently maintained this argument in his many published articles for the next 25 years. Wall was not opposed to artistic pretensions in photography—he was, in fact, one of artistic photography's most vocal proponents. Yet Wall held different ideas for photography's artistic boundaries than Robinson. Wall's beliefs about the medium's capabilities were manifest in his conclusion after reviewing the entire exhibition. "The fact is, as we have said, photography has yet to be appreciated, and the art critic, who now smiles so condescendingly upon the new art, and graciously pats the aspiring youngster's rising head, while bestowing, in charity, a passing word of scant

²⁸ According to his obituary (*British Journal of Photography Annual*, 1907: 625-6), Alfred H. Wall had been a miniature painter in the 1850s and then a touring portrait painter, using the name R.A. Seymour. In 1860 he began to contribute series of articles to *The British Journal of Photography* and *The Photographic News* that encouraged photographers to make more artistically pleasing works. Over the next decade, Wall maintained this position, urging photographers to not place too much emphasis on technological learning. In the end, Wall felt the photography should be considered among the Fine Arts, but he had a different theory of photographic imitation than Robinson.

²⁹ Wall, "Photographic Exhibition," in *The Photographic Notes* 5, no. 97 (April 15, 1860): 112.

encouragement, shall yet enter our photographic exhibitions as he does those devoted to paintings, and criticize, with the same respectful attention, the productions of pencil and camera....”³² While disparaging of these art critics, Wall realized that artistic photography had a long way to go. He saw himself as a photographic corollary to the ideal art critic by respectfully and seriously critiquing photography. He saw his role as one who could, through his writing on aesthetics and his criticism, “improve the taste and judgment of both [photographic] producers and purchasers.”³³

Others were also critical of Robinson’s article. In June 1860, a writer using the pen name “Penelope Ann Spriggins” wrote a satirical letter to the editor.³⁴ Stylistically written to mimic a strong vocal dialect (presumably for comic effect), she compared combination printing to quilt making and, following Robinson’s logic, suggested that her grandmother, too, was very much an artist. Underneath the humor there were some sharp criticisms of the technique. She drew direct comparison between the act of combination printing to drawing “pieces from the rag bag,” thereby negating the photographer’s careful creation of the negatives themselves. She also implied that Robinson was unrealistic in this pursuit. Throughout the letter she referred to him as “Robinson Crusoe,” and then concluded her letter with the postscript: “Mr. Snooks says it wasn’t Robinson *Crusoe* but

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 114.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Penelope Ann Spriggins, “Correspondence: Mrs. Spriggins on Patchwork,” in *The British Journal of Photography* 7, no. 119 (June 1, 1860): 172.

sumboddy else which was werry much at see.”³⁵ What was likely the most biting criticism for Robinson was Mrs. Spriggins’ adoption of Wall’s pejorative term “patchwork,” implying a thoughtless and crude approach to creating photographs that were supposed to aspire towards more lofty ends.

Robinson’s combination prints that he made at this time were similar to works created by Rejlander, Roger Fenton, William Lake Price and William Grundy, who composed genre and fictional figure scenes by photographing models dressed in costume, transforming them into *Turkish Water Carriers*, *Dutch Fishermen*, *Don Quixote* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Such images were generally called “composition pictures.” Unfortunately, “composition printing” was the most common term for what later Robinson called “combination printing,” or the use of more than one negative.³⁶ As a result, some critics’ reviews and articles written are unclear which type of “composition” they are critiquing.

Protesting against these various criticisms of combination printing, George Shadbolt, the editor of *The British Journal of Photography*, wrote an editorial for the June 1 issue. “In what consists the difference,” he wrote, “between composing a subject and taking it on one plate, and taking portions of the subject on separate plates, and combining them subsequently, except that the latter is the more troublesome method, and, we may add,

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ In Robinson’s article, “On Printing Photographic Pictures from Several Negatives,” he did not arrive at a consistent term for the process. He variously called it “photographs containing figures and landscapes combined,” “double printing,” (which was generally used for double exposures on the same negative) “composition pictures,” “prints from several negatives combined,” and “figure-pieces.” It also became known as “composite printing,” which is much clearer than composition.

produces better results?”³⁷ This was a point that was often made, whether implicitly or explicitly, by defenders of combination printing. Shadbolt and others felt that “composition pictures” in themselves created fictitious characters/groupings, so the comparable “truth” of a single negative was irrelevant.

Wall wrote a long article in response entitled “‘Composition’ versus ‘Patchwork,’” which was published in the June 15 issue of *The British Journal of Photography*. Here, Wall asserted that there was a significant difference between composition pictures and combination printing, which he characterized in terms of imitation and deception:

If the intention of our ‘patchwork’ printers is deception, in the sense of making one thing look like another, they fail most signally—the only deception attained being that for which their beautiful art suffers to a very serious extent. This deception (which I most earnestly denounce) is that which substitutes things unreal for others which they are palpably unlike, and so brings photography (an art which has its highest and *only* value in its wondrous truthfulness) into disrepute.³⁸

Wall was again making reference to Robinson’s use of his back yard as a set for his images, although this had nothing to do with combination printing. He then he attacked Robinson’s works for displaying the cut edges of the different negatives. “Upon my word, this cruel cutting is, in my opinion, downright sacrilege, substituting as it does the hardest, sharpest, and ugliest of outlines for that exquisitely softened and melting

³⁷ [George Shadbolt], [Editorial], in *The British Journal of Photography* 7, no. 119 (June 1, 1860): 157-8. As we see here and in later stages of this debate, editors of photographic journals were able to pre-empt, in effect, any arguments that they published in their journals by writing leading editorials. Of course, editors had tremendous potential influence upon their readers’ opinions by also being able to choose which articles and letters they published.

³⁸ Wall, “‘Composition’ vs. ‘Patchwork,’” in *The British Journal of Photography* 7, no. 120 (June 15, 1860): 176.

boundary which we only meet with in nature and in photographs.”³⁹ Wall went even further in his critique, asserting that a combination print that did not display these edges was still deceptive. “I do not look upon the greatest ingenuity of skill as at all palliative of the practice,” he wrote. “The more artfully concealed the more mischievous the result, because the thing is then more likely to be looked upon by the uninitiated as genuine, when the art itself suffers; and an operator who displays such capabilities ought to know better, or, knowing better, he sins against his conscience.”⁴⁰ While Wall gave a nod of approval to composition pictures, he altogether rejected combination printing.

For Wall, photography’s highest and only value was its truthfulness. This truthfulness, which was usually perceived as serving the scientific community through its documentary capability, was also linked by Wall to the fine art concept of imitation.

In all such branches of the fine arts as, strictly speaking, are imitative, it [photography] may yet take a most honourable and distinguished position. Although I use the word imitative in its strictest sense, I believe that most of the qualities claimed as ‘imaginative’ belong clearly to imitation; for there is that poetry and beauty in nature which, whether transcribed by brush or camera, will be found in pictures in exact ratio with their truthfulness.⁴¹

Here Wall was relying upon a standard academic interpretation of representation, particularly of nature, wherein great works of art were both imitative, yet also interpretive. The artist combined elements from nature—the true source of beauty—in his mind, using his imagination, to depict a scene that idealized nature. For Wall’s

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

artistic photography, the photographer used his imagination to select the best views in nature. Combination printing went too far by ignoring the facts of nature.

The debate about combination printing reached its climax in the next issue of *The British Journal of Photography*, on July 2, 1860. Both Robinson and Wall published long letters, which Shadbolt prefaced with a long editorial. Robinson's rebuttal revealed that he had been caught off guard by all of this attention and criticism.⁴² He admitted that his technique was crude for the moment, but he countered that critics should be concentrating on the principles of combination printing instead. (Of course, this is what Wall largely did.) He also stated that making a facsimile hill was valid since he did not assert that it was a *particular* hill or that his homemade stream was a *particular* stream. In short, Robinson saw no deception where none was intended, and he felt that these particular fictions should be allowable under the rubric of a genre image of peasant girls. Yet, at the same time, Robinson made the argument that he could get closer to the "truth" for some subjects with more than one negative. In other words, Robinson maintained that in capturing both the landscape and the figure in good focus, this was closer to the "truth" of viewing a landscape than taking it with one negative, which would throw the distant landscape out of focus. Robinson concluded by making the now-familiar plea for a proper critique: "I quite believe the time will come when photographs will be admired more for their invention than their execution."⁴³

⁴² Robinson, "Composition NOT Patchwork," in *The British Journal of Photography* 7, no. 121 (July 2, 1860): 189-90.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

Wall's letter reaffirmed his previous one, and drew a comparison between Rejlander's and Robinson's work. He repeated his objections to Robinson's combination printing process, and felt that Robinson was attributing their potential success to his technique rather than to his own imagination. This was an unfair accusation, as Shadbolt pointed out in his editorial, since Robinson had been asked to present a paper about his process of combination printing rather than upon the artistic capacity of photography. Moreover, Robinson had concluded his paper with a lengthy encouragement to artistic photographers. For Rejlander, Wall had nothing but praise. He characterized Rejlander as someone who viewed combination printing as a very disagreeable necessity. He admired Rejlander's studious working of the composition from pencil sketches as well as the painterly language he used to describe how he made prints. It was this difference in attitude towards combination printing that separated the two photographers in Wall's mind. While Rejlander labored over his prints carefully and thoughtfully, trying to make the light as consistent and effective as possible, Robinson made a point of de-emphasizing this aspect of his images. While Robinson admitted his works were crude, he hoped others would judge them by their conception and imagination. In an effort to encourage this approach, Robinson attempted to downplay the difficulty of combination printing. It was this carefree attitude that Wall disliked in Robinson, preferring Rejlander's serious struggle with these limited tools of early photography. At the end of his article, Wall seemed to back away from his categorical rejection of combination printing. He discussed Rejlander's *St. John the Baptist* [Plate 12], praising its execution.

(Indeed, as Shadbolt confirmed in his editorial, there were no hard divisions visible between the negatives in this work.) Wall concluded: “While I possess this gem I shall never want a proof that photography has the power of dealing with the more ambitious efforts of aspiring art.”⁴⁴

Shadbolt, in his editorial, was quick to point out Wall’s contradictory stance. He argued once more: “As ‘composition pictures’ assume only by their very designation to be regarded as pleasant fiction, their want of truthfulness—which is not claimed for them, but absolutely ignored—cannot reasonably be alleged as an objection.”⁴⁵ Shadbolt, here, made a crucial point by elucidating the essence of Robinson’s photographic aesthetic—artistic photographs were simply “pleasant fictions.” This editorial effectively ended the debate between Robinson and Wall regarding combination printing, as they both must have realized that they held thoroughly opposite viewpoints.⁴⁶ Both would continue to stand their ground over the next few decades.

There were other critics and writers who commented on the practice of combination printing. At the end of 1860, the photographer C. Jabez Hughes read a paper entitled

⁴⁴ Wall, “‘Composition’ versus ‘Patchwork,’” in *The British Journal of Photography*, 7, no. 121 (July 2, 1860): 190-1. It is possible (though unlikely) that Wall did not understand at the time that the photograph was a combination print. Wall discussed this work again later that year [“An Hour with Rejlander,” in *The Photographic News* 4, no. 112 (October 26, 1860): 302]. There he described Rejlander, who had a certain model in mind for the work long before he was able to photograph his head, as an executioner waiting for to decapitate. “At length the opportunity came, the deed was done, he took it off, and there, on a napkin in the charger, it is before us; in all the solemn majesty of its martyrdom, with the damp and heavy locks of hair disordered by the executioner’s hand, and the muscles relaxed and powerless.” Wall’s high estimation of the work had not changed, although he fully acknowledged the combination technique.

⁴⁵ [Shadbolt], [Editorial], in *The British Journal of Photography* 7, no. 121 (July 2, 1860): 187-8.

“Art-Photography: Its Scope and Characteristics” at a meeting of the South London Photographic Society, which had been established the previous year to promote art photography.⁴⁷ Part of his talk addressed photographs made from multiple negatives. Hughes objected to them in much the same way as Wall: he felt it was wrong photographically and that they should be avoided at all costs. He allowed that double printing of skies was acceptable, but he insisted that the sky negative used for the print be taken at the same time as the landscape negative. Hughes also felt that too much attention was being paid to the methods of producing these photographs, and that the critique should be of the final image. He asserted:

When judging of a painting, we do not ask the artist how many sittings he took from his models, or how often he arranged his lay figure; these are the mechanical appliances of the arts—the mysteries of the printing and painting rooms. I lay stress on these points because I find persons dwelling too much on the beauties of an art-photograph, and praising the artist *because* he composed it from so many negatives, thus exalting too highly the mechanical instead of the artistic skill.⁴⁸

Robinson would likely have agreed with this statement, as well as with Hughes’ assertion that combination printing, as a mechanical act, was alien to the artistic sensibility. This is why Robinson tried so carefully to downplay the difficulty of combination printing. Despite these similarities of view, however, Hughes felt that photography’s mechanical nature obviated any artistic capability of the combination print. Instead, Hughes felt it was akin to a child playing with a toy puzzle.

⁴⁶ It is possible that Robinson and/or Wall continued to send letters to *British Journal of Photography* and that Shadbolt chose not to print them.

⁴⁷ C. Jabez Hughes, “Art-Photography: Its Scope and Characteristics,” in *The Photographic News* 5, no. 122 (January 4, 1861): 2-4. Hughes was a council member of the North London Photographic Society at the time.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

In an editorial response, *The Photographic News* editor G. Wharton Simpson interpreted Hughes as saying “that which defines the highest art [is] that which conceals the art,” and agreed with him.⁴⁹ However, Simpson believed that some photographers, such as Robinson and Rejlander, had been successful at creating images wherein it was very difficult to determine whether they were combination prints. He thought, therefore, that Hughes was wrong in thinking that *all* combination prints destroyed truth. Yet, Simpson generally defended Hughes’ point of view because they both believed that few photographers could practice the technique of combination printing well. They also agreed that the very technique of a combination print’s production was no guarantee of its artistic status.

After this critical give and take the two sides in this debate convinced few to change their minds. Critics, photographic and artistic alike, had split opinions. In 1862, a critic named R.A.S. wrote that Robinson’s *Holiday in the Wood* [Plate 13] was “the most masterly, perfect, and beautiful specimen of artistic and photographic composition that has yet been executed.”⁵⁰ While this critic used the term “composition” to generally mean works composed for the camera, the following comments addressed the combination printing technique specifically: “The lights and shadows in every part of the

⁴⁹ [G. Wharton Simpson], “Art-Photography,” in *The Photographic News* 5, no. 133 (March 22, 1861): 134-5. Simpson was a council member of the North London Photographic Society as well as serving on council with Hughes for the South London Photographic Society.

⁵⁰ R.A.S., “Exhibition of the South London Photographic Society,” in *The British Journal of Photography* 9, no. 168 (June 16, 1862): 233. Later in this dissertation I postulate that R.A.S. was the pen name of Alfred H. Wall. See chapter 3, note 13.

whole are in harmonious keeping; the grouping is managed with the most consummate pictorial knowledge and skill... the just perspective is preserved in the relative sizes of the figures...”⁵¹ Clearly this critic understood and accepted this work as a combination print. Despite this, he was critical of Robinson’s execution: “almost the only fault discernible is that which indicated a want of mechanical skill and ingenuity in so contriving that the outlines made by the scissors in cutting out the different figures should be lost or concealed.”⁵²

Another common criticism of combination printing from art critics in the early 1860s was that it required so much work. For example, a writer for *The Art-Journal* in 1863 compared Robinson’s *Bringing Home the May* [Plate 14] to a painting in these terms: “Mr. Robinson’s (of Leamington) ‘Bringing Home the May,’ makes a figure in the room; the composition has many beauties, but the time and expense indispensable to the production of such a photograph, or rather set of photographs, can scarcely be less than what would be necessary to the painting of a picture of the same size.”⁵³ Many art critics questioned why someone would spend so much effort in trying to manipulate a medium whose images were so difficult to separate from a documented reality, in comparison to painting, where all of the pictorial elements were under the total control of the artist.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Unidentified author, “Photography,” in *The Art-Journal* 2 (February 1, 1863): 38.

Much of this type of criticism was directed at photographs that aspired to fine art status. One of the most significant photographic voices against art photography of the time was Thomas Sutton, who had served as editor of the monthly journal *Photographic Notes* since 1856.⁵⁴ Sutton prepared a paper for the Photographic Society of Scotland that he read on January 13, 1863. Part of this paper discussed artistic photography, including combination printing. He related that the painter William Powell Frith, in preparation for his 1858 masterpiece of realism, *Derby Day* [Plate 15], had employed his friend Thomas Howlett to photograph, from the roof of a cab, as many groups of figures as he could. Frith then used these images as studies for his painting, “not to introduce literally into his picture as Robinson or Rejlander would have done, but to work up in his own mind and then reproduce with the true stamp of genius upon them.”⁵⁵ For Sutton photography was clearly a product of a machine, not of the mind. As we saw in objections to Rejlander’s *The Two Ways of Life*, the reality of photography was accepted above any ability to fictionalize. Frith, as a painter, had the power to select and combine these various groups in his mind *before* committing them to the canvas; he was also able to change pictorial aspects of these groups in order to unify them more completely than any combination photographer could do. Despite the fact that it was well known that Frith had used photographs as studies, he was admired for his creativity of composition. Moreover, his works were prized for their “realism,” attributed in part to his method of working from photographs. Yet this work was not considered to be copying a *particular* scene at the

⁵⁴ Gernsheim notes that *Photographic Notes* did not have a very wide circulation in comparison with either *Photographic News* or *The British Journal of Photography*.

⁵⁵ Thomas Sutton, “On Some of the Uses and Abuses of Photography,” in *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London* 8, no. 129 (January 15, 1863): 204.

Derby, but depicting instead a generalized view of what the experience was like. Photography's role in this collaborative effort, as a useful study for painters, was precisely what many art critics felt to be so valuable about photography. Painters could now model their works upon them rather than upon stale academic conventions. As Sutton wrote:

But if artists and poets are not to turn photographers and make such pictures as 'The Lady of Shalott' and 'Don Quixotte in his Study,' the artists at least may use photography with advantage in other legitimate ways. An artist who studies largely and conscientiously from nature, acquires in time an originality of style which those who spend most of their life in the studio instead of the field are fain to copy: and thus arises that plague of art, 'conventionality.' The latter class of artists have derived great advantage from photography, because, next to copying from nature, it is good to copy the minute and accurate detail of a photograph in a broad and truthful manner.⁵⁶

Underlying this argument was an assumption that photography was a direct, and minutely detailed, record of facts. Moreover, painters were not to copy the photograph, but were instead to represent its inner truth, an idealized version of reality. Sutton's criticism of combination printing, then, was less of a critique of the method of combining various negatives than of the direct reproduction of these negatives onto the paper without any apparent modification by the photographer's intellect. Despite Sutton's disdain for conventionalism and his admiration of direct study of nature, the artist was able to transform this direct study into something with greater "truth" than any particular segment of nature itself.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 203-4.

In response to this paper by Sutton, Rejlander addressed the South London Photographic Society in February, 1863, with a paper titled *An Apology for Art-Photography*.⁵⁷ Rejlander defended the practice of combination printing as a natural extension of vignetting, which was a generally acceptable type of image manipulation. He also argued that one could not criticize combination printing in theory, but only through its examples: “There is no valid reason for saying that, because you have not seen a good photographic composition, there could not be one. I believe there can be produced—even after all that has been done—wonderful pictures by photography.”⁵⁸ Yet Rejlander made certain concessions to Sutton’s argument about photography’s relationship to fine art. He insisted that he did not create *The Two Ways of Life* to present photography itself “as an ultimate art, or an art depending on itself, or complete in itself, except details.”⁵⁹ Instead, it was meant, as many of his works were, to serve as studies for painters—as a “handmaid” to art. Rejlander concluded that photography and fine art coincided in many important ways, but that photography pursued a more “humble” road. Curiously, despite his defense of combination printing, he asserted that he had only done one such composition since *The Two Ways of Life*. It is difficult to read his tone when he writes: “It is very hard—but I must confess it—that I positively dare not now make a composition photograph, even if I thought that it might be very perfect.”⁶⁰ One possibility is because he was severely criticized regarding *The Two Ways of Life* he had been cowed into not exhibiting again. Rejlander had not written a rejoinder to the

⁵⁷ Rejlander, “An Apology for Art-Photography,” in *The Photographic News* 7, no. 233 (February 20, 1863): 88-90.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.

criticism before this article. Moreover, during most of these debates on art photography and combination printing, Rejlander had remained silent in the photographic press.

Another possible explanation is more practical. Rejlander wrote that making art studies was not financially rewarding; indeed, he reported that he had lost money through it.

Given the fact that Rejlander had lost money on art studies consisting of genre subjects made from one negative, the extra time and expense that combination printing required would have been financially impractical.

In March of 1864 the Council of the Photographic Society of London announced the regulations for its upcoming Photographic Exhibition, which opened in mid-May of that year. That year, the Council decided, the exhibition would be “a real Photographic Exhibition, illustrating the progress and position of photography proper.”⁶¹ This was done through an interest in “the advance of the art,” particularly to demonstrate “a real progress in photography as a Fine Art.” Among the changes made for that year’s exhibition were that no “touched” (retouched) pictures would be allowed. Moreover, no pictures from painted or retouched negatives would be exhibited.⁶² Where did combination printing stand? This prohibition could have theoretically excluded combination prints, since retouching was required in their production. As it turned out, combination prints were allowed, but this possibility of exclusion may have dissuaded

⁶⁰ Ibid., 90.

⁶¹ “Photographic Society of London: Ordinary General Meeting,” in *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London* 9, no. 143 (March 15, 1864): 2.

⁶² The Council even vowed to employ “the very proper test suggested by M. Claudet [of] the application of a sponge to the surface.”

some photographers, save Robinson, for he was the only exhibitor of combination prints in the exhibition.

The Council, however, also decided to restrict the parameters for awarding medals in the exhibition. In particular, the medal for best group or groups of figures could only go to an image taken from a single negative. There were no reasons published for this restriction. Here we find a contradiction in the regulations, or at least in how they were applied. If the Council admitted combination prints into the exhibition (as indicated by Robinson's work *Autumn* [Plate 16]), this type of work must have fallen within the bounds of "pure photography."⁶³ Why then would they be ineligible for competition? If the Council did not feel combination printing to be pure photography, why was *Autumn* admitted? The paradox that emerged was deepened by the jurors' placement of *Autumn* in the place of honor.⁶⁴ Despite this accolade, it must have been a particular blow to Robinson that this work was excluded from medal consideration. By publicly stating that the intent of the exhibition was to demonstrate photography's progress as a fine art while at the same time eliminating combination printing from competition, the Council made its collective opinion on this controversy heard. This must have been an especially powerful rebuke, for Robinson was serving on the Council at the time. G. Wharton Simpson, Robinson's vocal supporter, sharply criticized the Council for this decision.⁶⁵ To Simpson, both combination printing and art reproduction, which had also been excluded

⁶³ [Hugh Diamond], "[Editorial]," in *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London* 9, no. 143 (March 15, 1864): 2.

⁶⁴ Unidentified author, "The Photographic Exhibition: Studies and Genre Subjects," in *The Photographic News* 8, no. 303 (June 24, 1864): 302.

from the exhibition, represented “the two branches of photography which most distinctly ally it with the fine arts, which demand the most perfect art-education, and which admit of the most interesting and valuable pictorial results.”⁶⁶ If the Council admitted composition works from one negative, he argued, then they should allow combination printing, which was only a mechanical way of overcoming the imperfection of optical instruments. Robinson never publicly commented on these events.

Robinson, however, did publish a long article about combination printing only two months later. He began his article by claiming, like Simpson, that combination printing was simply a solution to a technological problem. Robinson again reiterated his argument that a good combination print was good for photography, whereas a poor one was not to photography’s detriment:

I believe that all efforts to produce good results of every kind to be legitimate, and that failure does not prove the effort to be wrong as much as it proves the person making it to be weak. If the photographer succeed in producing good results, worthy of the name of pictures in its most comprehensive sense, his art is elevated, and its extensive powers verified; if he fail in doing so, he alone suffers the shame of incapacity and of incompetent ambition.⁶⁷

In August 1865, an unauthored review of the photographs at the Dublin International Exhibition discussed several of Robinson’s works. Of *Autumn* the critic wrote that it was especially difficult to tell if it had been taken with multiple negatives. He concluded his assessment of Robinson’s work with the following long passage:

⁶⁵ [Simpson], “[Editorial],” in *The Photographic News* 8, no. 289 (March 18, 1864): 133-4.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Robinson, “On Printing from Several Negatives,” in *The Photographic News* 8, no. 317 (September 30, 1864): 471.

This, we take it, is the especial characteristic of Mr. Robinson's productions which distinguishes them essentially from almost all other attempts to produce genre pictures in photography. Many others have produced clever single studies, many more clever fragments and suggestive bits, but we do not know of any others who conceived and executed such perfect compositions, complete in all their parts, having unity of purpose, of character, and of effect, not suggesting something merely intended or struggled after. The design, whatever it may be, is complete both in arrangement of lines and massing of lights and shadows. Of the higher characteristics, which many of them possess, the poetry and feeling which they have in themselves and suggest in the beholder, we have not space to speak here, beyond saying that in this respect few photographs which we know, approach them."⁶⁸

While this statement was written regarding "composition pictures," or those photographers producing genre or other narrative scenes, its special emphasis on the works' unity of purpose and effect addressed the specific points of criticism against Robinson's combination prints. Moreover, by choosing to praise their poetic conceit, the critic implied that their mechanical composition was less significant.

On the same day this article was published in *The Photographic News*, an article denying combination printing's legitimacy appeared in *The British Journal of Photography*. In arguing against photography as a fine art, George Slight highlighted photography's truthfulness and asserted that photographs of imaginary subjects contradicted this central characteristic of the photographic medium. He concluded that combination prints were "splendid specimens of deception."⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Unidentified author, "Photographs at the Dublin International Exhibition: Third Notice," in *The Photographic News* 9, no. 362 (August 11, 1865): 377.

⁶⁹ George H. Slight, "Concerning Art-Photography," in *The British Journal of Photography* 12, no. 275 (August 11, 1865): 413.

A writer contributing to *The Photographic News* under the pen name of Respice Finem reached a middle ground of sorts. He felt strongly that composition and combination photography may be done, “in perfect keeping with the truth of nature and the principles of art.”⁷⁰ Nor did he see anything to suggest “patchwork” in either *Bringing Home the May*, or *Autumn*—by this I believe he meant that while he may have detected joins of different prints, they were so well put together that they overcame these flaws. It was the consistency across the various compositional elements (light & shade, etc.) as well as the subject matter, which made it difficult to see these works as assemblages. However, he did not feel that photography should attempt subjects of the imagination, and he cited *The Two Ways of Life* as one of the worst transgressors.

Predictably, a few months later came Wall’s response to this renewed question of the validity of combination printing. Wall characterized those who championed this type of printing as standing on the tops of ideological molehills while photography’s potential as a fine art sat up on the mountaintop. “Content with nice, easy, little, molehill art-efforts, such as can be accomplished by careful scissors and skilful vignetting, they may in the profundity of their satisfaction ignore the existence of all heaven-piercing mountains....”⁷¹ Although Wall admitted that several beautiful combination prints had been made since the patchwork controversy, they had not changed his overall opinion. Wall called combination prints “sketches” because they had, in his opinion, about 1%

⁷⁰ Respice Finem, “The Sphere and Scope of Photography in Art,” in *The Photographic News* 9, no. 363 (August 18, 1865): 392.

⁷¹ Wall, “Practical Art Hints: The Dangers and Difficulties in what is called ‘Composition Photography,’” in *The British Journal of Photography* 13, no. 301 (February 9, 1866): 61.

chance of succeeding as complete pictures. His greatest objection, however, was to the differences in tonal quality between different negatives taken at different times.

Ultimately he felt that “it is perversion and degradation to an art like ours to make its truth and unity subservient to conventional tricks, shams and mechanical dodges.”⁷² For Wall, there was still a great deal of artistic potential for photography to achieve, and those who used combination printing to pursue it were “wasting time by manufacturing artificial difficulties in conquests over which no *great* honour or profit can be advantageously won.”⁷³

The next month, on March 2, 1866, Wall added to the grounds of his objections to combination printing. In an article that addressed an ongoing debate about perspective and photographic backgrounds, Wall looked at a particular combination print in terms of its perspective. (Although he did not name the photograph, it is clearly Robinson’s *Autumn*.) In this photograph of five rustic figures and a landscape, Wall found four different implied horizon lines: “which are indicative of its being a view which was seen by *one* person at *one* time in *one* spot, *from four different points of view—mirabile dictu!*”⁷⁴ Wall’s conclusion was that these figures and landscape had been taken from at least four different negatives and that the photographer must have altered the height of his camera for each one. It was this potential perspectival error that sealed the case against combination printing: “This piece of patchwork (for, however good its photography may

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Wall, “Practical Art-Hints: Elementary Perspective as Applied to Photographs,” in *The British Journal of Photography* 13, no. 305 (March 9, 1866): 116.

be, as a *picture* it deserves no higher name) will also show how the rule of a point of sight [perspective] may be violated, as it commonly is violated in such productions.”⁷⁵

In early 1868 Robinson moved his family and photographic studio from London to Tunbridge Wells, in Kent. Upon the insistence of his wife, Robinson took on a partner to assist with the studio and his artistic compositions. This was Nelson K. Cherrill, a fellow member of the Photographic Society of London. Cherrill was a “young and rising” photographer according to a review in *The Photographic News* of his *Photographs of English Lake Scenery*, which praised his images as “little short in excellence of those of many of the experienced masters of the art.”⁷⁶ Cherrill was an excellent choice for Robinson because of his expertise in landscape, which played such a substantial role in Robinson’s compositions. Moreover, it is clear that Cherrill was an excellent technician and printer: “Several views of Borrowdale are remarkable for their delicacy of gradation and perfect harmony. This is especially marked in all the pictures; however brilliant, there is nothing hard; no chalky lights and no black shadows.”⁷⁷ We have seen that Robinson often downplayed the quality of his exhibition prints, but during his partnership with Cherrill their quality rose. Particularly attractive for Robinson must have been Cherrill’s familiarity with combination printing. Again, citing this review of Cherrill’s

⁷⁵ Ibid. In this, Wall was in error. The figures in *Autumn* were all shot with one negative, as Robinson later delighted in revealing. Robinson often referred to this mistake in the future as part of his attack on those critical of combination printing.

⁷⁶ Unidentified author, “Critical Notices: Views of the English Lake Scenery. By Nelson K. Cherrill,” in *The Photographic News* 10, no. 423 (October 12, 1866): 482.

⁷⁷ Ibid. It was a common criticism by Robinson, Wall, and other photography critics that too many photographers felt it necessary for each print to span the entire tonal range – from the whitest highlights to the blackest shadows. Here Cherrill is being praised for producing more subtle prints.

work: “One especial feature in these pictures is the presence of atmosphere and of cloud effects. In many cases these are obtained on one negative, at the same time as the landscape; but in many others the clouds are introduced by skilful double printing. Of these, some views of Folkestone Harbour, with sea and shipping, are effective examples, admirably illustrating the pictorial value of this mode of giving completeness to a picture.”⁷⁸

After the formation of this partnership, Robinson and Cherrill began to collaborate on many combination prints for exhibitions, producing dozens of prints over the next few years. This renewed presence in the 1868 exhibition of the Photographic Society of London prompted critics once again to weigh in against the technique of combination printing. The first notice of Robinson’s work was an unauthored review in *The Illustrated Photographer*, a journal that Alfred H. Wall had founded and served as its editor. In remarking upon Robinson’s photograph, *Returning Home*, the author praised the work in terms of its “cleverness and the most finished technical ability.” It concluded, however: “but no *artist* critic could see it without at once detecting its tricky artificiality and untruthfulness.”⁷⁹ This type of criticism was very typical of Wall and those who supported his views: it praised Robinson’s technical abilities, but dismissed his artistic achievement. The next week *The Illustrated Photographer* followed up with an

⁷⁸ Ibid. It is not surprising that one would find a review that mentions combination printing favorably in this journal. G. Wharton Simpson, the editor from 1860-1880 felt it was a justifiable technique.

⁷⁹ Unidentified author, “Transactions of Societies: The Photographic Society of London,” in *The Illustrated Photographer* 1 (November 13, 1868): 492. Whether Wall wrote this (and the following) review of the exhibition is open to question. It was common custom for exhibition and book reviews to be penned

article called “The Moral of the Conduit Street Exhibition.” Part of the critique was dedicated to Robinson and Cherrill’s combination prints. In the author’s judgment: “If the most accomplished and skilful artists cannot work apart from nature without failure, there is small hope of inartistic photographers achieving success by such means. It must remain an open question, as to how much the dodges of double printing and made-up compositions can be successful; but the moral of those exhibited this year is unquestionably—*don’t*.”⁸⁰ Once again the conclusion was that Robinson and Cherrill could not accomplish this technique without failure. In the end, its lack of fidelity to nature was its fundamental flaw. Wall himself wrote yet another review of the exhibition the following week. He confirmed that combination printing, in both *Returning Home* and *Watching the Lark* [Plate 17] was a flawed system. Looking back over Robinson’s career, Wall wrote: “the promise of these works [early works *Fading Away* and *Holiday in the Wood*] has certainly not been fulfilled in his latter efforts, which exhibit nothing above or beyond a knack of manufacturing artificial effects, which, striking enough to the uninitiated, are truly offensive to all lovers of natural truth and real artistic beauty.”⁸¹

Despite Wall’s criticism of the image, the Photographic Society of London chose to make Robinson’s *Watching the Lark* its presentation print of that year, and it commissioned copies for all members of the society. In coordination with this presentation, Cherrill

anonymously. This article also follows Wall’s arguments closely. Since Wall was the editor of this journal, it is likely that reviews would be solicited from those who shared his opinions.

⁸⁰ Unidentified author, “The Moral of the Conduit Street Exhibition,” in *The Illustrated Photographer* 1 (November 20, 1868): 500.

⁸¹ Wall, “The Late Conduit Street Exhibition,” in *The Illustrated Photographer* 1 (November 27, 1868): 513.

read a paper for the Society on January 12, 1869 promoting combination printing as a subject of “magnitude and importance.”⁸² Cherrill took up Robinson’s argument that combination printing was a way of supplementing the optical powers of lenses and providing photographers a means with expanding their art: “However perfect the instruments may be which the combined science and skill of the optician may place in our hands, there must always be a ‘something beyond,’ which can only be reached by supplementing our powers by some such device as combination printing.”⁸³ He praised Rejlander for first evolving combination printing as a way to create artistic compositions, and he asserted that photography was a product of the photographer’s mind.⁸⁴ Yet, Cherrill limited his claim for art photography by urging photographers not to depict the imaginary or any abstract idea: “As for instance, the central figure in the ‘Two Ways’ does not to my mind represent ‘Repentance,’ but it represents a ‘repenting woman.’”⁸⁵ Here Cherrill responded to criticisms, which I will discuss in the next chapter, that photography was unable to generalize—to be able to depict a cultural type rather than only a particular individual. Instead, depictions of allegorical figures were read as photographs of people *playing* characters or allegorical figures. As with Robinson, Cherrill’s claim of the artistic status of photography depended upon possibilities *and* parameters of its abilities. Unfortunately, Cherrill’s defense of combination printing was simply that if a photographer could not execute a picture by one negative, he must use two. Cherrill’s response to Robinson’s critics was that they did not look at the prints

⁸² Nelson K. Cherrill, “On Combination Printing,” in *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London* 14, no. 201 (January 16, 1869): 203.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 204.

directly without prejudice. Here Cherrill indirectly pointed out one of the main justifications for the technique, as had Robinson, that it produced a coherent final print. If the critic would only look at the photograph in front of him without concerning himself about its manufacture, Cherrill felt, then he would accept the image as truthful to nature.

Oscar Rejlander, who was present at the society meeting where Cherrill read his paper, followed with some interesting comments. Although he no longer practiced combination printing, he had not changed his mind about its legitimacy. Rejlander asserted that the method of producing a combination print was akin to the painter working from different sketches to produce a painting. By arguing this, he also asserted that photographs were, like paintings, products of a creator's mind. Moreover, Rejlander argued for a similar critical approach to photography as painting—judge the photograph and the painting by the image itself, not by how it was made: “If it [a combination print] was badly done, it would, of course, look patchy and untrue, precisely as a painting badly done would look untrue; but if it were well done, and looked right, the mode of doing it could not be wrong.”⁸⁶ In the end, Rejlander asserted that photography and photographers were akin to paintings and painters. He felt that they worked in the same manner and should be judged in the same manner. As he had succinctly put it in an article for the 1867 *Year-*

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Unidentified author, “Photographic Society of London. Ordinary Monthly Meeting,” in *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London* 14, no. 201 (January 16, 1869): 208.

Book of Photography: “It is the thought which is expressed, and not the means by which it gains expression, which constitutes a work of art.”⁸⁷

Of the non-partisan photography critics, there were some who were able to judge combination prints by their images. *The British Journal of Photography* in particular published reviews of exhibitions that treated Robinson’s combination prints individually, critiquing them by neither blindly praising nor outright refusing their legitimacy. In 1867 the *BJP* reviewed the exhibition of the Photographic Society of London in which Robinson exhibited his combination print *Sleep* [Plate 18]. Despite pointing out a lack of cohesion among the different parts of the print, the critic was spare in his criticism: “A shrub in a flower pot, behind the sleepers, is somewhat out of focus, although the figures in the foreground and the waves in the extreme distance are alike sharp—effects which are apt to attract the attention of the matter-of-fact observer.”⁸⁸ With these differences in depth of field between combined negatives—a potential hazard of combination printing—one might have expected a harsh criticism of the technique. Another review published in *The British Journal of Photography*, of the exhibition of the Photographic Society of London in 1873, followed the same approach. In reviewing Robinson and Cherrill’s works *A Gleaner* and *A Passing Stranger*, the critic noticed a curious effect: “being printed from separate negatives, the backgrounds of these, instead of retiring, as good-mannered backgrounds should do, persist in coming to the front—a kind of

⁸⁷ Rejlander, “What Photography Can Do In Art,” in *The Year-Book of Photography and Photographic News Almanac*, 1867: 50.

⁸⁸ Unidentified author, “Exhibition Soiree of the London Photographic Society,” in *The British Journal of Photography* 14, no. 394 (November 22, 1867): 556.

pseudoscopic effect being produced.”⁸⁹ Again, this was a potential deleterious effect from combining multiple negatives, yet the critic did not use this specific work’s failure to represent an illegitimate technique. It simply was a poor example of combination printing.

Another critical approach to combination prints occurred in a review of the Bengal Photographic Exhibition of 1873, in which Robinson and Cherrill exhibited many prints. In writing about *Waiting at the Stile*, which won the gold medal for the exhibition, the critic was cautiously favorable: “The results of joining together portions of photographs, taken at different times and under different circumstances, must always be open to criticism; but that an effective and harmonious picture may be produced in this manner by the exercise of due care and artistic skill is amply proved by the fine photograph before us.”⁹⁰ Likewise, a review published in *The Illustrated London News* walked this same line of disapproval of combination printing but praising individual examples. This critic wrote: “But we submit that a negative once taken should not be tampered with, and we cannot, therefore, allow attempts at pictorial composition by combining two or more negatives to be legitimate applications of photography. The different elements of the combination are rarely lighted harmoniously; indeed the lighting can never be in perfect relation, and cast shadows from figures are often ignored altogether.”⁹¹ Here we see a

⁸⁹ Unidentified author, “Exhibition of the Photographic Society [Third Notice],” in *The British Journal of Photography* 20, no. 705 (November 7, 1873): 529.

⁹⁰ Unidentified author, “The Bengal Photographic Exhibition,” (abridged from the *Calcutta Englishman*) in *The British Journal of Photography* 20, no. 673 (March 28, 1873): 149.

⁹¹ Unidentified author, “Exhibition of the Photographic Society,” in *The Illustrated London News* 55, no. 1568 (November 27, 1869): 546.

typical dual objection, at least as implied. The first part objected to any “tampering” of negatives, which was a common objection on the grounds of its subsequent loss of fidelity. The second part of the objection lay in observation of examples of combination printing—that the parts could never match up—but this left room for instances where the appearance of these prints was nonetheless pleasing. The critic continued: “At the same time much credit is due to these [Robinson and Cherrill] and other contributors...for the artistic knowledge and great ingenuity evinced in their several combinations. One of the least prejudicial violations of the conditions of direct photographic representation is the now common addition of clouds to landscape views. This combination was effected with much judgment in several instances by Messrs. Robinson and Cherrill, some of whose ‘skies’ were among the softest and best chosen with respect to composition.”⁹² Later, the critic praised other combinations: “The difficulties of combination were overcome with remarkable success in ‘The Milkmaid’ and ‘Early Summer,’ by Mr. Slingsby, of Lincoln. The latter in particular is so considerable a triumph that we have selected it as the subject of an Engraving for next week.”⁹³ Accompanying the engraving of Slingsby’s *Early Summer* was a brief reiteration by the critic of his position on combination printing:

It is not needful to repeat our reasons for regarding photographic ‘combination prints’ as questionable applications of the art. Having given those reasons at length in our last week’s review...we may be content with a general protest against wedding two or more ‘negatives’ together for the production of one positive ‘picture.’ With this reservation distinctly understood as to the principle involved, we are left free to acknowledge how large a measure of artistic taste and manipulative skill in photography is requisite to secure a ‘combination’ which shall be free from obvious

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

patchwork—joining, discordancy of effect, or any other defects in natural relation.⁹⁴

While these reviews were not likely ones that Robinson or Rejlander embraced wholeheartedly, these photographers would certainly have appreciated the praise, however qualified. There were many such reviews that operated in a middle ground between the strong advocacy typified by Robinson, Rejlander and many writers contributing to *The Photographic News* versus the outright critical attacks from Wall and other contributors to *The Illustrated Photographer*.

The subject of combination printing did not reemerge in any significant way until 1889. It was this year that the so-called Naturalist photographers, led by Peter Henry Emerson, renewed arguments that artistic photography should be based upon nature and not upon artistic principles adopted from painting. While Wall and other writers had long asserted the importance of nature and photography's tie to it, the Naturalists emphasized it more strongly.

One naturalist photographer, Graham Balfour, read a paper for the Camera Club in February 1889 that underscored photography's tie to nature. In this paper, he tied together the dual agencies necessary to create a photograph – the machine and the photographer himself. Given this dual agency, Balfour asserted that photographs were subject to two sets of rules: the material (mechanical) and the artistic. The primary

⁹⁴ Unidentified author, "Early Summer," in *The Illustrated London News* 55, no. 1569 (December 4, 1869): 570.

mechanical limitation was that photography could not capture what it could not see, such as anything in the imagination. However, the realm of proper artistic photography did not include *all* that the camera could see. Balfour urged this limitation to be bound by not only in what the camera could not see, but also by what the eye could not. As he wrote: “The lens and plate can record attitudes and effects which the eye can never perceive; and what the eye cannot see in nature, it naturally refuses to recognise in art.”⁹⁵ Although Balfour recognized double-printing as “but remedies applied to the shortcoming of our tools,” he felt that it was not valid, presumably because it produced images that could not be seen by the eye. “An art has certain limitations, that is obvious. If it go beyond them by some trick, and produce a result which cannot be what it pretends to be, and only passes because it is a result possible to some other art, that is artistic dishonesty. Not only must it be in the long run unprofitable and disadvantageous, but it cannot have any real and honourable life of its own.”⁹⁶

Peter Henry Emerson’s vituperative book, *Naturalistic Photography for Students of the Art*, was also published in early 1889.⁹⁷ This book was Emerson’s manifesto that promoted his version of photography as an art form. Despite this similar goal, Emerson insisted on a new type of artistic photography that did not rely upon aesthetic principles enshrined by the art academies and exemplified best by Robinson’s work. For Emerson, art was best learned by practice alone, not through learning of the artistic canon;

⁹⁵ Graham Balfour, “Figure in Landscape and Genre,” in *The Photographic News* 33, no. 1588 (February 8, 1889): 90.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ The first reviews of this book appear at the end of March, 1889.

photographs, in turn, were to be judged against the standard of nature, not painterly principles. Emerson's opinion on combination printing, like Wall's, was that it was only permissible for printing in clouds for a landscape, and even then, only if the negative were taken at the same time. Used for any other purpose, combination printing was the "art of the opera bouffé."⁹⁸ He wrote: "This process is really what many of us practised in the nursery; that is cutting out figures and pasting them into white spaces left for that purpose in a picture-book. With all the care in the world, the very best artist living could not do this satisfactorily. Nature is so subtle that it is impossible to do this sort of patchwork and represent her."⁹⁹

In response to *Naturalistic Photography* a year-long debate was launched and pursued by Robinson, Emerson, Balfour and another Naturalist photographer, George Davison. While most of these debates centered upon the proper quality of focus in photographs, part of the criticisms were directed at Robinson's method of combination printing.¹⁰⁰ All of the Naturalists' positions were based upon a firm insistence upon photography's truth and that combination was clearly an untruth, not only in concept, but also in practice. Davison, for example, acidly remarked: "Amongst these untruths must certainly be included the results of combination printing as practised by Mr. Robinson, wherein the

⁹⁸ Peter Henry Emerson, *Naturalistic Photography for Students of the Art*, 2nd ed. (New York: E.&F. Spon, 1890), 199.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ The Naturalist photographers generally held that photographs should have a single subject in focus and the rest not quite as clearly defined. They also accused Robinson of too much detail in his work. Robinson denied this, saying he had always advocated "a certain amount of softness." Robinson then criticized Emerson, in particular, for basing his theory of selective focus upon a poor understanding of optics and

character, quality, and tone of the foregrounds will be found to be out of harmony and truth with the backgrounds.”¹⁰¹

Through this survey of critical judgments for and against combination printing from the 1850s to 1889, we can see that it was an extremely controversial technique. Other than the fairly common practice of printing in skies, combination printing as a method of composing pictures was only practiced by a handful of photographers. Even Oscar Rejlander, one of its earliest practitioners, had stopped doing it for years by the time he wrote his “Apology for Art-Photography” in 1863.¹⁰² As could be expected, most of the art critics who felt that photography could not be an art were totally opposed to its viability. But as we have seen, even some photographers who wanted photography to be respected as an art were similarly critical of the technique. Certain photographic journals and their editors either accepted it outright (*The British Journal of Photography* under George Shadbolt, 1858-64, and *The Photographic News* under G. Wharton Simpson) or rejected it altogether (*The British Journal of Photography* under J. Traill Taylor, 1865-79, and particularly *The Illustrated Photographer* under Alfred H. Wall, 1868-9). Many critics, opposed to combination printing, spent much of their efforts looking for the joins in Robinson’s work—clearly not what Robinson desired. Even relatively neutral critics, open to the possibility that combination printing could still produce effective pictures,

human cognition. The Naturalists also severely criticized Robinson for using dressed-up models rather than real rustics in his photographs.

¹⁰¹ George Davison, “Correspondence: Naturalistic Photography,” in *The British Journal of Photography* 36, no. 1534 (September 27, 1889): 642.

¹⁰² Rejlander, “An Apology for Art-Photography,” in *The Photographic News* 7, no. 233 (February 20, 1863).

criticized prints that were unsuccessful in concealing their art. As mentioned above, one critic noticed differences in the depth of field between different negatives in the 1867 photograph *Sleep*. It is surprising that this was the only mention of this flaw in the photographic periodical literature, for other combination prints of Robinson's demonstrate this problem (most notably *When the Day's Work is Done* [Plate 19]). Again and again critics objected to combination printing not only for its infidelity to nature, but also in reacting to the quality of the exhibition prints. In the end, combination printing was clearly an extraordinarily difficult thing to do. Not even Robinson's works are consistently successful after twenty years of practice.

Theory of Photographic Imitation

Why would Robinson stubbornly adhere to this technique, which put him in a difficult and defensive position for much of his career? How would he be willing to endure these criticisms, protesting that photography's artistic aspirations allowed, or even demanded, these manipulations? What was Robinson's theory of photography as an imitative practice that maintained this point of view in the face of so much criticism from those trained in the fine arts? His arguments put him into an awkward position, theoretically, so that even his straight photographs could appear strange. Robinson's theory of photography allowed him freedom to create several different types of work (i.e. not just combination prints), submit them to exhibitions, and write about them all in a similar manner. His approach allowed him to create straight narrative works with dressed up models (with and without combined clouds), combination prints of genre subjects,

combination prints of contemporary subjects, combination prints of portraits, and photographs of both contemporary and genre subjects with painted, rather than photographic, backgrounds. It also provided him the freedom, to use, or consider using, artificial props in his images.

By the time Robinson came to photography, the medium's possible artistic status was a well-worn subject. The earliest formal discussions took place in the first few months of the formation of the Photographic Society of London in 1853, whose first president was Sir Charles Eastlake, President of the Royal Academy. This topic was not only discussed in the meetings and journals of the photographic society (later societies), but it was also debated in the other more popular journals of the day, such as *The Art-Journal*, *The Athenaeum* and *The Illustrated London News*. In 1856 a writer for *The Athenaeum* judged:

Messrs. Lake Price and Riglander [*sic*] are the most successful exhibitors in this interesting branch of the art. Many of their works are complete pictures,--new in subject, admirable in composition, wonderful in execution, and matchless in light and shade. Already, from the rudest beginning, they have reached a dangerous rivalry with painting; but they have not yet succeeded in producing one bit of High Art, nor ever will...they will never light up hired faces with those momentary fires of religion, love, hatred, or scorn which the human imagination only can conceive, and the human hand only execute. We may have a photographic Teniers, but not a photographic Raphael.¹⁰³

Emphasizing the emotional and imaginative components of high art, the critic employed one of the key objections to photography's artistic pretensions. Continuing this objection, he wrote: "Machinery can copy science,--can catch shadows, and keep them

when caught;--but it takes a human heart to conceive the Transfiguration, and a human brain to plan the Last Judgment.”¹⁰⁴

Those who objected to photography’s potential fine art status often repeated this theme in various forms. In 1858 the writer Ronald Campbell published in *The Art-Journal* his “Photography for Portraits: A Dialogue Held in an Artist’s Studio.” The article began with this thesis: “The object of this essay is to show that the *body* of photography is incompetent to maintain its existence in antagonism with the *soul* of art.”¹⁰⁵ Moreover, Campbell introduced another component of its mechanical nature—its lack of control: “The painter of genius does not depart from truth when he throws into eloquent silence whatever is unnecessary to give a fair representation of his subject. Incapability of any such reserve is the very boast of photography.”¹⁰⁶ This criticism drew a common distinction—one that Robinson had to confront in his writing—that the bare *facts* photography captured were different from the greater *truth* to nature that art embodied. Truth, in this regard, represented an idealized nature, manifested by the artist’s ability to control the appearance of the subject. Photography represented the bald facts from which artistic truth could not be derived.

Even in the photographic societies there was disagreement over the possibilities and parameters of artistic photography. Roger Fenton, Vice-President of the Photographic

¹⁰³ Unidentified, “The Photographic Society,” in *The Athenaeum* no. 1472 (January 12, 1856): 46.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ronald Campbell, “Photography for Portraits: A Dialogue Held in an Artist’s Studio,” in *The Art-Journal* (September 1, 1858): 273.

Society of London and an accomplished photographer in his own right, chaired the meeting at which Rejlander read his description of *The Two Ways of Life* in April 1858. In this talk Rejlander defended his work as serving as an artist's study for figures, but he also wished to demonstrate the plasticity of the photographic medium. Fenton, in response, believed Rejlander's work too ambitious a first attempt at high art, but he fully supported photography's ability to obtain a picture "of a lower description of art," such as like Wilkie or Teniers.¹⁰⁷ Others simply believed that there would be no use for photography as art. For example, "A prominent member of a photographic council," as photographer William Lake Price recalled, "declared that he did not see what was wanted with PICTURES; he thought the science of photography would be just as well without them."¹⁰⁸

This was the point of the debate on art photography when Robinson joined it. In his first significant article, Robinson directly confronted objections to photography's artistic capacity by urging photographers to control their compositions. "If photographers generally would attend more to composition and expression, and consider their science as only the means to an end, and that end *art*, they would be saved the infliction of such extravagant articles...[as] 'Photography for Portraits,' by Mr. Ronald Campbell."¹⁰⁹

Robinson thus staked his claim for artistic photography upon its composition. He also

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 275.

¹⁰⁷ Roger Fenton, [Comments after "On Photographic Composition; with a Description of 'Two Ways of Life'"], in *The Journal of the Photographic Society* 4, no. 65 (April 21, 1858): 196.

¹⁰⁸ Lake Price, "On Composition and Chiar'oscuro—I," in *The Photographic News* 3, no. 76 (February 17, 1860): 281.

recommended that photographers look at examples of painting so that they could improve their compositions. To support this assertion he quoted Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Discourses*: "Invention is one of the great marks of genius; but if we consult experience, we shall find that it is by being conversant with the inventions of others that we learn to invent, as by reading the thoughts of others we learn to think."¹¹⁰

Where would a young portrait studio photographer from western England have learned about these principles of painting? Robinson was born in 1830 in the remote country town of Ludlow, Shropshire. His father was a schoolmaster and his mother, he remembered, was "full of artistic instincts in advance of her time, and was the recognized authority in all matters of art and taste for the town and neighborhood."¹¹¹ Robinson yearned to be an artist as a young man, despite poor instruction in school. When he was around 15 years old he began to visit an aristocratic man in town, a Mr. Penwarne, who had been a student at the Royal Academy and studied under John Opie, professor of painting. From Penwarne Robinson learned the academic basics of composition, visiting him almost daily for about eight years. Robinson later asserted that two books had more influence over his artistic training than any others: Ruskin's first volume of *Modern Painters* and John Burnet's book on composition.¹¹² Looking back more than fifty years, Robinson contrasted these books: "The one sent me direct to nature for everything, the

¹⁰⁹ Robinson, "Photography, Artistic and Scientific," in *The Journal of the Photographic Society* 5, no. 71 (October 21, 1858): 48.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹¹¹ Robinson, "Autobiographical Sketches, Chapter I," in *The Practical Photographer* 8, no. 86 (February 1897): 42.

other taught me that nature was only the foundation of art. The one corrected the other.”¹¹³ For Robinson, Ruskin was someone who mistakenly thought that art could be learned directly from nature. Burnet’s book, which was largely based upon Sir Joshua Reynolds’ theories from the previous century, taught him the value of conventions from the masters of the past, and that these conventions should be applied when representing nature in art. For Burnet, the artist would not have known how best to perceive nature without first observing previous painters’ successes and failures in rendering nature. As he wrote in the book of the same name, it was about the “education of the eye.”¹¹⁴ Burnet’s theory of imitation, and of the education of the artist, placed a dual emphasis upon nature and the past art of the masters. The original source of inspiration was nature; however, the student needed to look at other works of art to learn how to appreciate nature’s structure:

Raffaello, by taking advantage of the works of those who had preceded him, carried the art to a state of perfection, which the study of nature, notwithstanding his constant application to her, never could have enabled him to achieve; the contemplation of the fine works of antiquity created elevated visions of ideal composition, while his constant application to nature for the details enabled him to give a reality and identity to the creations of his imagination. Without the eye being made acquainted with the beauties of those who have advanced the art to its present state...it will be impossible to select what is beautiful in nature, or be able to choose one point of view more interesting than another.¹¹⁵

¹¹² John Burnet’s book *A Treatise on Painting* was variously issued in either three or four parts, depending on the edition. Robinson was referring specifically to the part *Practical Hints on Composition in Painting*.

¹¹³ Robinson, “Autobiographical Sketches, Chapter IV,” in *The Practical Photographer* 8, no. 92 (August 1897): 231.

¹¹⁴ John Burnet, *An Essay on the Education of the Eye with Reference to Painting*, 4th ed. (London: Henry Sotheman & Co., 1880).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

For Burnet, this “reality and identity” of Raphael’s works was also essential, and could only come from direct study of nature. Burnet recommended spending many hours drawing directly from nature, capturing its finest details: “Such imperfections can be avoided only by having accustomed the eye in the first instance to a scrupulous exactness in delineating objects from nature, as one or two parts left out may destroy the richness and variety of lines, and an unequal proportion of the forms may deprive the copy of the truth and beauty of the original.”¹¹⁶ Following this advice, Robinson spent most of his free time in his youth drawing and sketching the landscape, training himself how to draw from memory.

With this background in mind, we can understand better how Robinson approached artistic photography. With the exception of the “patchwork” controversy in 1860, Robinson published only a few articles about his photographic theory between 1858 and 1868, the year he published *Pictorial Effect in Photography* in serial form in *The Photographic News*. In this work, he laid out the theory of his artistic photographs as well as many academic principles regarding composition. Robinson again asserted that photographers could control their subjects and, because of this, they could create more aesthetic compositions, i.e. “pictures.”

Following John Burnet’s book on composition, Robinson relied heavily upon Sir Joshua Reynolds’ eighteenth-century *Discourses* for teaching the principles of artistic imitation.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 67.

Robinson, like Burnet, insisted that students absorb these principles as a way of learning how to look productively at nature. Nature itself was not art, and directly copying nature was not acceptably picturesque. Robinson wrote:

It is a too common occurrence with photographers to overlook the inadaptability of a scene to artistic treatment, merely because they think it lends itself to the facility, with their art possesses, of rendering, with wondrous truth, minutiae and unimportant detail. To many this rendering of detail, and the obtaining of sharp pictures, is all that is considered necessary to constitute perfection.¹¹⁷

For Robinson, picturesque theory (at least as it had transformed by the mid-nineteenth century) was a useful support to draw upon for art photography. It emphasized looking at, and shaping, nature to conform to the standards of academic aesthetics. While Robinson admitted that photography's plasticity was severely limited in comparison to painting, it was the photographer's control over his subject that opened the door to possible status as an art. By combining picturesque theory with academic standards of composition, Robinson outlined a set of goals he thought were obtainable for photography in its quest for fine art status. While Alfred Wall also adopted many of these compositional principles, Wall's primary basis for photography was nature itself—the camera should only produce images that lay in front of it. Robinson's efforts gave greater freedom to the photographer to conceive and execute his pictorial control over the image by placing primary emphasis upon the photographer's ability to shape nature in order to conform to pictorial standards.

¹¹⁷ Robinson, *Pictorial Effect in Photography*, 11.

Robinson art photography's foundations were built upon the photographer's recognition of certain laws. Despite Robinson's belief that photography was capable of depicting the creator's imagination, however, he was either unwilling or unable to assist his readers in obtaining the higher plateau of artistic photography. He wrote: "I shall not have a word to say on the poetry of art; that is a question on which it is difficult to write so as to be really understood, except by those who have had a long education in art....I propose to deal with the body, or perhaps the skeleton, and not the soul; with the tangible, not the intangible; with that which can be taught, not that which must be felt."¹¹⁸ Ironically, Robinson used the same terminology of "body" for photography and "soul" for art as Ronald Campbell had in his "Dialogue," whose object was "to show that the *body* of photography" was "incompetent to maintain its existence in antagonism with the *soul* of art." By only discussing the "body" of photographic practice, he was unable to forcefully defend Campbell's attack by demonstrating that the "soul" of artistic photography was possible. All Robinson could do was assert that it could be done. Robinson defended his approach by insisting that the beginning student needed deliberate instruction in composition *before* studying nature too directly, otherwise he would not know *how* to look at nature for pictorial effect.

Robinson intended his book to fulfill this need of the beginning student in the art of photography. Like a painter, Robinson encouraged photographers to control the scene before them: "Consider it as a painter would, if he were going to make a large and

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

important picture of the scene,” Robinson wrote. “Think if there is anything you could do to improve the already well-considered composition. Make up your mind if a dark or light spot is required in the foreground to give balance, and if a figure would answer the purpose.”¹¹⁹ Robinson had given a good example of this type of control in an earlier article published in 1865. He told the story of two pupils approaching a particular scene to photograph. One produced an image that was, in Robinson’s judgment, a poor picture. The other student, however, having studied painting, altered the scene before him:

Finding that the reflection of the distance in the water caused a patch of light to divide his picture into two parts, he caused [clearly having hired help at his disposal] a huge dark-coloured stone to be carried into the stream, and placed at a point he indicated; this not only broke up the objectionable light, but it placed a near dark object exactly under the greatest distance, giving greater value to the receding perspective. He now found that he had got a principle dark acting as a key note to the composition, but he had got some masses of light and half tones scattered about that required bringing into harmony. To do this he introduced a rustic female figure in a light dress, walking over the shingle to the water...and the result was a picture in the true sense of the word, not a mere photograph...but a work of art, in which you saw at once that the mind of the artist had triumphed over his subject...and that all the elements of true art...had been observed.¹²⁰

Apart from the paternalistic attitude embodied in the manipulation of an implied servant and a rustic (it is unknown whether this was a middle class girl dressed as a rustic or an actual one), we see Robinson’s emphasis upon the artist triumphing over his subject as a similar triumph of art over standard photography. For Robinson, a photographer “may use all legitimate means of presenting the story he has to tell in the most agreeable manner, and it is his imperative duty to avoid the mean, the base, and the ugly; and to aim

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 46.

to elevate his subject, to avoid awkward forms, and to correct the unpicturesque.”¹²¹

Robinson’s struggle for artistic photography lay in the paradox that photography was (by his own admission) a medium of unassailable facts. Yet these facts needed to be manipulated by the photographer’s imagination.

Part of Robinson’s argument was made to counter those critics who felt that photography was a product of machine and not of mind. Robinson, particularly considering his reliance upon combination printing, strongly weighted his argument toward the mental conception rather than its physical production. This was evident through his emphasis upon abstract concepts of painterly composition, but one can also see his emphasis by way of his attitude towards printing his negatives. In his 1860 article on combination printing, Robinson related that his assistants printed his combination pictures. This carefree attitude reinforced his concern with the mental process of composing the image, rather than with its physical manifestation. Responding to Wall’s criticisms about combination printing, Robinson neatly summarized his emphasis on the mental source of artistic production. He concluded his article with this hope: “I quite believe the time will come when photographs will be admired more for their invention than their execution.”¹²²

¹²⁰ Robinson, “On the Selection of a Subject, and its Management,” in *The Photographic News* 9, no. 362 (August 11, 1865): 379.

¹²¹ Robinson, *Pictorial Effect in Photography*, 51.

¹²² Robinson, “Composition NOT Patchwork,” in *The British Journal of Photography* 7, no. 121 (July 2, 1860): 190.

Robinson insisted upon the mental intervention between camera and nature for his entire career. As he summarized in his book *The Elements of a Pictorial Photograph* from 1896: “All art is based more or less on selected nature, but the moment the copy becomes so like nature as to become deceptive, it may be art of a kind, but not fine art....A picture is a conventional representation of nature. It should be true to nature, but if it is to be a work of art it must not represent nature as faithfully as seen in a mirror.”¹²³ In this opinion, Robinson was adopting Joshua Reynolds’ theory of painting and imitation. For Reynolds: “A mere copier of nature can never produce anything great; can never raise and enlarge the conceptions, or warm the heart of the spectator.”¹²⁴ Written from the perspective of the 1890s, Robinson was contrasting his own conservative opinions against the more radical views of the Naturalist photographers. With these different approaches in mind, he wrote: “The general opinion is that to become art the representation of nature must be more or less conventional, although we may not all believe that the further we get from nature, the nearer we are to art.”¹²⁵ While Robinson felt that his work was much closer to nature than the Naturalist photographers, he still insisted that photographs of nature needed to be mediated by the artist. For Robinson, the facts of nature were never beautiful; indeed, many times they were “intolerable” to him.¹²⁶ The art photographer’s duty was to convert the raw material of these facts from nature and turn them into art. As he wrote back in 1860: “for a subject must be imagined,

¹²³ Robinson, *The Elements of a Pictorial Photograph* (Bradford: Percy Lund & Co., 1896), 17.

¹²⁴ Sir Joshua Reynolds, from Discourse III, in Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses*, ed. with introduction by Pat Rogers (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), 103.

¹²⁵ Robinson, *The Elements of a Pictorial Photograph*, 17-8.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

and imagination is art.”¹²⁷ It was this insistence upon the separation of photography from its source in nature that encouraged Robinson to take more liberties, to actually position photography “further” from nature and more toward art, than his contemporaries. Perhaps it was the adoption and reliance upon combination printing that necessitated this point of view, or perhaps it was this point of view that allowed him to adopt the technique so freely in the face of enormous criticism.

Robinson’s version of artistic truth was much broader than other photographers’ as it allowed the manipulation of what was in front of the camera, even to the point of arranging several scenes before the camera and combining them into one image. As he wrote in *Pictorial Effect in Photography*: “I am far from saying that a photograph must be an actual, literal, and absolute fact; that would be to deny all I have written; but it must represent truth. Truth and fact are not only two words, but, in art at least, they represent two things. A fact is anything done, or that exists—a reality. Truth is *conformity* to a fact or reality—absence of falsehood. So that truth in art may exist without an absolute observance of facts.”¹²⁸ While most art critics of Robinson’s day would have supported this statement in reference to painting, they would have asserted that in photography “truth” and “fact” could not represent two things.

¹²⁷ Robinson, “On Printing Photographic Pictures from Several Negatives,” in *The British Journal of Photography* 7, no. 115 (April 2, 1860): 95.

¹²⁸ Robinson, *Pictorial Effect in Photography*, 78.

Utility and Positivism

Any attempt by Robinson to distinguish, however awkwardly, between “fact” and “truth” in mid nineteenth-century Britain, needs to be put into the context of two contemporary philosophies: utilitarianism and positivism.¹²⁹ Charles Dickens famously opened his 1854 novel *Hard Times* with the following speech by school administrator Thomas Gradgrind:

“Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts; nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!”¹³⁰

Later in the scene a government official emphasized and expanded Gradgrind’s assertion by saying this to the school children:

“You are to be in all things regulated and governed...by fact. We hope to have, before long, a board of fact, composed of commissioners of fact, who will force the people to be a people of fact, and of nothing but fact. You must discard the word Fancy altogether. You have nothing to do with it. You are not to have, in any object of use or ornament, what would be a contradiction in fact...”

These passages were Dickens’ scathing characterization of the founder of utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham, as a man who excluded all forms of fancy and pleasure from daily life. This, of course, was an over-generalization of a predominantly legal and economic philosophy that Bentham evolved during the last few decades of the eighteenth and the

¹²⁹ It is impossible to give justice to the complex philosophies of utilitarianism and positivism in this dissertation. What I hope to show is that Robinson’s writing confronts some of the major themes of these philosophies.

¹³⁰ Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*, eds. George Ford and Sylvère Monod, 2d ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1990), 7.

first few decades of the nineteenth centuries.¹³¹ Nevertheless, this characterization of Bentham as a cultural philistine was fully entrenched in the minds of both the intellectual and middle classes by mid century, thanks in large part to John Stuart Mill's 1838 essay on Bentham.¹³²

Much of Bentham's philosophy was based upon his axiomatic assumption that "it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong."¹³³ In other words, whatever made the most people happy was best for society. In his *Rationale of Reward* (1825), Bentham attempted to apply this goal of social utility to aesthetics. Characteristically, Bentham saw the fine arts as part of the broader "arts and sciences of amusement," and he refused to distinguish their evaluation from the arts and sciences of curiosity (i.e. games). For him, they should all be measured by their ability to excite pleasure. Bentham's emphasis on the social aggregate produced a novel critique of aesthetics. Because the "arts of curiosity" had broader appeal (i.e. gave pleasure to more people) than the fine arts, Bentham considered them as more valuable. In this critique, Bentham upturned the traditional hierarchy of intellectual taste:

The utility of all these arts and sciences—I speak both of those of amusement and curiosity,—the value which they possess, is exactly in proportion to the pleasure they yield. Every other species of pre-eminence which may be attempted to be established among them is altogether

¹³¹ This discussion of Benthamite Utilitarianism is based upon the introduction to part II of John Whale, *Imagination Under Pressure, 1789-1832: Aesthetics, Politics and Utility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 98-109.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 100. While Whale's analysis demonstrates that imagination played a more significant role in Bentham's philosophy than has been appreciated, Robinson's understanding of utilitarianism would have been based upon its popular conception.

¹³³ Jeremy Bentham, from his *A Fragment on Government* (1776), as quoted by Whale, *Imagination Under Pressure*, 102.

fanciful. Prejudice apart, the game of push-pin is of equal value with the arts and sciences of music and poetry. If the game of push-pin furnish more pleasure, it is more valuable than either. Everybody can play at push-pin: poetry and music are relished only by the few.¹³⁴

Later, Bentham reinforced this criticism of the fine arts as an elitist enterprise: “If poetry and music deserve to be preferred before a game of push-pin, it must be because they are calculated to gratify those individuals who are most difficult to be pleased.”¹³⁵

Bentham’s evaluation went even further by criticizing poetry as false—a characterization that equally applied to all the fine arts:

The game of push-pin is always innocent: it were well could the same be always asserted of poetry. Indeed, between poetry and truth there is a natural opposition: false morals, fictitious nature. The poet always stands in need of something false... Truth, exactitude of every kind, is fatal to poetry. The poet must see everything through coloured media, and strive to make every one else to do the same.¹³⁶

This last passage, in particular, demonstrates how Bentham’s philosophy equated fact (exactitude) with truth. There was no possibility for the fine arts to have direct access to any truths. Bentham characterized such efforts as “colouring”—attempts to shade the truth with imaginative nuance. There was simply no room for fiction or fancy, as the government official in Dickens’ *Hard Times* proclaimed.

Robinson’s aesthetic formulations attempted to resist this union of fact and truth for photography: “Truth and fact are not only two words, but, in art at least, they represent two things,” as he wrote in *Pictorial Effect in Photography*. While he was not alone in

¹³⁴ Bentham, from his *Rationale of Reward* (1825), as quoted by Whale, *Imagination Under Pressure*, 107.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

asserting this kind of split regarding the fine arts, he was one of the few who would say this regarding photography. Indeed, it was crucial for his type of work that he insist upon this split despite criticism from Wall, who felt that artistic photography could be achieved while maintaining a strong link between fact and truth.

As I have already quoted, Robinson also made the claim in *Pictorial Effect in Photography* that: “truth in art may exist without an absolute observance of facts.”¹³⁷

Here Robinson not only claimed a distinction between these two terms, he also attempted to loosen the bond between them. This component of his argument was made to resist the other predominant philosophy of mid-nineteenth century Britain: positivism. Also called scientific naturalism, positivism could be described as a scientific spirit infused into a philosophy of social behavior.¹³⁸ Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill saw the need to formulate a rational study of human behavior based upon the natural sciences. Comte, in particular, felt that social relations could be objectively observed and that a social science would be able to predict future behavior. The positivists’ approaches stressed their foundation upon observable and verifiable facts—only from these facts could more general laws be derived. While not identical, truth for the positivists could only grow directly from fact.

In an effort to secure an aesthetic and artistic freedom for the medium of photography (which was being promoted by scientific photographers as the ideal recorder of facts) and

¹³⁷ Robinson, *Pictorial Effect in Photography*, 78.

for his own work, Robinson needed to assert the independence of truth from fact. Robinson's phrasing that truth could exist, "without an absolute observance of facts," seems written specifically to assert this claim in opposition to positivist empiricism.

A Variety of Fakery

Robinson's images and theories constituted a unique view of photography at the time. In our terminology today, one could say the space depicted in his images was a fictive one.

By this I do not mean deceitful, but one that did not adhere to the facts of nature.

Robinson, through his writing and imagery, asserted that his photographs should be judged by their own criteria, their own internal logic, and not by how his photographs compared to nature. Did this internal logic relate to the logic of artistic composition? This might be the question Robinson would have asked, rather than whether they had integrity in relation to nature. Robinson was unconcerned with how his photographs were assembled, and even to a certain extent how they were printed. He was deeply concerned with whether his images appeared to be faithful to the laws of artistic imitation rather than faithful to nature directly.

This attitude liberated Robinson to produce the wide variety of images he exhibited throughout his career: combination prints, straightforward photographs, models with painted backdrops, models dressed in rustic clothing, and models dressed in

¹³⁸ My discussion of positivism is based on Peter Allan Dale, *In Pursuit of a Scientific Culture: Science, Art and Society in the Victorian Age* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), especially chapters 1 and 2.

contemporary dress. Robinson also felt free to use artificial props in some of his works. I have already mentioned how Robinson discussed in very matter-of-fact terms in 1860 how he had set up his backyard to serve as a simulated landscape for some of his photographs, and how he was severely criticized for this deception.¹³⁹ Robinson also used a stuffed wolf for one of his narrative photographs based on Little Red Riding Hood [Plate 20]. He was also criticized for this, and one critic pointed out that Robinson should have somehow devised an image that did not directly show the wolf's face, thus not directly exposing his artifice.

While Robinson could have later dismissed these manipulations as the naïve practices of a young and ambitious art photographer, he remarkably resorted to occasional fakery in his photographs taken well beyond 1860. In his 1869 paper about combination printing, Robinson's partner Nelson Cherrill discussed a combination print of children they had produced that had been widely criticized. With a victorious air, Cherrill indicated that the work's critics missed a crucial element—that the rock in the foreground was not a real one, but “a small piece of dried garden-mould, taken full size.”¹⁴⁰ The Photographic Society unfavorably received Cherrill's disclosure. Several members of the society, including Rejlander and Francis Bedford, who generally supported Robinson's claims for combination printing, sharply criticized Robinson and Cherrill for this falsehood.

¹³⁹ Robinson defended himself by asserting that it was valid to do this because he was not claiming it was a particular hill on which he was photographing.

¹⁴⁰ Cherrill, “On Combination Printing,” 207.

Another example of photographic fakery that went undiscovered was Robinson's *Bringing Home the May*, which he exhibited in 1862. Writing thirty-five years later, Robinson revealed:

The selected model for the back figure, although she had had some practice, got nervous, and could not stand still. There was no time to select and train another, and the principal figure was quickly dressed in her clothes and performed the part. That there are two figures from one model has never been detected, and this is the first time it has been mentioned.¹⁴¹

In another instance, Robinson admitted in 1888 in *The Photographic News* that he once considered using a stuffed heron in a landscape photograph. While he wrote that he ultimately chose not to employ this deception, he admitted that he did not quite understand why. He speculated that at the time he was making “quixotic concessions to unworthy critics.”¹⁴² Also in 1888, Robinson co-wrote a book entitled *The Art and Practice of Silver Printing* with Captain William Abney. Part of this book discussed the technique of double printing skies into a landscape composition. Yet the authors took the artifice one step further by also promoting the practice of hand painting clouds onto the negative. They wrote: “Very effective clouds may be produced by a paint-brush and lamp-black, Indian ink, or gamboge, by painting them artistically *at the back of the negative*.”¹⁴³ Fully cognizant of the questionable (although widespread) nature of the practice, the authors assured the reader: “By judicious masking, fleecy clouds floating in

¹⁴¹ Robinson, “Autobiographical Sketches, Chapter VII” in *The Practical Photographer* 9, no. 98 (February 1898): 30.

¹⁴² This anecdote is related in Graham Balfour's article “Figure in Landscape and Genre,” in *The Photographic News* 33, no. 1589 (February 15, 1889): 101.

¹⁴³ Capt. Abney and Henry Peach Robinson, *The Art and Practice of Silver Printing* (London: Piper & Carter, 1888), 57.

a light sky were produced, which deceived the greatest connoisseurs in such matters.”¹⁴⁴ By acknowledging the deceit of this activity, Robinson still evidently believed at the end of his career that such departures from nature were subservient in importance to the image’s pictorial effect.

Another type of image that Robinson exhibited was not even entirely photographic, and was thus further removed from “fact.” In the early to middle 1860s he created a series of works using painted, rather than photographic, backdrops. Works such as *Down to the Well* [Plate 21] employed backdrops depicting landscapes that Robinson had painted himself. These works all combined Robinson’s favorite genre subject, rustic maidens, with a pictorial convention that stemmed from commercial studio portraiture. This convention would have been very familiar to Robinson, for he earned his living as a studio portrait photographer.

Backgrounds for commercial portrait photographs were in themselves a controversial topic. Commercial photographers, generally more interested in producing profitable, rather than aesthetic, portraits were often sloppy with pairing subjects with their backgrounds. In 1866 the photographer John Werge launched a debate about backgrounds that these photographers used. In his article, *Errors in Pictorial Backgrounds*, Werge argued that the perspective represented in the backgrounds should

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

continue the space of the sitter and the studio accessories.¹⁴⁵ He also felt that many studios were following conventions from painting “to give increased importance to their subjects, by placing their figures against diminutive backgrounds.” Werge cautioned photographers against following “this liberty taken with nature.” “Photography is in all other respects,” he wrote, “so rigidly truthful that it cannot consistently sanction such a violation of natural laws.”¹⁴⁶ Wall, who was usually a strong proponent of “truth” in photography, disagreed. His first objection had to do with Werge’s assertion that the perspective of the background had to agree with the sitter. Wall insisted that this was impractical if not impossible, since sitters of different height would require different backgrounds. Wall’s strongest objection, however, was that backgrounds were *of necessity* conventional, and not intended to be strongly representational. He wrote:

Backgrounds, which are palpably conventional, are neither tricks, shams, nor mechanical dodges! They are simply what they openly profess to be, *backgrounds*. They never pretend to be pictures, never weakly and childishly attempt deception where they have not the slightest power of deceiving. . . . A background should be simply and purely a background; it should be subject in choice and execution to nothing but its purpose—nothing but its effect on the portraits to be placed before it.¹⁴⁷

Robinson, writing in *Pictorial Effect in Photography*, agreed. He particularly cautioned photographers from attempting to unite the perspective of the sitter with the background. For Robinson and Wall, the background’s purpose was to bring the sitter into some relief, which could be best done by painting the background scene without much detail.

Robinson’s own painted backgrounds supported Wall’s argument. They are softly

¹⁴⁵ J. Werge, “Errors in Pictorial Backgrounds,” in *The Photographic News* 13, no. 298 (January 19, 1866): 29-30.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

painted, with few details, and they cause the figure(s) to stand out. Wall's support for this technique is surprising for someone who so strongly advocated photography's truth, and his reliance upon the conventionality of art was much like Robinson's in this case.

Perhaps the most telling comment Robinson made about artistic conventionality was in conjunction with one of his painted backdrop works, entitled *On the Hill-Top* [Plate 22], which he illustrated in *Pictorial Effect in Photography*. While this passage specifically addressed the use of accessories in portraiture, it applied to his entire career. He wrote:

A great deal can be done, and very beautiful pictures made, by the mixture of the real and artificial in a picture. Although, for choice, I should prefer everything in a photograph being from nature, I admit a picture to be right when the 'effect' is natural, however obtained. It is not the fact of reality that is required, but the truth of imitation that constitutes a veracious picture. Cultivated minds do not require to believe that they are deceived, and that they look on actual nature, when they behold a pictorial representation of it....Art is not the science of deception, but that of giving pleasure, the word pleasure being used in its purest and loftiest sense.¹⁴⁸

This quote brings to mind George Shadbolt's comment made back in 1860 in defending combination prints that "assume only by their very designation to be regarded as pleasant fiction." Both comments asserted that the viewer approached and understood the photograph as a representation, or imitation, and not a direct copy of nature.

The unique position Robinson occupied in nineteenth century photographic theory allowed him great leeway in creating photographs that adopted the aesthetic principles of

¹⁴⁷ Wall, "Correspondence: Perspective in Backgrounds," in *The British Journal of Photography* 13, no. 304 (March 2, 1866): 108.

¹⁴⁸ Robinson, *Pictorial Effect in Photography*, 109.

painting, all in the effort to further photography as a fine art. Robinson's conception of his images could be described as fictive spaces, answerable more to themselves and to rules of composition, balance, etc., than to any particular referents in nature. This philosophical position, while personally liberating, isolated Robinson from much of the photographic community, even from many who vigorously supported the medium's ambition for fine art status. Moreover, his work clearly alienated many art and cultural critics in England, who then used Robinson's works as proofs that photography was at an aesthetic dead end. As one critic, writing for *The Athenaeum* in 1862, assessed:

Mr. H.P. Robinson illustrates, more completely perhaps than anything else can do, the fallacy of expecting a mental operation, such as the results of pictorial art are, from a chemical process. In this case the operator has placed some models (children and others), according to a pictorial arrangement, in the hopes of making a picture. His *Holiday in the Wood* (131) and others here, with their set air of portraitures, stiffness, and fixed smiles on the models' faces are miserably depressing to the spectator. This failure of intention is the more observable, seeing that the operator has taken great pains to obtain a contrary result.¹⁴⁹

Part of Robinson's critical reception was a reaction against the type of artistic instruction he published through *Pictorial Effect in Photography* and subsequent books. Robinson proclaimed that he was dealing solely with the mechanics of composition—the “body” and not the “soul” of art. The paradox was that this mechanical set of rules paralleled the typical criticism that photography itself was the product of a machine, not a mind. Critics alleged that photography allowed for no human intellectual performance. Although

¹⁴⁹ Unidentified author, “International Exhibition. Photographs,” in *The Athenaeum* no. 1825 (October 18, 1862): 504. The International Exhibition was a particularly important event for artistic photography in British photographic history, which attracted a great deal of attention upon this subject in the general press. That this review came during a time of such visibility for photography must have been particularly discouraging for Robinson.

Robinson insisted that it had creative possibilities, he did not take on directly these charges by addressing *how* photography incorporated creative principles. Robinson was well aware of this, and he protested that his compositional guidelines were suggestions rather than hard and fast rules. Yet Robinson did not venture into the rhapsodies of creativity like Wall. At the same time, Wall's writing was much criticized by Robinson's supporters for not dealing with the *specifics* of the artistic process, which Robinson addressed more directly.

For Wall, creative photographers were empowered to shape and construct the most aesthetic view that could be captured of a given scene. While this manipulative shaping, choosing and forming of the image was demanded of creative photographers, the material substance that nature provided was ultimately all the photographer could work with. For Wall, aesthetic images could be made from any subject, but they were ultimately *documents* of aesthetic views and arrangements of nature or figures. Photographs could even represent a larger idea, via an allegorical *subject*, but the image itself still functioned as a document of the scene.

Robinson's theory of photographic imitation embodied a peculiar paradox that stemmed from academic painting's dual source of inspiration: artistic convention and nature. A painter was supposed to shape nature, but be inspired by it. Nature was the ultimate goal for these painters, yet it was unruly, and needed to be shaped to artistic ends. In one way, painters were to make art that looked like nature, an idealized nature rather than real

nature, and one that conformed to artistic rules of composition. When translated into photographic terms, Robinson's photography had an even more complex relationship with nature. On the one hand, nature served as the ultimate guide—Robinson acknowledged that photography had to picture what was at one time in front of the camera. Despite Robinson's claims in the 1880s that the Naturalist photographers were "farther" away from nature than he was, his theory and his works asserted that the photograph's final allegiance was to the "truth of imitation," or the principles that guided artistic composition, lighting, etc.

Robinson's works operated more in the realm of the imagination than in factual reality. As he wrote: "for a subject must be imagined, and imagination is art." In order for Robinson's works to succeed, he expected the viewer to treat these images as imaginative, not real. The peasants and other figures in these works could not be seen as deceitful exact re-presentations of these models, but instead as transformations into fictitious characters—"pleasant fictions" made by a medium that most people believed to be incapable of fiction. To appreciate these works, the viewer had to look at Robinson's images as if they were paintings, and they were therefore removed from the tangible things the photographs actually depicted. For Robinson, employing combination printing, introducing artificial elements and using painted backgrounds became viable ways to create images that were complex enough to be accepted as "pictures," as works of art. The next two chapters will discuss the two most significant subject types that Robinson employed to support these goals: poetic illustration and genre imagery. As we

shall see, these works' remove from nature posed significant problems for their acceptance. By simultaneously asserting the importance, yet the controllability, of the natural source of his photographs, Robinson operated against the prevailing acceptance of photography as an art that was much more directly tied to nature than to painting.

Chapter 2: Poetry and the Fictive Space

Introduction

Throughout his career, Robinson attempted different strategies to make photographs accepted as high art. One such strategy involved accompanying some of his images with lines from poems or other narratives. Robinson exhibited many photographs at photographic competitions that had poetic lines written directly on the exhibition mats so that this association would be clear. These began in 1858 with *Fading Away*, which he coupled with lines from Percy Shelley's poem *Queen Mab*. This chapter will discuss this image and its repercussions for the rest of Robinson's career. I will then discuss two other significant photographic works coupled with poetry: *The Lady of Shalott* (1861) and *Sleep* (1867). While his works embody a variety of relationships between text and image, Robinson overriding intent was to cast the viewer's mind in a subjective, or fictive, frame and thereby persuade them that his photographs were mediated by his artistic mind.

Ut Pictura Poesis (associating pictorial works with text) had already had a long tradition in painting. Sir Joshua Reynolds, upon whom Robinson relied so strongly for his photographic theories, linked painting and poetry together in his Thirteenth Discourse. By asserting that both painting and poetry were essentially imitations of nature, Reynolds argued that painting should be considered on par with the higher art of poetry. Neither poetry nor painting copy nature directly, he felt, but instead they present a selected and

idealized version of nature. Nature, thereby, was stripped of its particular faults and presented in its essential form.¹

The union of text and image was a common practice in painting and printmaking in the nineteenth century. There were countless genre paintings, for example, by Mulready, Leslie, and Frith, which illustrated scenes from the popular novels of Sterne, Scott and Dickens. Other painters at the Royal Academy had lines of poetry printed in the exhibition catalogs to function as epigraphs for their works. For example, Constable's *Salisbury Cathedral*, exhibited in 1831, had lines from James Thomson's 1727 poem *Summer* printed in the catalog to accompany it.² In 1856 Arthur Hughes' painting *April Love* was exhibited under this quotation from Tennyson's *The Miller's Daughter*:

Love is hurt with jar and fret,
Love is made a vague regret,
Eyes with idle tears are wet,
Idle habit links us yet;
What is love? For we forget.
Ah, no, no.

J.M.W. Turner also used poetry great deal as accompaniment to his paintings—of the roughly 200 oil paintings that Turner exhibited, 53 had poetic epigraphs.³ Sixty of his canvases (usually without epigraphs) had titles that made reference to Shakespeare, Byron, and other poets. Of those with poetic epigraphs, 26 paintings had poems that Turner composed himself. Most of these featured selections from his unfinished and

¹ Reynolds, *Discourses*, ed. Pat Rogers (London: Penguin, 1992) 282-299.

² Many other examples of poetry accompanying paintings can be found in Chauncey Brewster Tinker, *Painter and Poet: Studies in the Literary Relations of English Painting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939).

³ Landow, 45.

unpublished poem *The Fallacies of Hope*. According to Ronald Paulson, Turner's union of text and image was meant to raise his landscapes to the level of history painting.⁴ As Jerrold Ziff explains: "to the end of his life Turner held firmly to the idea that poetry and painting, different by virtue corporeal mediums, nonetheless aimed for the same ultimate goal of an elevating truth."⁵ In the end, according to Ziff, Turner firmly believed that "a heightened expression might be achieved through a unity of the arts."⁶

In terms of photographic precedents, Robinson would certainly have known two albums prepared by the exchange club within the Photographic Society: the *Photographic Album for the Year 1855* and the *Photographic Album for the Year 1857*.⁷ These elaborately printed and bound albums paired photographs with both technical data about the images as well as literary or historical quotations. In the latter album, for example, opposite Dr. Percy and John Spiller's photograph *The New Mill, Near Lynton, North Devon*, was another quotation from Tennyson's *The Miller's Daughter* [Plates 23 & 24].

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Through the quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The meal sacks on the whiten'd floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door

⁴ Ronald Paulson, *Literary Landscape: Turner and Constable* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 69.

⁵ Jerrold Ziff, "J.M.W. Turner on Poetry and Painting," in *Studies in Romanticism* 3, no. 4 (Summer 1964): 213-4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁷ This group called itself the Photographic Club, or sometimes the Photographic Exchange Club. There was another Photographic Exchange Club, however, that was a distinct body from the exchange club within the Photographic Society. See Grace Seiberling, *Amateurs, Photography, and the Mid-Victorian Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

Made misty with the floating meal.

Also in this album was Mark Anthony's photograph entitled *Wild Flowers*, from 1856

[Plates 25 & 26]. The poem facing this image read:

The flowers were beautiful to me,
When childhood lured the way
Along the green and sunny slope,
Or through the groves to stray.

They were to me as playmates dear,
And when upon my knee
I whisper'd to them in their beds,
Methought they answer'd me.

Then countless gay and fairy forms
Gleamed by on pinions rare,
And many a castle's turret bright
Was pictured on the air.

For fancy held me so in thrall,
And peopled every scene,
That flowers might only fill the space,
A thousand joys between.

--Mrs. Sigourney

These photographic albums were modeled on popular British literary gift-books and annuals such as *Fisher's Drawing Room Scrap Book* and *Friendship's Offering* from earlier in the century. These published volumes, intended to be given as tokens of esteem or affection, were popular from the 1820s through the 1850s. They were customarily filled with reproductive engravings and poems by both amateur and recognized writers.⁸ As such, this format would have made these photographic albums instantly familiar to their viewers.

In English printmaking many reproductive engravings had poetic captions written on the borders of the prints themselves. One photographic precedent to Robinson's work by William Lake Price followed this format. Price published a photogalvanotype (a type of photomechanical print) of *The Soldier's Toast* [Plate 27] in the serial publication *Photographic Art Treasures*, which began in 1856. As part of the caption to the work, Price printed the first line of Iago's drinking song from *Othello* on the border: "And let me the Canniken clink clink." Clearly Robinson, by associating his photographs with poetry and other narrative texts, was following a well-traveled path in the visual arts of the nineteenth century. Drawing upon these precedents, Robinson's union of text and image was intended to raise the status of his photographs through the same "heightened expression" that Turner and other artists created.

Fading Away

In 1858 Robinson exhibited his first combination photograph, *Fading Away* [Plate 28]. Made from five negatives, Robinson accompanied it with lines from Percy Shelley's poem *Queen Mab*. When he exhibited the work, Robinson inscribed these words on the exhibition mat:

Must then that peerless form,
Which love and admiration cannot view
Without a beating heart, those azure veins

⁸ Anne Renier, *Friendship's Offering: An Essay on the Annuals and Gift Books of the 19th Century* (London: Private Libraries Association, 1964).

Which steal like streams along a field of snow,
That lovely outline, which is fair
As breathing marble, perish!

--Shelley

First shown in September 1858 at an exhibition of photographs at the Crystal Palace, *Fading Away* depicts a young woman dying of consumption (today known as tuberculosis). A contemporary description by George Shadbolt of the composition revealed the emotional impact Robinson must have hoped this scene would provoke in the viewer:

A sick girl, with wan cheeks and wasted frame, supported by pillows, forms the centre of the group; over the back of the easy chair on which she reclines her sister bends, lost in a reverie of painful thought, with eyes fixed on vacancy, and heedless of the present. Opposite the daughter sits the poor mother, watching with anxious solicitude the expression of the fading girl's countenance, while just behind the centre figure the lover has turned to the open window in an attitude of grief, and gazes on the setting sun, an emblem of the waning life of the beloved object beside him.⁹

Fading Away was one of the most discussed single images in the British photographic journals of the nineteenth century. This amount of attention was partly because it was exhibited in no fewer than six exhibitions between September 1858 and April 1859, and there were many published articles that examined the image as part of their exhibition reviews.¹⁰ One reviewer even lamented: "Why, for instance, are we to be followed

⁹ [George Shadbolt], [Editorial], in *Liverpool & Manchester Photographic Journal* 2, no. 12 (June 15, 1858): 147-8. This was Shadbolt's first editorial to support any of Robinson's photographs.

¹⁰ Based on exhibitions that were reviewed, *Fading Away* was first exhibited at the Crystal Palace exhibition, London, which opened in September 1858. It was then exhibited at the British Association exhibition in Leeds (September 1858), the exhibition of the Photographic Society of Scotland (December 1858), the exhibition of the Photographic Society of London (January 1859), the exhibition of the Photographic Society of Nottingham (January 1859), and the exhibition of the Photographic Society of Glasgow (April, 1859). Robinson also chose this work as one of his images for the International Exhibition of 1862.

everywhere by the eternal *Fading Away*?”¹¹ Nevertheless, placing a print in a photographic exhibition did not guarantee a critical review, so *Fading Away*'s significance can in some way be linked to the frequency of it being critiqued. In addition to these many appearances at exhibition, *Fading Away* was popular with print sellers who sold photographs. For example, a review from the *Literary Gazette* reprinted in the January 21, 1859 issue of *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London* asserted that the image “has for months past been in every photographic printseller’s window.”¹² The work’s popularity was also demonstrated by its reproduction in the New York publication *Harper’s Weekly*, which engraved *Fading Away* in their November 20, 1858 issue [Plate 29].

The photograph’s tragic subject matter was controversial, however, and it provoked both favorable and disapproving notices in the press. While *The Athenaeum* described it as “tender and sad,”¹³ *The Illustrated London News* judged it to be “a sickly sentimental affair,”¹⁴ and the *Daily News* went so far as to question its taste.¹⁵ Indeed, such a morbid subject seemed inappropriate to many reviewers. One writing for *The Photographic*

¹¹ Unidentified author, [Review of Exhibition of the Photographic Society of London], from *The Daily Telegraph*, quoted in Henry Peach Robinson, *Picture Making by Photography* (London: Piper & Carter, 1884), 115.

¹² Unidentified author, [Review of Exhibition of the Photographic Society of London], from the *Literary Gazette*, reproduced in “Exhibition in Suffolk Street,” *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London* 5, no. 77 (January 21, 1859): 147.

¹³ Unidentified author, “Fine Arts: Photographic Society,” in *The Athenaeum* no. 1629 (January 15, 1859): 87.

¹⁴ Unidentified author, “Exhibition of the Photographic Society,” in *The Illustrated London News* 34, no. 955 (January 15, 1859): 59

¹⁵ Unidentified, [Review of Exhibition of the Photographic Society of London], from the *Daily News*, reproduced in “Exhibition in Suffolk Street,” *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London* 5, no. 77 (January 21, 1859): 146-7.

Journal asserted: “*Fading Away* is a subject I do not like, and I wonder Mr. Robinson should have allowed his fancy to fix on it; it is a picture no one could hang up in a room, and revert to with pleasure.”¹⁶ The strongest objection, however, came from a correspondent to *The Photographic News*, who clearly felt the subject was too powerful for exhibition. He pronounced:

I cannot but recognise a species of trading on the most painful sentiments which it is the lot of human beings to experience....The absence of expression in the mother’s countenance, of which so many critics complain, is not evident to me; on the contrary, I can readily conceive that a mother who had been accustomed for weeks, or months, to see her child slowly dying, and who had a firm conviction that the separation which was about to take place was only for a time, and that she would soon meet her again in a world where death could not enter, *would* acquire that calm expression; neither do I object to the expression of the young woman who is looking down upon the poor dying girl’s face; but I *do* object to the introduction of the burly figure who stands with his back towards the spectator. Speaking artistically, he is a great blot in the picture, which would be infinitely better if he were absent; and looking at his presence there from another point of view, it must be offensive to every right-minded person. The sentiment which his presence is intended to convey, is one which a true artist would only have hinted at afar off, and the prominent manner in which it is thrust before us in this photograph, is only suggestive of a desire to “pile up the agony.” Now, a death-bed is not the place for indulging in such sentiment, and if it existed in reality it should have been kept out of the picture. Moreover, in the present case, it excites disgust rather than any other feeling, because the poor little sufferer is evidently a mere child, and could never have been looked upon in any other light.¹⁷

¹⁶ Sel d’Or, “Notes on the Exhibition of the Photographic Society of Scotland,” in *The Photographic Journal* 6, no. 85 (January 1, 1859): 8. [Various photographic journals referred to themselves as *The Photographic Journal*. I reserve its use only for the journal that was published in 1859, which was the continuation of *The Liverpool & Manchester Photographic Journal* and which was continued by *The British Journal of Photography*. I cite the other prominent *Photographic Journal* as *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London* (later of *Great Britain*).]

¹⁷ An Ex-Member of the Council, “Correspondence: Exhibition of the Photographic Society,” in *The Photographic News*, 2, no. 27 (March 11, 1859): 8-9.

While most reviewers, like this one, identified the man as a lover/suitor, one reviewer assumed it was the young lady's father. His identity has remained unresolved.

While *Fading Away* was an unusual subject for photography, sickness and death of children was a common, although controversial, subject in Victorian painting. For example, Thomas Webster's painting *Sickness and Health* [Plate 30], exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1843, depicts a convalescing girl watching other children dancing to an itinerant hurdy-gurdy player. Lionel Lambourne has written about the subject: "This theme of child sickness and mortality was of course of particular interest in those days of high infant mortality to a public which wept over Charles Dickens' treatment of such affecting scenes as the death of Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841)."¹⁸ Despite its prevalence in Royal Academy exhibitions, some critics objected to the theme of child mortality in contemporary painting. In writing a survey of Joseph Clark's paintings for *The Art-Journal*, one critic voiced his disapproval:

[*The Sick Child*, which Clark had exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1857] is one of those subjects of which, however cleverly represented—and this is undoubtedly a really clever picture—can never give unmixed pleasure. In truth, the more merit such a work exhibits in treatment, the less enjoyment does it offer to the spectator, and the artist producing it thereby limits, to a considerable extent, his chance of finding a purchaser. It is clear, nevertheless, that this reasoning had no weight with Mr. Clark, who, we presume, disposed of his work; for in the following year he contributed to the Academy another picture of a similar description, entitled *The Doctor's Visit*. Here, as in the former composition, we have a "sick child," a little boy seated in a large old-fashioned chair, and propped up by pillows, his face pale and thin, and his whole appearance indicative of the ravages of disease; at his side is the

¹⁸ Lionel Lambourne, *An Introduction to "Victorian" Genre Painting from Wilkie to Frith* (Owings Mills, Maryland: Stemmer House Publishers, Inc., 1982), 25.

medical attendant earnestly regarding the invalid, while an elderly woman, who may be a nurse, or, perhaps, is the boy's grandmother, waits anxiously to hear the doctor's opinion of the patient.¹⁹

It is clear from these reviews that *Fading Away* was operating on delicate ground.

Robinson was, however, also evoking British literature. The disease of consumption was also one of the great Romantic literary themes.²⁰ So many of the famous creative men and women of the eighteenth and nineteenth century died of tuberculosis that it became a poetic trope for genius. Alexander Dumas, for example, wrote in his memoirs: "In 1823 and 1824 it was the fashion to suffer from the lungs; everybody was consumptive, poets especially; it was good form to spit blood after each emotion that was at all sensational, and to die before reaching the age of thirty."²¹ But it was not just writers who died of consumption, scores of characters in nineteenth century poems and novels also died of the disease. In Dickens' *David Copperfield* Little Blossom succumbs to the disease, though with few of its symptoms, and Emily Brontë describes many of her characters' fight with the disease in *Wuthering Heights*. Various authors' and poets' approaches to the disease differed, but it was rarely a graphic description of the physical manifestations. Rather, the disease was used as a tragic symbol.

In the case of *Fading Away*, other writers strongly supported Robinson's work. One of the main qualifications for photography to be considered an art was that it embody

¹⁹ J. Dafforne, "British Artists: Their Style and Character: No. LXIII--Joseph Clark," in *The Art-Journal* 2 (March 1, 1863): 50.

²⁰ Information for this paragraph comes from the chapter "Consumption and the Romantic Age" in Rene and Jean Dubos, *The White Plague: Tuberculosis, Man and Society* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1952).

sentiment. Robinson, through his poetic epigraph, attempted to appropriate consumption's tragic symbolism in order to bring sentiment to his photograph. Using *Fading Away* as conclusive affirmation of this attempt, George Shadbolt asserted: "Our French brethren have pronounced that 'sentiment is forbidden ground to photographers,'—we differ from them *in toto*."²² Dr. Hugh Diamond, serving as editor of *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London*, claimed that the image "would itself suffice to raise Photography to a rank among the fine arts—a rank in which a certain class of artists and ill-tempered 'art critics' dispute its right to be placed. The sentiment in this picture is painful; but the truth with which the lesson of the uncertainty of this mortal existence is conveyed to the mind is startling."²³ One critic for *The Photographic News* was equally impressed, and he attempted to unite the sentiment of art with aesthetic pleasure: "It seems almost incredible that such a difficult subject could be so beautifully treated by a merely mechanical process."²⁴ Neatly summarizing his point, he wrote that *Fading Away* "is an exquisite picture of a painful subject."²⁵ It was this paradox of pain and pleasure that made this work so compelling for these critics.

Remarkably, *Fading Away* was the one work that was praised by some of Robinson's harshest critics. Jabez Hughes, who had rejected combination printing outright by likening it to a child playing with a toy puzzle, admired this one image for its emotional

²¹ Ibid.

²² [Shadbolt], [Editorial], in *Liverpool & Manchester Photographic Journal* 2, no. 12 (June 15, 1858): 148.

²³ [Hugh Diamond], [Exhibition of Photographs, Leeds, in conjunction with British Association], in *Journal of the Photographic Society of London*, 5, no. 71 (October 21, 1858): 38.

²⁴ Unidentified, "Critical Notices: The Photographic Exhibition at the Crystal Palace. Second Notice," in *The Photographic News* 1, no. 4 (October 1, 1858): 41.

content. Looking back three years after *Fading Away*'s debut, he wrote: "But there is a deep pathos and feeling about his *Fading Away*, that gives that picture a far higher place in my mind than any of his other productions."²⁶ Even more remarkably, Alfred H. Wall also wrote favorably about this image, well after the height of the "patchwork" controversy. It was one of the few instances where he felt Robinson's efforts worthy of praise. Writing in August of 1862, he stated:

Mr. Robinson's picture *Fading Away* has been so often criticised, that I must confine myself to saying that, in my opinion, it is a composition which he has not yet surpassed. As to the objections brought against it by certain morbidly, delicate critics, who seem to think the great mission of a fine art is alternately to tickle them into laughter and soothe them into dreaming indolence, I can only add that I don't agree with them, and think some of the most sad and melancholy scenes in life are calculated to give birth to the very noblest thoughts, and rouse in us the most humanising feelings.²⁷

This work, then, embodied for Wall the edifying purpose for creating art—to arouse profound feeling and sympathy. Despite his doubts regarding combination printing's capability to successfully carry the banner for art photography, it is clear that Wall admired the sentiment Robinson was able to evoke with this image.

Robinson clearly had achieved his goal of producing a work that would provoke an emotional reaction. But what was the cost of this success? Was he able to capitalize upon this work and continue in this vein? Did his audience accept the fictive space of this photograph by treating it as they would a painting? What is clear from *Fading*

²⁵ Ibid., 40.

²⁶ C. Jabez Hughes, "Art-Photography: Its Scope and Characteristics," in *The Photographic News* 5, no. 122 (January 4, 1861): 3.

Away's creation is that Robinson intended it to be read as a fictive work in the manner outlined in the previous chapter. *Fading Away* was his first significant attempt to work out what could be a successful image, particularly with combination printing. In later years Robinson's assistant, Nelson Cherrill, asserted that Robinson knew full well what he was attempting:

At the time this picture was taken, it was made a matter of considerable discussion whether or not the subject was one fitted for an accurate and realistic display of photographic art. It was *because* Mr. Robinson considered the subject was one eminently unsuited to the absolute rendering of an ordinary photograph that he chose the picture for his first serious attempt at combination printing. It was because the subject would be considered so awful and so painful if it were to be rendered simply photographically that Mr. Robinson chose it to try to show that the amelioration of art could be introduced into even the commonly supposed unplastic art of photography.²⁸

Cherrill's argument reveals one of the key paradoxes regarding Robinson's use of combination printing to create fictive works. For a successful image, it had to be cohesive enough so that the evidence of its manufacture—hard lines, outlines, etc, did not overwhelm the subject. Yet the scenes themselves needed to be unequivocally read as being composed by the photographer in order to qualify for artistic status. In this case, Cherrill's comments point to the fact that *Fading Away*'s audience *had* to recognize immediately that it was a composed scene capable of the amelioration of art, rather than as an "ordinary photograph." Otherwise, Robinson risked creating an image that would be considered "so awful and so painful" for the public. One of his key strategies to

²⁷ Wall, "Exhibition Gossip. Revision of the Awards and Distribution of the Medals, &c.—French and English Genre Studies," in *The British Journal of Photography* 9, no. 172 (August 15, 1862): 316.

²⁸ Cherrill, "On Combination Printing," in *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London* 14, no. 201 (January 16, 1869): 205.

assure this end was by appending poetry to the photograph. We will see shortly that this was largely, although not uniformly, successful.

One very powerful way the poetic framework created the fictive space in *Fading Away* was through its immediate, although implicit, association with painting. As discussed in the beginning of the chapter, suggestive titles and poetic associations were common practices in the Royal Academy exhibitions. Illustrations of scenes from novels in painting were especially popular, but poetic illustrations were also shown regularly, most commonly scenes from Shakespeare. In other cases, the texts performed the simpler role of epigraph—evoking a mood or theme rather than providing a narrative for illustration. By mimicking this fine art practice (particularly familiar and effective within the context of an exhibition) Robinson immediately cast *Fading Away* as being similar to those paintings. This borrowed technique led to an association of the photographic space with the conventionalized space of painting. Robinson's hope must have been that when someone saw his work exhibited with poetic lines, they would assume the relationship between text and image to be akin to academic painting. If effective, this would be an ambitious association for a photograph, which was not generally assumed to be capable of such a relationship.

As in the case of all of Robinson's photographs with textual inscriptions, the lines from *Queen Mab* that Robinson used to accompany *Fading Away* operate dually in an intellectual and mechanical way. Firstly, they identify the existence and substance of the

narrative in the photograph. This identification of the narrative also serves a practical function—it helps to unify the inherently ambiguous space inevitably created by combination printing. This unification of the space, the implication of a pictorial narrative that related to an accompanying text, also helped to perform a separation of Robinson's photographic space from its direct connection to Nature. As we saw in Chapter 1, this was a key element of Robinson's fictive space and his works' artistic status.

The poetic citation functions as an epigraph by casting the emotional tone of the image it represents. This factor can be illustrated by the following example. When *Harper's Weekly* published its engraving of *Fading Away*, [Plate 29], it did so without the accompanying poetic lines. The article that followed did not mention Robinson's use of Shelley's poetry, nor did it include these lines as part of the caption. These lines' emotional impact was not needed, however, for the engraver made two significant changes to Robinson's composition in order to solidify its meaning. In the engraving, the dying girl looks at her mother with open eyes. Her mother, in turn, looks back as a tear falls from her eye. The lines from Shelley's poem that Robinson included with his exhibition prints function much the same way as the tear in the engraving—by serving as emotional touchstone. For Robinson they would have demonstrated that photography was entirely capable of producing and evoking an emotional response.

Moreover, the poetic text, being fictional, immediately brought *Fading Away* into the same realm. But how did Robinson's audience know the poem? Even accepting Douglas Nickel's recent assertion that the British were some of the best educated people in the world who memorized long passages from the country's finest poets, it wasn't necessary for them to know the entirety of Shelley's *Queen Mab*.²⁹ Robinson took these lines completely out of their context in the poem. In his 1884 book *Picture Making by Photography*, Robinson addressed this aspect of poetic evocation. Referring to Thomas Gray's poem "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," he wrote:

The poem is full of picture-giving lines; some are so plainly descriptive, such as 'The ploughman homeward plods his weary way' as to require no effort of the imagination to see them at once; others are suggestive, and all the more valuable on that account. Of this kind is the line 'Brushing with hasty steps the dews away.' In the poem this line applies to a poetic youth, but the artist is not called upon to literally follow the poem; the line itself may be taken without the context, and there are then infinite possibilities in it for other applications—for instance, it would apply to a village maiden skipping along the fields at the break of the day, basket on arm or hayrake on shoulder.³⁰

In terms of the visual mechanics of reading the image, the narrative support to *Fading Away* served to unify the space of the combination print. Because this work was made from several negatives, it was possible that the viewers would be distracted by discrepancies in the spaces depicted in the different negatives. By attaching the picture to a known narrative, Robinson gave this combination a sense of cohesion. Ultimately, this union between text and image was intended to demonstrate Robinson's complete control of over his pictorial materials—another key aspect of the fictive space.

²⁹ Douglas R. Nickel, *Dreaming in Pictures: The Photography of Lewis Carroll* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 43.

We have seen how *Fading Away* was intended, but how was it received? Was it read as a fictive work, or, alternately, as a documentary photograph of a dying girl? Clearly there were a great many people who accepted the work as an artistically rendered fiction, for otherwise these prints would not have been seen so commonly in print sellers' windows during the months it was up for display. George Shadbolt and Hugh Diamond, as we have seen, were among those in the photographic press who supported Robinson's efforts at artistic photography, particularly because this work was able to generate sympathy in the viewer.

As Hugh Diamond had pointed out, *Fading Away* was able to generate a certain amount of emotion in the viewer—a key element to its artistic status. What is striking about *Fading Away*'s reception is the strong reaction from many different sources *objecting to* the type of emotion Robinson was able to generate. Most, if not all, of these people realized that Robinson's work was an act of fiction, yet they clearly did not accept the “amelioration of art” while viewing this painful subject. I have already quoted extensively from a correspondent to *The Photographic News* who objected to Robinson's inclusion of a character representing a lover. His objections went further than taking offense to the man in the window:

Mr. Robinson does not, like Mr. Rejlander, appeal to the passions, but to a kind of morbid sentiment; and it would be difficult for him to have chosen a subject calculated to excite painful emotions in the minds of so many persons in anything like the same degree. How few there are among us

³⁰ Robinson, *Picture Making by Photography* (London: Piper & Carter, 1884), 68.

who have not to lament the loss of some dear friend or relative by this terrible disease, and whose recollections, and consequently painful emotions, are revived with such intensity as to make their visit to the exhibition a source of pain instead of pleasure.³¹

Indeed, consumption, or tuberculosis as it was later known, was an extremely prevalent disease in nineteenth-century Britain. Medicine had yet to determine its cause, and all known treatments were ineffective. Consumption was especially devastating because it affected all classes of English society. Today it is difficult to determine how many died of the disease, largely because until the end of the century it was not distinguished from other wasting chest diseases. One modern study has confidently asserted that in the nineteenth century tuberculosis was “unquestionably the greatest single cause of disease and death in the Western world.”³² Regardless of the actual statistics, a majority of Robinson’s public would clearly have recognized *Fading Away*’s subject.

While Robinson may have been evoking consumption as one of the great Romantic themes, for much of his public it was a subject that hit too close to home. George Shadbolt, in 1858, related that Robinson had received many painful letters regarding *Fading Away*.³³ As Robinson himself related, his image elicited a great deal of response from the public. Writing in the series of *Autobiographical Sketches* published in *The Practical Photographer* from 1897 – 1898, Robinson revealed: “I find it impossible to give any adequate impression of the reception of *Fading Away* by the public. I have a

³¹ An Ex-Member of the Council, “Correspondence: Exhibition of the Photographic Society,” in *The Photographic News* 2, no. 27 (March 11, 1859): 9.

³² Rene and Jean Dubos, *The White Plague*, 10.

large volume of newspaper cuttings, as well as many very painful letters and long poems from families who were losing one of their number, for the dying girl seemed to be like every other young girl dying of consumption in the country.”³⁴ All of this emotional reaction to his work must have deeply affected Robinson. As Shadbolt wrote after only two exhibitions of *Fading Away*, some of the letters Robinson was receiving were “so painful a nature that he [Robinson] is tempted to regret ever having executed the idea.”³⁵ Robinson had certainly not calculated on this type of response to his image.

It is impossible to say whether those members of the public who reacted so strongly to the subject matter of *Fading Away* read the photograph as a work of fact or fiction. Surely either interpretation could have lead to “very painful letters and long poems” in response. For others, however, Robinson’s calculated measures towards fiction were not enough, and many clearly understood *Fading Away* to be a straight photograph of a real dying girl. Robinson later reminisced: “People came to Leamington to see the model, and [they] were disappointed as much as I could make them. But in one case I weakly yielded to the urgent entreaties of Countess S---, and took the little girl to London to be interviewed. I am sure this was a great mistake; the disillusion was unmistakeable.”³⁶

Those who came to visit the female subject surely were doing so with the expectation of

³³ [Shadbolt], [Editorial], in *The Liverpool and Manchester Photographic Journal* 2, no. 19 (October 1, 1858), 237. Following other critics, Shadbolt felt that this emotional response was ‘proof’ of photography’s artistic power.

³⁴ Robinson, “Autobiographical Sketches. Chapter V,” in *The Practical Photographer* 8, no. 94 (October, 1897): 292.

³⁵ [Shadbolt], [Editorial], in *The Liverpool and Manchester Photographic Journal* 2, no. 19 (October 1, 1858): 237.

lending emotional support to the ailing patient. In these cases, Robinson's attempts to make his fiction understood were inadequate—they were unable to suspend their belief in the photograph as a direct record of nature.

Another part of Robinson's audience was unwilling, rather than unable, to accept the fiction of *Fading Away*. These viewers saw straight through the artifice of Robinson's image, critiquing *Fading Away* as a document of posed actors rather than as a representation of a dying girl and her family. Even in favorable reviews, many gave credit to the models themselves rather than to Robinson's manipulatory abilities. One review in *The Photographic News*, for example, attributed much of *Fading Away*'s effect to the young woman:

But the great success which attends Mr. Robinson's efforts is owing to his being so ably seconded by a young lady, who, to say the least of it, is thoroughly able to appreciate and enter into the feeling of the poetry or sentiment which it is his object to elucidate. Be the character what it may, she thoroughly understands her part, and, with an art peculiarly her own, she makes the picture something extraordinary.³⁷

Yet this dependence upon the model could backfire. This same critic continued:

Though the secondary figures which are necessary to form the picture are good, and are equal to the average run of good photographic models, yet the difference between *the* model—the gem of models—and the others, is painfully perceptible. For instance, the figure which represents the sister fails to give that true expression which is requisite for the part assigned her. She enters but partially into the feeling of the subject, and the expression is consequently forced.³⁸

³⁶ Robinson, "Autobiographical Sketches. Chapter V," in *The Practical Photographer* 8, no. 94 (October, 1897): 292.

³⁷ Unidentified author, "The Photographic Exhibition at the Crystal Palace: Second Notice," in *The Photographic News* 1, no. 4 (October 1, 1858): 41.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Like other composition photographers, Robinson had to rely upon the acting/posing abilities of his models to convey the image's impact. He could dress them and arrange them, but this creative process was inevitably a collaboration. Critics were quick to highlight the manifest difference between similar subjects made by painters and photographers. Comparing *Fading Away* as well as other composition photographs to paintings, a critic for the *Literary Gazette* wrote:

A photograph of the models he [Raphael] used in the positions he placed them, and surrounded by all the accessories he introduced, would no doubt form a valuable study for a painter, but it would be a sorry substitute for his picture. What gives his picture all its value is that which he added to its models, and not what he found in them. When, therefore, a photographer, having placed certain persons in an attitude, and surrounded them with various 'properties,' takes a photograph of the group, and presents it with all the stiffness of arrangement...and asks your admiration for it under some poetic or suggestive title, the most unobservant is struck with the incongruity, and the instructed eye turns from it with disgust."³⁹

For a man who asserted the artistic qualities of his photographic compositions, the complete control the photographer had over his image was of key importance. Critics' focus on the models' behavior was discouraging for Robinson because it exposed this lack of creative autonomy regarding how the model appeared. This criticism also highlighted photography's relative inability to do anything but record these models' expressions as they presented them.

Three of these different reactions just discussed (the very strong reaction regarding his choice of theme; those who thought it was real; and those who criticized the models'

³⁹ Unidentified author, "Exhibition in Suffolk Street," reprinted in *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London* 5, no. 77 (January 21, 1859): 147.

performances) all point to the challenges and hazards of creating *Fading Away* and photographic compositions in general: trying to overpower the (presumed) realism of the photographic medium. The direct power of these photographic images, particularly *Fading Away*, overcame the latter two groups' abilities to set aside the medium's realism—despite Robinson's attempt to link photography with poetry.

In the end, Robinson relied upon his audience to understand and accept the fictive nature of a photograph that gave few signs of fiction within the image itself. Despite all of the fictive effects of the narrative framework, there were the contrary signs that the audience recognized—it was a photograph; it featured figures in contemporary dress; and it was of a very contemporary theme. Moreover, the subject and relevance of the narrative overcame its own fictional nature as well as its poetic association. For many of those who reacted so strongly to the morbid theme of the image, Robinson seems to have miscalculated the powerful sentiment it would evoke.

Sentiment was exactly what Robinson was hoping to provoke in an effort to claim an important victory for photography as an artistic medium. While *Fading Away* was claimed by many to place a firm stake in fine art territory, for many others the sentiment proved just the opposite. This sentiment, evoked by the subject, was compounded by the realism of the photographic medium, which presented a young girl dying of disease. In this instance Robinson failed to appreciate the power of photography's tie to nature as a documentary medium. The compounded sentiment overpowered every other element in

the picture, even for some of those who otherwise accepted and supported its fictive status. The fictive space was simply not transformative enough.

Most of the support Robinson enjoyed for this work from photography critics unfortunately came well after Robinson had reassessed his artistic project. While he abandoned depicting the death of recognizable contemporary subjects, he did not yet abandon photographing death. His next attempt was to portray it in such a way that the audience would have to understand it as fictional.

The Lady of Shalott

In the fall of 1861 Robinson's *The Lady of Shalott* [Plate 31] was exhibited at an exhibition of photographs held in conjunction with the meeting of the British Association in Manchester. In response to this work several reviews appeared, either devoted solely to this single photograph or as part of larger exhibition reviews. Opinions ranged from the positive or ambivalent to the negative. So much critical attention was not unusual for a significant photograph; we have just seen many reviews of *Fading Away* in the daily and weekly presses.

In the 1861 exhibition and thereafter, Robinson displayed *The Lady of Shalott* with two and a half stanzas from part four of Tennyson's poem of the same name. The photograph was made from two or three negatives, and was relatively simple as a combination print. In one of the existing original glass negatives, housed in the RPS

collection at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford, England, we see the dressed model lying in a punt in a pool of water [Plate 32]. The pool is artificial, clearly made by Robinson in his garden. Behind the model we see a large mound of dirt, beyond which is a brick wall with a towel hanging over it. There is also a mound of earth covered with ivy. In the exhibition print Robinson used the lower (unmasked) portion of this negative, with the exception of some lily pads that Robinson touched out in the final version.

Robinson displayed *The Lady of Shalott* with verses from the poem written on the exhibition mat. Of the entire poem's thirty-eight stanzas, Robinson transcribed the two and a half that described the scene he had chosen to produce:

Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
 The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seer in a trance
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
 Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Through the noises of the night
 She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,

They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Of course, these lines depict several moments of action in the poem, and Robinson wisely chose to illustrate the most static of them—the Lady, lying motionless in the boat, floating down the river. Robinson included more than just the few specific lines about her trip down the river in order to give some context to the image. While Robinson did include in these lines reference to the Lady’s death: “They heard her singing her last song,” he omitted the next stanza that focused more intently on the morbid aspects of the story. This read:

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to tower’d Camelot.
For ere she reach’d upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

He also did not include the beginning of the first cited stanza, which details stormy weather that the Lady encounters upon leaving her tower. In short, Robinson chose to include the text that he was able, in some way, to illustrate photographically. Knowledge of the complete poem would undoubtedly lend a richer interpretation of Robinson’s representation, and Robinson would have likely assumed that many of his viewers would have known the 1842 revision of the Laureate’s work [Appendix A]. Whereas in *Fading Away* the quoted lines are taken out of context of Shelley’s *Queen Mab* in order to stand as an epigraph for his photograph, these lines from *Lady of Shalott* are related very much with the understanding that they, as well as the image, are part of the whole narrative

poem. Simply stated, Robinson composed this photograph to illustrate a scene from the poem. This is a very different relationship between text and image than in *Fading Away*.

Robinson's audience could have been familiar with Tennyson's poem through the 1857 edition of *Poems* published by Edward Moxon, one of the more famous examples of English book illustration in the century. The "Moxon Tennyson" included images by three Pre-Raphaelite artists (William Holman Hunt, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and John Everett Millais) as well as more traditional artists, such as William Mulready, Clarkson Stanfield, and others. Specifically, there were two engravings illustrating *The Lady of Shalott*: one by Hunt [Plate 33] and the other by Rossetti [Plate 34]. Robinson's *Shalott* differs from these two Pre-Raphaelite depictions most obviously because it illustrates a different moment in the poem. Whereas Hunt depicted the climactic moment as the Lady's curse begins to unfold after her direct glance at Lancelot, Rossetti chose the end of the poem where Lancelot discovers her dead body.

Despite depicting a different moment, Robinson was clearly aiming for his image to be associated with Pre-Raphaelite painting. As he commented at the end of his career: "In the 'fifties,' pre-Raphaelite pictures attracted much attention, and I thought I would attempt to show that the curious feeling and weird effect shown in many of these pictures could be conveyed by photography."⁴⁰ The unusual shape of the photograph would also have associated *Shalott* with some of the Pre-Raphaelite paintings that preceded it. In

particular, the arched top is very similar to William Holman Hunt's first painting, *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia from Proteus*, from 1851 [Plate 35]. More interestingly, the Pre-Raphaelites had also used the arched top for images of death, including two very famous ones: Henry Wallis' 1856 *Chatterton* [Plate 36], and John Everett Millais' 1852 *Ophelia* [Plate 37]. For viewers who knew these Royal Academy paintings, Robinson's image would have been very familiar.

Robinson's critics noticed the Pre-Raphaelite association when *Shalott* was shown throughout the early 1860s, although they more often ascribed *Shalott*'s Pre-Raphaelite character to its clearly detailed rendering of the reeds along the riverbank. Robinson would have appreciated this characterization, for he claimed to have once attempted to paint "a picture in the feeling of the brotherhood, in which every leaf of a wall of ivy was painfully studied."⁴¹ Robinson's *Lady of Shalott*, then, had two important characteristics suggesting to the viewer that it depicted a fictive space. The narrative would have given it spatial continuity with the poem, and the associations with Pre-Raphaelite painting would have also linked the photograph with the Brotherhood's fondness for Biblical, poetical or allegorical subjects.

Reviews of *Shalott* were mixed. In 1861 *The Photographic News*, *The British Journal of Photography*, and the *Journal of the Photographic Society of London* published six

⁴⁰ Robinson, "Mr. H.P. Robinson's Photographs at the Camera Club," in *The Photographic News* 33, no. 1623 (October 11, 1889): 659.

⁴¹ Robinson, "Autobiographical Sketches. Chapter VI," in *The Practical Photographer* 8, no. 96 (December, 1897): 358.

reviews of the work. Each critiqued it within larger exhibition reviews as well as devoting separate reviews to this work. *The Photographic News* was very supportive of Robinson's attempt to depict the subject:

We know very well that there are many non-photographic and some photographic readers who will smile with complacent pity at the notion of giving embodiment to an imaginative work by means of photography, and regard it as more difficult than 'making bricks without straw.' The task is difficult; and we honour the man whose ardent love of, and faith in, his art gives him courage to attempt to realize thus the conceptions he has admired.⁴²

This critic went on to praise the "mystic solemnity" that Robinson had successfully conveyed from the poem. While this writer also disliked certain details, such as Robinson's addition of a damask drapery over the Lady's body, he acknowledged that this criticism was leveled only because he felt the photograph worthy of careful criticism.⁴³

The British Journal of Photography published three critiques of *Shalott* while it was exhibited in Manchester. The first two were brief and negative—one felt that it was "sadly wanting in poetic grace,"⁴⁴ while the other felt that it was "not a good poetical conception of the poet's genius."⁴⁵ A significantly longer article devoted solely to *Shalott* was rather ambivalent, claiming that the work was only a partial success.

⁴² Unidentified author, "Critical Notices: *The Lady of Shalott*. By H.P. Robinson, Leamington," in *The Photographic News* 5, no. 159 (September 20, 1861): 446.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 447. He wrote: "Had we admired it less as a work of art, we should not have cared to criticize minor faults, and it is only because the picture is so fine in other respects, that these faults of detail are worthy of notice."

⁴⁴ "Our Eye-Witness at Manchester," "Exhibitions: British Association for the Advancement of Science," in *The British Journal of Photography* 8, no. 150 (September 16, 1861): 331.

Interestingly, this last reviewer felt that Robinson had not quoted enough of the poem to explain the image.⁴⁶ He believed that one needed to know the whole story of the Lady, particularly her resignation to her fate, to fully appreciate the mood of Robinson's photograph.

The Journal of the Photographic Society of London initially praised the work as proof that photography could reach towards artistic ends.⁴⁷ However, when *Shalott* was exhibited as part of the 1862 Exhibition of the Photographic Society of Scotland, the journal critic panned the photograph: "it only proves to us that when a first rate photographic artist, with a strong feeling for art, can produce nothing more interesting, the range of this branch of photography is limited. . . . For rustic and domestic groups, such as the Wood Scene [*Holiday in the Wood*] of last year, these got-up scenes and artificial scaffolding may be available; for the higher department of Art, we are satisfied they never will."⁴⁸ This reviewer again raised the question of artistic photography's proper parameters. While some of the photographic journal's critics and editors encouraged artistic photographers to constantly push the boundaries of composition photography, a larger number of critics, both artistic and photographic, felt that photography could do only so much in that realm. As this critic asserted, many believed that photography could

⁴⁵ "Our Eye-Witness at Manchester," "Exhibition of Photographs at Manchester in Connexion with the Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science," in *The British Journal of Photography* 8, no. 151 (October 1, 1861): 345.

⁴⁶ Unidentified author, "Photographic Contributions to Art," in *The British Journal of Photography* 8, no. 152 (October 15, 1861): 356.

⁴⁷ Unidentified author, "Review: *The Lady of Shalott*. By H.P. Robinson," in *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London* 7, no. 114 (October 15, 1861): 286-7.

perform some moralizing similar to genre painting, while grander and more ambitious styles were out of reach. This issue will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 3.

Alfred Wall shared this sentiment. In an 1864 article entitled “‘Composition’ Photography: Searching for a Subject,” Wall considered what he termed as a *hypothetical* situation a photographer wishing to create an artistic photograph based on “The Lady of Shalott.”⁴⁹ (He claimed in a footnote that he took this subject only because it was well known to photographers!) In the article Wall went through the process of deciding whether to adopt this poem to a photograph:

We first study the poem so as to realise to the full the ideas of the poet. We picture to our minds the scene described, consider its component parts, note its more and less prominent features, imagine the expression of each of these parts is capable of receiving, and the degree of relationship which each such expression bears to the expression of the whole... We say there is human life gliding gently away into infinity—the river moving placidly on towards the ocean—day dying into night—light melting into darkness...⁵⁰

This was a strong defense of artistic photography in that it detailed the thought process behind the creation of a composition photograph. Yet Wall cautioned against rash decisions when adopting poetry to images, for he pointed out that they were different languages: “Translators tell us that there are some works so intimately associated with the language to which they first belong that no justice can be done to them in any other. So it may be that even when we can find a subject and grasp its thought we may yet find that,

⁴⁸ Unidentified author, “Sixth Exhibition of the Photographic Society of Scotland, Edinburgh,” in *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London* 7, no. 117 (January 15, 1862): 348.

⁴⁹ Wall, “‘Composition’ Photography: Searching for a Subject,” in *The British Journal of Photography* 11, no. 205 (January 1, 1864): 8-9.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

although grand and beautiful in its native elements, such a subject is feeble and unsatisfactory when translated into the language of pictures.”⁵¹ His final rejection of the subject rested upon the photographer’s reliance upon models to enact these subtle emotions:

If the sentiment of a subject is in its colouring—if the emotions and passions to be expressed are so refined or complicated that no mere model can be made to express them—if it can only be realised by the natural combination of rare beauties and qualities required but never to be found in any one model, let us abstain from rash attempts only calculated to bring down ridicule upon ourselves and upon our art, and turn to the spacious, indeed inexhaustible, fields of loveliness and power which are legitimately open to us.⁵²

As discussed in the previous chapter, Wall’s theory of photographic imitation led to very different conclusions than Robinson’s. Wall believed that nature itself provided all the subject matter one needed, and that the photographer had to find the best view of a given subject and frame it as interestingly as possible. Ultimately, Wall decided that any photographer’s attempt to illustrate *The Lady of Shalott* would be futile. “There are laurels enough to gratify the proudest ambition therein,” he wrote, “without foolhardy attempts at the improbable or impossible, which generally characterises unreasoning ambition in the conceited and ignorant.”⁵³ While Wall had written that *Fading Away* was a remarkable work, this was a sharp rebuke, although curiously written a few years after *Shalott* was first exhibited.

⁵¹ Ibid., 9.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

Remarkably, Robinson also later rejected Shalott's validity, although for different reasons. Beginning in 1868 with the publication of *Pictorial Effect in Photography* and ending with his *Autobiographical Sketches* in 1897-1898, Robinson wrote a series of books and articles expounding upon his theory of photographic imitation. Part of this project was to look back at several key photographs over his career. While Robinson did not regret creating *Fading Away* from the vantage point of the end of his career, *Shalott* was more problematic. He later wrote: "It is not the fact of reality that is required, but the truth of imitation that constitutes a veracious picture;" but, in the same book he had this to say about the issue of fitness: "The photographer must not let his invention tempt him to represent, by any trick, any scene that does not occur in nature; if he does, he does violence to his art, because it is known that his finished result represents some object or thing that has existed for a space of time before his camera."⁵⁴

In 1892 Robinson wrote a review of some American photographs that illustrated Tennyson's poem *Elaine*. While he liked the sentiment in some of these images, he ultimately felt that photography should not illustrate myths: "however much poetry we may put into a photograph it is based on fact...You cannot embody a myth from nature with a camera, or revivify the dead in photography."⁵⁵ He explained this change of heart at length:

It may be said that painters produce these subjects, then why should photographers not also? The reply is that painters embody their imagination of these subjects, the photographer can only show what is

⁵⁴ Robinson, *Pictorial Effect in Photography*, 78.

⁵⁵ Robinson, "Impossible Photography," in *Photographic Quarterly* 3, no. 10 (January 1892): 103.

before the lens. The painter may help the carrying out of his idea by the use of models, the photographer can only represent the models. The painter's representation of these subjects is to a great extent a convention which we have agreed to accept, and there are conventions to which we agree without trying to make believe much. For instance, we all know absolutely that Christ and His Apostles did not dress in coloured blankets, yet we have been content to let the painters for four or five hundred years dress them in that fashion... Now in a photograph we all know that, however much we may call the picture King Arthur, it is only a portrait of a dressed-up model. It is easier to believe in a painter's conventional Christ than in a photographer's Arthur, however correctly the latter may be dressed.⁵⁶

Revisiting his own photograph of *Shalott*, Robinson admitted that he had created a photograph that was “very untrue to nature,” and he concluded that “it was a ghastly mistake to attempt such a subject in our realistic art, and with the exception of an Ophelia done in a moment of aberration, I never afterwards went for themes beyond the limits of the life of our day.”⁵⁷ Robinson thus admitted that photography's conventions were necessarily different from those of painting, and that a properly-dressed photographed Christ was less acceptable than a conventionally-dressed painted one. Whereas painting's pictorial language was already assumed to be fictional, photography did not have the luxury of this *a priori* understanding by the general public. For Robinson, the challenge was to create works that operated within the limits of being “based on fact” yet still convey imagination and sentiment.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 104-5.

But how did Robinson learn his lesson; when did his moment of revelation occur?

Writing in 1884 in his book *Picture Making by Photography*, Robinson discussed his realization that imaginative subjects were out of bounds:

In the early part of my photographic career, I was as much a sinner in this way as anybody. I didn't know better. I did not hesitate to call my little efforts by the names of people who had died a thousand years before photography was thought of, or who never had any existence at all. Ophelia, Elaine, Mariana, the Lady of Shalott—these were some of the names I profaned. I soon found out my mistake. I am not one of those who pretend not to read or take heed of criticisms, and have often felt obliged to the critics for many a hint. The following from a notice of the Exhibition, 1859, in a morning paper, is what opened my eyes to the subject:

We are not sure that Mr. Robinson's figure of 'Mariana' is not new, but we are quite certain that it will not suggest to anyone the 'Mariana' of Tennyson. It is simply the portrait of a young lady trying to look like 'Mariana,' and not succeeding. Choloponin, a Russian photographer, has sent, among other things, a figure of 'Mdlle. Orecchia as Leonora,' in the 'Trovatore,' which is satisfactory in all respects. If Mr. Robinson had been the producer of this photograph, he would, in accordance with his system, have entitled it simply 'Leonora.'

I accepted the critic's hint at once, and have never since given any of my figures the names of historical personages.⁵⁸

While the distinction the critic is making would appear to be a technicality, clearly it was an important one at the time for some critics of photography. The problem with Robinson's image *Mariana* was that there was too much ambiguity about what was being depicted. Because of photography's apparent inability to escape its tie to nature, the viewer in this case needed a little extra information to accept this as a controlled and crafted representation (i.e. a work of art). The second image provided this information in the guise of "Mdlle. Orecchia as..." This ambiguity is one of the reasons Robinson had

sought to attach poetic lines to some of these images. His epigraphic texts served to signal these works as fictive—as representations in an up front manner. Although the lines from Tennyson’s *Shalott* satisfied Robinson’s need for a clear reading of his work, *Shalott* was evidently too fictive a subject for a medium whose imagery needed some basis in reality. Robinson did find subject matter more perfectly suited to the groundedness of photography while still being able to be fictive—genre subjects, which will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Robinson’s sensitivity to criticism serves as a possible clue in a peculiar ambiguity surrounding *The Lady of Shalott*. In a paper presented in conjunction with his 1889 retrospective exhibition at the Camera Club, Robinson offered a critique of his own photograph: “The object in this case was to neglect picturesque composition, and to make as formal an arrangement as possible. Unfortunately pictorial instinct prevailed at the last moment, and I made the dying figure drawn up one knee to break the line. This ruins the picture. The whole sentiment should be one of dreariness, and monotony of line would have helped the effect.”⁵⁹ It was unusual for Robinson to admit this type of failure, even in an early work. It becomes even more interesting when compared to a review of *Shalott* from its first public display at the annual Photographic Society of London exhibition in January 1860 (The earliest exhibition I have cited thus far took place in the fall of 1861). Writing in *The Athenaeum* a critic charged: “but in *The Lady of Shalott*, Mr. Robinson has been most unfortunate, both as regards the personal attractiveness of

⁵⁸ Robinson, *Picture Making by Photography*, 115.

his model and his method of posing her. The position of the shoulder requires study, and more folds on the upper drapery would have broken the monotony of the figure.”⁶⁰ These seem to be unusual criticisms of *Shalott* for two reasons: one is that they do not seem to apply to this photograph. The second reason is that the term “monotony” is applied both here and in Robinson’s critique; however, for *The Athenaeum* it was leveled as a criticism, whereas Robinson lauded it as a quality that he had, unfortunately, *removed* from the figure. The question becomes: how could one critic chastise Robinson’s image for a trait that Robinson regretted it lacked?

I suggest that there was a different (earlier) version of *Shalott* than the one exhibited beginning in the fall of 1861 and published in Robinson’s *Autobiographical Sketches*.⁶¹ (I will refer to the published version as the “known” version.) There are a number of pieces of evidence that point to this conclusion; however, because this earlier version has not been found or published, my case must remain hypothetical and be based upon circumstantial evidence. The first piece of evidence is *The Athenaeum*’s critique quoted above. Neither of its specific criticisms is particularly appropriate to this image as we know it. The shoulder does not seem to be out of place, nor are there too few folds on the lady’s “upper drapery.” Another odd fact is that this was the only review of *Shalott* while being shown in London, whereas this image received a great deal of critical attention the following year in Manchester and Edinburgh. Why would there be so much less attention

⁵⁹ Robinson, “Mr. H.P. Robinson’s Photographs at the Camera Club,” 659

⁶⁰ Unidentified author, “Fine Arts: The Photographic Exhibition,” in *The Athenaeum* no. 1682 (January 21, 1860): 99.

paid to this photograph in a London venue than in the subsequent venues of Manchester and Edinburgh?

Other facts also seem to point to the known version's creation in 1861, rather than the year before. Robinson, writing various retrospective articles towards the end of his career, consistently cited this work as having been created during 1861. Moreover, G. Wharton Simpson, Robinson's vocal supporter, reviewed *Shalott* when it was shown as part of an exhibition of the Photographic Society of London in 1865.⁶² In this article, Simpson asserted that this was the first time *Shalott* had been shown in the annual London exhibition. Surely Robinson's close friend would have remembered if Robinson had exhibited the known version at the 1860 London exhibition. Finally, in all of the heated debates about combination printing between Wall and Robinson in the spring and summer of 1860, neither mentioned the work, although the known version is clearly composed from multiple negatives. It would seem uncharacteristic of Wall to miss an opportunity to criticize Robinson's oeuvre, and it would be very surprising if Wall had changed his opinion when he wrote his 1864 critique. All in all, I would conclude from these factors that Robinson created a different non-combination photograph entitled *Lady of Shalott* and exhibited it in 1860. From his own admission, Robinson was sensitive to reviews of his work. It is quite possible that he absorbed the criticism of the first version as being "monotonous" in feeling, and this might explain the unfortunate "pictorial

⁶¹ Robinson, "Autobiographical Sketches. Chapter VI," in *The Practical Photographer* 8, no. 96 (December, 1897): 357.

⁶² [Simpson], "The Photographic Exhibition," in *The Photographic News* 9, no. 348 (May 5, 1865): 205-6.

instinct” that “prevailed at the last moment” as he was posing the figure for the second version. My interpretation of this admission is that he ultimately regretted making this concession to criticism.

So what does *Lady of Shalott* represent? According to Robinson this photograph expressed a need to push the boundaries of artistic photography further than had been attempted before. Following the unexpected emotional reaction that greeted *Fading Away*, perhaps Robinson wanted to explore less emotionally charged ground.

Immediately after *Fading Away* Robinson produced a rustic genre scene entitled *Holiday in the Wood*. While this image will be discussed more fully in the next chapter, it was a broad critical success, particularly compared to *Fading Away*. Wanting to stretch beyond this “safer” rustic genre, Robinson created in *Shalott* another depiction of death that in no way could be interpreted as representing a real dying lady. Robinson’s work left no doubt as to its subject and fictional status, particularly by writing the specific verses on the exhibition mat and showing the title on the side of the boat.

But can there be something more to Robinson’s choice of poem? Quickly summarized, the poem tells the story of the Lady, sequestered in a castle on an island near Camelot. Alone in her castle, she weaves a tapestry to pass the time. Yet she is under a curse that prevents her from looking directly at the outside world. In order to see outside, therefore, she has to look at its reflection via a mirror. While she is generally cheerful, she does sometimes long to be out in the real world, as she once laments: “I am half sick of

shadows.” One day Sir Lancelot rides by on his horse and she sees his reflection in the mirror. Without considering either her actions or their consequences, she rushes to the window to see him directly, thus invoking the curse. Tennyson describes this climactic moment:

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro’ the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
 She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack’d from side to side;
“The curse is come upon me,” cried
 The Lady of Shalott.⁶³

The Lady leaves her tower as the weather turns stormy. At the end of the day she gets into a boat and floats down the river towards Camelot. As the boat makes its way downstream, she lies down and sings until she dies. As the dead Lady arrives at Camelot, she is noticed by Lancelot, who muses “She has a lovely face; / God in his mercy lend her grace.”

There have been various interpretations of the poem, as well as pictorial representations of different scenes from its narrative.⁶⁴ One of the main currents of interpretation has viewed the poem as a metaphor for artistic creation. This interpretation is compelling considering Robinson’s choice of subject after his experience with *Fading Away*, for *Shalott*’s significance must be considered in relation to the earlier controversial work. A.

⁶³ Taken from Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Poems* (London: Edward Moxon, 1857), 72.

⁶⁴ For pictorial representations, see *Ladies of Shalott: A Victorian Masterpiece and Its Contexts* (Providence: Brown University, 1985). For a summary of various interpretations of the poem, see Kerry

Dwight Culler has interpreted Tennyson's poem as a myth of the poetic imagination. He writes: "The poet cannot participate directly in reality but must view it through the mirror of the imagination and weave it into the tapestry of his art. The 'curse' is simply the inescapable conditions of the poet's art."⁶⁵ As I have discussed above, the central tenet of Robinson's artistic photography, the fictive space, relied upon the mediation of the outside world by the photographer's imagination. While Robinson asserted that the creation of *Fading Away* was mediated in this way, much of his audience either did not understand or they did not accept Robinson's imagination to be a component of the work. Robinson, after reflecting upon *Fading Away*'s reception, may have chosen to illustrate *Shalott* as a way of ensuring his audience understood and appreciated his imagination's role. *Shalott*'s theme of artistic creation served to reinforce the point.

The poem also serves Robinson's creative purpose in another way. Robinson's *Shalott*, in comparison to *Fading Away*, is much more subdued in emotional tone. There is no one mourning the Lady's death, and therefore the sentiment is greatly reduced.

Moreover, the fictional subject, while fully capable of rendering sentiment in a reader of Tennyson's poem, is less directly tragic than *Fading Away* which, although fictional, is not obviously so upon first inspection. Whereas Robinson's *Fading Away* exploited the notion of a romantic death, Tennyson's poem is almost anti-romantic in tone. The Lady's death is not some grand sacrifice, nor would it be recognized by any of the other

McSweeney, "'What's the Import?': Indefinitiveness of Meaning in Nineteenth-Century Parabolic Poems," in *Style* (Northern Indiana University) 36, no. 1 (spring 2002): 36-53.

⁶⁵ Quoted in McSweeney, 38.

characters in the poem. Rather than an outpouring of grief upon the discovery of her death, Lancelot, who does not know her, merely muses over her identity.

The central irony in the poem is that the Lady exchanges her imprisonment for something worse—death. Her passion is ill-fated. Robinson's efforts to make artistic photography employing the fictive space were similarly ironic. *Fading Away's* artistic mediation could not entirely overcome, nor even compensate for, its real photographic space. There was too much realism—the subject was too topical and the characters were too contemporary. Because of this present-day atmosphere, it was difficult to cast the young women as a type, or character, rather than as herself. The presumed realism of photography led many to read her as a specific person, while for others the presumed realism led to an all-too-powerful emotional effect.

By contrast, in *The Lady of Shalott* the artistic mediation overwhelmed photography's tie to nature. There was little or no acknowledgment in the image that it owed any possible success to the photographic medium. Even Robinson later felt that he was in error in depicting a purely imaginative subject, and he never again attempted an image so deliberately fictional. The irony of Robinson's photography was that by attempting to convey his imaginative control over his productions, he theorized a very narrow range of work that could succeed. He had effectively boxed himself in.

Sleep

The third Robinson combination photograph to touch upon these themes of innocence and death was his 1867 exhibition photograph *Sleep* [Plate 38]. The best description of it is in a glowing review published in *The Art-Journal*. The critic wrote:

It is called ‘Sleep—a study from Nature,’ and represents two young children sleeping on a simple bed in a room of some baronial castle or mansion overlooking the sea. The apartment is richly furnished, and hung with ancient implements of war, so far as we can make them out in the deep-shadowed parts of the print. Through a single mullioned window the moonbeams cast a strong light on the sleeping pair, one of whom, a boy, has thrown himself back from his pillow, with his left hand under his head, and in the movement has disarranged the coverlid, &c. His companion, a girl, by her long hair, has rested quietly. Through the window, the sea, lighted up by the moon, is visible.”⁶⁶

When it was exhibited, Robinson appended the following lines from Matthew Arnold’s 1852 Arthurian poem *Tristram and Iseult*, describing Tristram’s and Iseult of Brittany’s sleeping children:

They sleep in shelter’d rest
Like helpless birds in the warm nest,
On the castle’s southern side;
Where feebly comes the mournful roar
Of buffeting wind and surging tide
Through many a room and corridor.
—Full on their window the moon’s ray
Makes their chamber as bright as day.
It on the snowy pillow falls,
And on two angel-heads doth play
Through the soft-open’d lips the air
Scarcely moves the coverlet.
On little wandering arm is thrown
at random on the counterpane,
And often the fingers close in haste
As if their baby-owner chased
The butterflies again.

⁶⁶ Unidentified author, “Minor Topics of the Month,” in *The Art-Journal* 6, (December 1, 1867): 275.

This stir they have, and this alone;
But else they are so still!⁶⁷

Robinson's *Sleep* captures the spirit of this passage, rendering the sleeping state of the innocent children with gestures that mirror the quoted text. Interestingly, Robinson took some liberties with his quotation, for he left out some lines from the poem that he chose not to illustrate. For example, the poem describes the moonlight illuminating the bedroom with as shining "upon the blank white walls." The poem also describes the children as facing one another and wearing sleeping caps.

As with *Fading Away* and *The Lady of Shalott*, Robinson tied many of his images with specific poetic passages. While *Fading Away* treated isolated lines from Shelley's poem as an epigraph to the photograph, knowledge of the entire poem of *The Lady of Shalott* helped the viewer to understand Robinson's pictorial interpretation. *Sleep* used its poetic association in still a richer way. For a successful relationship, the image first had to illustrate the passage with which it was associated. Then, if it resonated further with other (not cited) parts of the poem, so much the better. Robinson's *Sleep* did both.

The bedroom scene functions well as an illustration of the long quoted passage from Arnold's poem. Robinson renders the children's innocence through dramatic chiaroscuro in his photograph. While most of the interior is rendered in varying degree of shadow, the children, dressed in white, are highlighted by the "moonlight" that comes through the window. He also successfully conveys the setting of a castle, both through the dark

interior and the period furnishings such as the curtain, the carved wooden chair and the tapestry hanging on the wall. Robinson also depicts many of the details from the poem. The boy (played by Robinson's son Ralph) lies asleep, with "soft-open'd lips." One of his arms reaches down and clutches the "counterpane" (bedspread) as if chasing butterflies in his dreams. Yet Robinson also took another liberty with the poem. In Arnold's work the children lie asleep on the southern side of the castle, away from the ocean. This position is even indicated in Robinson's quotation through the "mournful roar" coming "feebly" through many rooms and corridors. Robinson instead has this room, like Tristram's room in the poem, look out over the ocean's "surging tide."

Robinson also took liberty by introducing a tapestry hanging on the wall across from the bed. It is a fascinating element that can be interpreted in different ways, depending on one's knowledge of the poem. On an immediately visual level the tapestry serves, as it did for the *Art-Journal* reviewer, as a thematic decorative element that enhances the medieval character of the chamber. On another level the tapestry functions in relationship with the sleeping children. It appears to depict a horse and rider accompanied by a foot soldier who holds a spear. The spear points directly at the sleeping children. For Margaret Harker, this tapestry was "calculated to kindle the boy's dreams to nightmare proportions,"⁶⁸ and indeed, the arras can be read as a menacing presence or possibly as a manifestation of the boy's tortured sleep. This would likely be the interpretation for those viewers who did not know Arnold's poem, for the tapestry is

⁶⁷ Taken from *Poetical Works of Matthew Arnold* (London: Macmillan, 1892), 138-165.

not referred to in the quoted passage. With knowledge of Arnold's poem, however, the tapestry's possible meanings become all the richer.

Mathew Arnold's *Tristram and Iseult* is the retelling of an Arthurian poem from before the time of Mallory [Appendix B]. In the poem, Tristram the knight, one time friend of King Arthur, lies dying from a battle wound in his castle in Brittany. His wife, Iseult of Brittany, attends to him. Tristram's mind is focused upon a wished-for visit from the true love of his life, Iseult of Ireland. The poem is full of fevered reveries from Tristram as he recalls their past: Tristram had been accompanying the princess Iseult from Ireland to Cornwall where she was going to marry King Marc. During the voyage, Iseult and Tristram drank a magic potion. This potion, given to Iseult by her mother to be drunk on her wedding day, cast a love spell instead upon Iseult and Tristram. They fell madly and irrevocably in love. Despite this spell, each went their separate way and married another. Back in the present day of the poem, Iseult of Ireland arrives that evening to visit Tristram, and he is finally able to die in peace. Iseult herself then dies from grief. Through it all, Arnold casts Iseult of Brittany as the understanding cuckold, sympathetic to Tristram's passion. Arnold's further innovation to the story was to introduce children in order to enhance the reader's sympathy with Iseult of Brittany. After Tristram sends her off to bed, Arnold describes the children sleeping in their chamber. It is this same night that Iseult of Ireland arrives and Tristram dies.

⁶⁸ Harker, *Henry Peach Robinson*, 43.

In the poem Arnold describes a tapestry hanging in Tristram's room that depicts a warrior hunter. After Tristram's and Iseult's death, the tapestry comes alive and the Huntsman describes his wonder at the scene he witnesses before him: "*What place is this, and who are they?*" Arnold's Huntsman functions in much the same way as Lancelot does in Tennyson's telling of *Shalott*, serving as both narrator and observer within the story, functioning as the viewer's eyes. Robinson's adoption of the tapestry from another part of the poem, then, added a richness of meaning to his photograph as the Huntsman, like the viewer, glances down at the sleeping innocents. Yet the tapestry could serve in other ways. With our knowledge of Tristram's background as warrior, the figure in the tapestry could embody Tristram himself, serving as a reminder of the cost of his actions. The Huntsman could also represent the ghost of Tristram, who dies this evening. The tapestry, when combined with knowledge of Arnold's poem, thus brings a much richer associative power to Robinson's photograph. Arnold's interpretation of the story of Tristram and Iseult was largely anti-Romantic. By focusing the final section of the poem upon the meek and understanding neglected wife, and by inventing their children, Arnold's poem is tale about the human impact of naïve passion and, especially, infidelity. Even Tristram's and Iseult's reunion, rather than cast as a euphoric and passionate encounter, is punctuated by Tristram's anger and mistrust of his lover. This encounter, moreover, leads directly to both of their deaths.

In the third section of the poem, Iseult of Brittany is described as "one dying in a mask of youth." The coda of this last section of the poem serves as its moral. Iseult tells her

children the cautionary tale of Merlin and Vivian. In this story, Vivian, who has blinded Merlin with desire, tricks him and casts a spell that traps him in a permanent sleep. Vivian's reason? "For she was passing weary of his love." For Arnold, this story embodied the ultimate lesson of his poem: beware of passion, for it will trap you forever. Yet there is no judgment against Tristram himself, for his plight was inescapable.

Robinson takes this ambivalence in the poem and renders it in pictorial form. Robinson directly links Tristram with his son. I have already discussed various possible meanings of the tapestry as figuring the absent father. Moreover, Robinson has moved the tapestry from Tristram's room to his children's. But Robinson goes even further. He also took the liberty of substituting the children's landscape view out of their southern window with a view toward the sea to the north. This represents what Tristram sees out of his own window as he lies "propt on pillows in his bed / Gazing seaward...." Moreover, the sleeping boy's body may serve as a figuration of his father. Both, for example, are lying down. Tristram's sleep, however, is fevered and tortured with passionate dreams of Iseult of Ireland. For the children, while Arnold suggests that the boy grabs the coverlet with dreams of butterflies, Robinson depicts him with a remarkable pose. As Brian Lukacher writes: "The pose of the young boy in *Sleep*—a pose usually reserved for the erotic depiction of sleeping female figures—has a high art pedigree that verges on exhausted academic cliché."⁶⁹ This erotic pose, rather than investing the boy with any sexual characteristics, instead may be meant to represent his father's tortuous dreams.

⁶⁹ Lukacher, "Powers of Sight: Robinson, Emerson and the Polemics of Pictorial Photography," 36.

While it is out of the question that Robinson would be attempting to sully the children's innocence in this photograph, we may see Robinson attempting to qualify any condemnation we may reserve for Tristram. Robinson, in effect, links the children's innocence to their absent father. Yet this attempt is surely qualified since the children serve as a reminder of the very human price one pays for passion.

Sleep might well be Robinson's most successful photograph to depict a fictive space, for it simultaneously operates within photography's perceived link to the real. As we have seen, the image functions well on several levels. The photograph's success does not depend upon the understanding that these children represent fictional characters from Arnold's poem. For those who only observe the title, the photograph can operate as a self-contained scene. In this reading the children sleep and the tapestry represents an embodiment of their dreams. At the same time, however, the poetic association brings a wealth of meaning to the photograph in addition to its apparent visual elements. The photograph is thus able to lead a double life—as a rich depiction of the fictive space, yet also a charming image of sleeping children.

Sleep is ultimately so successful because its fictive space does not come at the expense of photographic space. It coalesces the lessons learned from *Fading Away* and *The Lady of Shalott* by being neither too mediated nor too direct. Instead, it operates well on both planes. The theme of innocent childhood, so present in many Victorian images at the

time, put this image in line with paintings and prints that popularized this theme. Yet its artistic conceits, such as the boy's pose and the careful placement of their shoes on the cushioning drapery, do not overwhelm the performance of this image as a simple photograph of an interior. Nor does the title, *Sleep*, force the viewer into interpreting the work as necessarily fictive. Having learned the lesson from *Shalott* as he professed, Robinson purposefully did not call this work *Tristram's Children*, or some other directly poetic title. It was a way for Robinson to maintain his distance from "unnatural" subjects, and yet depict them. It allowed Robinson to be able to photograph an Arthurian subject, like *Shalott*, without it being too heavy-handed. Whereas *Fading Away's* fictitious nature struggled against the painful reality of daily British existence, *Sleep* was instantly recognizable as artistic trope and yet photographically straightforward. It was this balance of artistic theme with photography that proved successful in Robinson's most substantial body of work: genre photographs.

There were only two substantial reviews of *Sleep*, and they were both positive. The *Art-Journal* critic concluded his review with the highest praise:

We have rarely seen a photograph so well worthy of a frame and a place on some home-wall. There is no doubt that Mr. H.P. Robinson, who has the merit of producing that really fine work, is a most skillful photographer, and in this charming subject has made a very successful 'hit.' No artist could, with his pencil, give us so truthful a picture.⁷⁰

Perhaps there were no objections because all of Robinson's usual critics liked the work and felt it a success. Wall, while he had no published commentary on *Sleep*,

⁷⁰ Unidentified author, "Minor Topics of the Month," in *The Art-Journal* 6, (December 1, 1867): 275.

renewed his attacks on Robinson's work the next year. But it is also interesting to consider that Robinson himself seemed to not have considered it one of his best works. In his various published reflections on his career beginning in 1884, he never discussed *Sleep*. Perhaps he created the work more for himself—the answer to the questions posed by *Fading Away* and *Shalott*. Perhaps he felt it was an unsuccessful resolution—still too much based upon a fictional source. It is also possible that Robinson felt that he had resolved these questions more satisfactorily through the large body of genre subjects he had made during his career. These genre photographs form the study of the following chapter.

“It is a maxim that in poverty, nothing will more easily, or more universally, excite the attentions of benevolence, than the appearance of neatness and cleanliness.” -- J. T. Smith in his *Remarks on Rural Scenery* (1797)

Chapter 3: Robinson’s Genre Subjects

Introduction

At the Photographic Society of London exhibition of 1861 Robinson premiered one of the more critically successful works of his career: *A Holiday in the Wood* [Plate 39]. The organizers of the exhibition also felt this was a successful photograph, for they hung it “in the centre of the wall at the top of the room—by common consent regarded as the place of honour.”¹ Printed from seven negatives, it depicts a gathering of 10 young people in the woods for a picnic. In the center are three girls seated on a mound. While one weaves a garland of wild flowers and another looks on, the third looks toward a pair of figures sitting in the immediate foreground. There also is a boy seated in front of the mound. To the right, two figures approach the group in the middle distance.

The arrangement of the figures sets up an interesting play of interaction. One of the center trio looks on amusedly as a young woman tries to put flowers into a little girl’s hair, who is clearly unhappy with this activity. On the left, the boy looks at another pair of girls up on the mound, who are, in turn, looking further into the distance as one of them raises her hat. Critics interpreted this last gesture either as an attempt to catch a

¹ Simpson, “The Photographic Exhibition,” in *The Photographic News* 5, no. 124 (January 18, 1861): 25.

butterfly, or as a greeting to more figures that we cannot see approaching.² Either way, critics felt this interplay of the figures was a compelling aspect of the work, and much of their criticism described the various glances and interaction. This explicit relationship among the figures led some critics to praise the image's "unity," despite their simultaneous criticism of the imperfect combination printing that revealed the picture's manufacture.³

The non-photographic publications gave *Holiday in the Wood* mixed reviews. *The Times* and *The Athenaeum* were generally critical, although these criticisms were more about art photography as a whole than *Holiday in the Wood* specifically. While the *Times* felt the image showed "very considerable taste in grouping, and commendable ingenuity in the employment of photographic machinery," it insisted that the image "be protested against as a miserable substitute for even the photographic reproduction of a picture."⁴ *The Athenaeum* echoed this view, asserting that "Mr. H. P. Robinson illustrates, more completely perhaps than anything else can do, the fallacy of expecting a mental

² Critics for *The Photographic News* and *The British Journal of Photography* felt she was chasing a butterfly, while the *Journal of the Photographic Society* interpreted her gesture as one of welcome. Unidentified author, "The Holiday in the Woods," in *The Photographic News*, 4, no. 117 (November 30, 1860): 366-7; Unidentified author, "Photographic Contributions to Art," in *The British Journal of Photography* 7, no. 131 (December 1, 1860): 346; Unidentified author, "Review. 'A Holiday in the Wood,' photographed from Nature. By Henry P. Robinson, of Leamington," in *The Journal of the Photographic Society* 7, no. 104 (December 15, 1860): 72-3. This ambiguity might expose a miscalculation in Robinson's combination printing technique, but this is unclear. Lindsay Smith, by criticizing the "lines of sight between figures which fail to meet," implies that she feels that the two figures on the hill should be facing the two approaching figures. [Smith, *The Politics of Focus*, 86.]

³ See especially Unidentified author, "Review. 'A Holiday in the Wood,' photographed from Nature. By Henry P. Robinson, of Leamington," in *The Journal of the Photographic Society* 7, no. 104 (December 15, 1860): 72-3.

⁴ Unidentified author, "Exhibition of the Photographic Society," in *The Times*, January 18, 1861, 7.

operation, such as the results of pictorial art are, from a chemical process.”⁵ While this comment was directed toward all of Robinson’s works exhibited at the International Exhibition of 1862, the writer singled out *Holiday in the Wood* for its employment of dressed models.⁶ He wrote: “His *Holiday in the Wood* (131), and others here, with their set air of portraitures, stiffness, and fixed smiles on the models’ faces are miserably depressing to the spectator. This failure of intention is the more observable, seeing that operator has taken great pains to obtain a contrary result.”⁷

Yet other non-partisan publications felt *Holiday in the Wood* to be a success. *The Scotsman*, reviewing the work when it was shown in the Photographic Society of Scotland exhibition in 1861, praised it and Robinson’s *Top of the Hill* [a single-figure composition print] as “specimens of a class which, in artistic feeling, grouping, and composition, as well as in truthful light and shade, is entitled to rank with the best productions of modern art.”⁸ *The Illustrated London News* gave this image a very long favorable review and engraved it in their March 16, 1861 issue [Plate 40]. Placing it in the context of art photography of the time, the critic wrote:

Photographers are every day making determined efforts to apply their art as a direct means of producing original pictorial compositions, showing the mind and will of the artist instead of the mere accidental condition of

⁵ Unidentified author, “Fine Arts: International Exhibition. Photographs,” in *The Athenaeum* no. 1825 (October 18, 1862): 504.

⁶ Robinson exhibited the following prints at the 1862 International Exhibition: *Top of the Hill*, *Early Spring*, *She Never Told her Love*, *Holiday in the Wood*, *The Lady of Shalott*, *Fading Away*, *Elaine Watching the Shield of Lancelot*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Here They Come*, and *Album Photographs*. Source: Taylor, *Photographic Exhibitions in Great Britain, 1839-1865: A Compendium of Photographers and Their Works* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, Library and Archives, 2002), 635-6.

⁷ Unidentified author, “Fine Arts: International Exhibition. Photographs,” 504.

⁸ From *The Scotsman*, reprinted in *The Photographic News* 5, no. 127 (February 8, 1861): 62.

facts already existing; and, however we may doubt their ever attaining to the perfection they aspire to, so as to supersede the pencil or the graver, we must admit that some of the things they have lately done are of great merit, and strikingly effective in the result. Mr. H.P. Robinson is one of the most successful labourers in this field....This year he produces a pleasanter and also a more extensive and elaborate subject [than *Fading Away*], which is deservedly hung in the place of honour in the exhibition of the Photographic Society, and which he entitles, "A Holiday in the Wood."...We must award high praise to Mr. Robinson for the judgment and eye for effect with which he has arranged his figures; and for the graceful combination and plan of outline which is the result.⁹

Reviews of the work in the photographic press were unanimously positive overall.¹⁰

Because this photograph was first exhibited only a few months after the patchwork controversy between Wall and Robinson, some critics took the opportunity to reaffirm photography's status as art and to legitimize combination printing as a valid means to this end.¹¹ Having been printed from seven negatives, it was an extremely ambitious work,. Yet critics largely found the unity of light, one of the most difficult tasks in combination printing, to be successfully achieved the composition. The critic for *The Photographic News*, for example, explicitly praised the light: "as if it had been produced at one time on one negative."¹²

⁹ Unidentified author, "Holiday in the Wood," in *The Illustrated London News* 38, no. 1079 (March 16, 1861): 248.

¹⁰ Before its exhibition premiere in 1861, Robinson presented *Holiday in the Wood* to the North London Photographic Association and made it available to the photographic press. Critics of this early version (*The Photographic News* and *The British Journal of Photography*) were not, in general, impressed by Robinson's printing. *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London*, however, praised this print as "one of the very few really great productions of the Camera." (All cited in full in note #2, above).

¹¹ Among those reviews expressing this view were *The Photographic News* and *The Journal of the Photographic Society*. (Both cited in full in note #2, above).

¹² Unidentified author, "The Holiday in the Woods," in *The Photographic News* 4, no. 117 (November 30, 1860): 367.

Significantly, Alfred Wall praised this work even though it was created by combination printing. In a review of the Exhibition of the South London Photographic Society in 1862, Wall, writing under the pen name of R.A.S.,¹³ wrote that *Holiday in the Wood* “is, to our thinking, the most masterly, perfect, and beautiful specimen of artistic and photographic composition that has yet been executed.”¹⁴ He continued: “The lights and shadows in every part of the whole are in harmonious keeping; the grouping is managed with the most consummate pictorial knowledge and skill....”¹⁵ Surely this was a remarkable statement from Wall to praise Robinson’s work so highly. In a more characteristic tone, Wall qualified his praise by downplaying Robinson’s combination printing technique in comparison to that of Rejlander. Wall was committed to promoting art photography, particularly in conjunction with this exhibition, and it is important to understand that *Holiday in the Wood*, as a genre subject, fit into what Wall considered the “highest” type of art photography possible.

In January 1861 Wall published the first of a series of eighteen articles entitled “The Technology of Art as Applied to Photography.” In the thirteenth installment of this series, Wall discussed the topic of genre subjects, which he defined as subjects “of a

¹³ I assert that R.A.S.’s identity was Alfred Wall. According to his obituary [Unidentified, “Obituary: Alfred H. Wall,” in *The British Journal of Photography Annual*, 1907, 625-6], Wall began his career as a painter using the name of R.A. Seymour (a homonymous play on a Royal Academician who could “see more”). There are only a handful of articles in the photographic journals penned by R.A.S., and these have very similar tone to most of Wall’s writing. Moreover, as a founder of the South London Photographic Society, it might have been inappropriate for him to review his own society’s exhibition. Wall had already directly praised this image in an article for *The Photographic News* the previous year [see note # 16, below].

¹⁴ R.A.S., “Exhibition of the South London Photographic Society, in *The British Journal of Photography* 9, no. 168 (June 16, 1862): 233.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

comparatively homely or everyday character, as opposed to those which belong to historical or high art painting so termed.”¹⁶ Wall felt they could play an important role in artistic photography. In a long passage, he wrote:

Such pictures must be regarded as bounding the aspirations of the artist photographer, because the art which soars above these productions immediately enters an existence which is rather dependent upon the loftier imaginings of the mind than the simple imitations of external nature, although upon the latter it, of course, still has its only true foundation. Certain small scarce-fledged critics have derived an immense accession to their puffed-up self-esteem, by affecting to look down upon all art that is not—strictly speaking—high art. But your true connoisseur would rather contemplate a first-class *genre* subject—hitting full in the eye of its mark—than one of those common and lamentable failures which have fallen so miserably short in an aim rashly chosen by presumption and vanity. The artist photographer may produce subjects of the first-named kind, and if really successful, win for his art the very highest appreciation; but if he think to emulate the poetical imaginings of the gifted painter in subjects which embody the highest order of composition, his fall will be in proportion to the height of his ill-considered aspirations, and the injury done to our little-understood, and much-maligned art, be really greater than if he had confined himself to the most purely mechanical and insignificant departments of his profession. There is plenty of poetry, and that of a lofty character, in those truths of nature which are within the reach of our beautiful process.¹⁷

This appraisal of genre-subject photography is consistent with his critique of Robinson that we have examined thus far. Wall was trying to promote photography as an artistic enterprise, and he felt that genre subjects, with their more direct tie to external nature (albeit conventionalized), were a more appropriate type of photography than “higher,” more “poetical,” subjects. In the previous chapter we examined Wall’s reaction to *The Lady of Shalott* in which he reached the same conclusion. While Wall admired *Fading*

¹⁶ Wall, “The Technology of Art as Applied to Photography,” in *The Photographic News* 5, no. 144 (June 7, 1861): 268.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Away for its emotional and moral content, *Shalott*'s ambitions were too high. For Wall, *Shalott* put at risk the gains that had been made in artistic photography. In his mind, the failed ambitions of the few could damage the potential of the art photography movement as a whole. Later in the same review, he reiterated: "We must not make ourselves artificial wings wherewith to reach the native home of birds which sing at 'heaven's gate,' or great will be our fall, and loud be the laughter of our enemies."¹⁸ Despite his great admiration for Rejlander's taste and particularly for his skill, Wall cited *The Two Ways of Life* as a work that fell well short of its aim. Wall's recommendation, based upon his theory of artistic imitation, was to choose subjects from nature and to produce portraits, landscapes, and genre subjects. He concluded this article by writing: "there is a vast and hardly opened field awaiting the ambitious artist photographer—a field which Wilkie and Teniers did not contemn, and many an eminent in their art have been proud to adorn."¹⁹ One photographic example of this type worthy of emulation was *Holiday in the Wood*, which, although faulty, "is a most successful and very admirable application of photography to a genre subject."²⁰ While Robinson emphasized the role of the imagination in his theories and particularly in his poetic illustrations, Wall was clearly less comfortable with this artistic ambition for photography. Instead, Wall emphasized genre's ability to blend artistic convention with external reality.

¹⁸ Ibid., 269.

¹⁹ Ibid. Wall's comment contradicts that of William Crookes, quoted below, who indicates that genre photography is a widespread phenomenon. Wall was likely claiming that genre was a 'hardly opened field' in order to encourage photographers to produce more of these scenes.

²⁰ Ibid. Presumably Wall found this image 'faulty' because of its construction by combination printing.

For Robinson, *Holiday in the Wood* was his first (nearly) unanimous success. We can characterize Robinson's early career as a search for subjects that he could produce within the parameters his theory of imitation. The two paths that he explored concurrently until 1867 (through *Sleep*) were poetic illustration and genre subjects. Of the two, rustic genre subjects were more critically popular. They were the most readily and widely accepted of his fictive creations. Throughout the remainder of his long career, genre subjects would be the most prevalent of the types of images he created.

Robinson was not alone in creating genre subjects for the camera. Indeed, genre scenes, especially scenes from country life, were already prevalent in photographic exhibitions by Robinson's entry into this world, and they were popular through at least the 1880s. As William Crookes declared in January 1859, this type of photographic imagery "as all readers know, is a class of subjects which finds great favour, both with artists and the public generally."²¹ Crookes especially highlighted "a naïve simplicity which is the charming characteristic of pictures from rural life."²² From this exhibition alone we can discover some of the representative titles given to these creations: *The Granny's Lesson*, *A Shady Bank*, *The Rivals*, *The Rejected*, *The Young Fisher Boys*, and *The Village Pump* were all titles for genre pieces by one creator alone—The Truefit Brothers. Rejlander both preceded and followed up his *Two Ways of Life* (1857) with many genre scenes,

²¹ [William Crookes], "The Exhibition of the Photographic Society," in *The Photographic News* 1, no. 21 (January 28, 1859): 241.

²² *Ibid.*

although these were often criticized for the crude nature of their production.²³ William Grundy, also a genre subject photographer, was often compared by critics to the seventeenth-century Dutch painter, David Teniers.²⁴ Genre photographs had become so prevalent that by 1861, the year of Robinson's *Holiday in the Wood*, one critic suggested that this kind of scene would even surpass genre painting itself in popularity: "It is not pleasant to make disagreeable prophecies," he wrote, "but as photography has already in a great measure superseded the miniature painter, the time does not seem far distant when it may probably equally affect the painter of *genre*."²⁵

Genre subjects thus became an aesthetic benchmark for many critics of artistic photography. Prior to Wall's declaration in 1862 that genre was as "high" as artistic photography should reach, other critics had reached the same conclusion. For example, in a review of the Photographic Society exhibition of 1856, a critic for *The Athenaeum* wrote:

Already, from the rudest beginning, they [Rejlander and Lake Price] have reached a dangerous rivalry with painting; but they have not yet succeeded in producing one bit of High Art, nor ever will. They will beat the costume-painter, —will surpass the Dutch with his flowers, fruits, pots, onions, and cattle...—but they will never light up hired faces with those momentary fires of religion, love, hatred, or scorn which the human imagination only can conceive, and the human hand only execute. We may have a photographic Teniers, but not a photographic Raphael.²⁶

²³ Unidentified author, "Photographic Society Exhibition," in *The Illustrated London News* 30, no. 841 (January 24, 1857): 61.

²⁴ Roger Fenton, for example, in discussing Rejlander's *The Two Ways of Life* in a meeting of the Photographic Society of London, referred to a work by Grundy as "of the Wilkie or Teniers kind." [printed in the April 21, 1858 issue of the *Journal of the Photographic Society of London*, 196.]

²⁵ Unidentified author, from *The Scotsman*, reprinted in *The Photographic News* 5, no. 127 (February 8, 1861): 62.

²⁶ Unidentified author, "The Photographic Society," in *The Athenaeum*, no. 1472 (January 12, 1856): 46.

Teniers, and occasionally David Wilkie, the early nineteenth-century Scottish painter, thus became the standard models to emulate by artistically-minded British photographers. In a review of the 1858 exhibition of the Photographic Society in *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London*, one critic described *Dutch Fisherman*, a work by William Grundy, as “so beautifully arranged that it would startle Teniers himself, were he to rise and see this inimitable picture so closely after his own style.”²⁷ Yet this author, too, agreed with *The Athenaeum* (as later would Wall) about the proper scope of artistic photography. He concluded that this photograph was “the greatest height to which we may legitimately expect photographic composition to go.”²⁸

Genre Painting in Britain

Genre photographers in Britain clearly looked toward British painting for their models. Yet despite the comparisons in the press to Dutch genre painters of the past such as David Teniers or even to the more recent, and more geographically proximate, David Wilkie, the models for most British genre photographs in the 1850s and later were their own painterly contemporaries such as William Collins, Thomas Webster and Thomas Faed. Tracing its influence back to Wilkie and even Teniers, contemporary British genre painting was a powerful presence in the Royal Academy exhibitions and in the art marketplace at the time. Writing a review of English painting at the 1855 Universal Exhibition in Paris, the French writer Maxime Du Camp praised British genre painting

²⁷ Unidentified author, “The Exhibition,” in *The Journal of the Photographic Society of London* 4, no. 66 (May 21, 1858): 208.

for its strength and independence: “If Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Lawrence have held by a tradition of Vandyke portraiture, it must be admitted, on the other hand, that in *genre*, Britain has spurned all foreign influence. Here and there may be felt in that class, reminiscences of Hogarth; but these are national and owe no debt to the celebrated masters of Rome, Florence, Antwerp, or the Hague.”²⁹ For many critics, including Du Camp, this independence was in itself identified as a national trait of English painting.³⁰

One chief theme that bound so many painters and paintings together was that of domesticity; another was rustic life. Of particular interest to those critics interested in promoting genre’s nationalism were subjects that were both domestic *and* rustic—the cottage scene.³¹ In a review of genre painting in the International Exhibition in 1862, *The Art-Journal* described genre this way: “In this school of domestic Art, English painters have long been pre-eminent. The English nation is notoriously domestic... Comfort—that word sacred to every Englishman—makes itself cosy even in the cottage. And thus there has grown up among us an Art dedicated to the simple annals of the poor.”³² In this assessment, the critic explicitly tied the subject matter of these works with the lifestyle of

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Maxime Du Camp, “French Criticism on British Art,” as reproduced in *The Art-Journal* 2 (March 1, 1856): 77.

³⁰ Tom Taylor, in a review of British painting for the *Fine Arts Quarterly Review* in 1863, cites French and German critics who also highlight English painting’s independence from foreign models. Tom Taylor, “English Painting in 1862,” in *The Fine Arts Quarterly*, May 1863, 1-26.

³¹ My discussion of British genre painting principally derives from Christiana Payne’s analyses of scenes of cottage life in Victorian Painting. Christiana Payne, *Toil and Plenty: Images of the Agricultural Landscape in England, 1780-1890* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); *Rustic Simplicity: Scenes of Cottage Life in Nineteenth-Century British Art* (Nottingham: University of Nottingham Arts Centre, 1998); and “Rural Virtues for Urban Consumption: Cottage Scenes in Early Victorian Painting,” in *Journal of Victorian Culture* 3, no. 1 (spring 1998): 45-68.

³² Unidentified author, “International Exhibition,” in *The Art-Journal* 1 (May 1, 1862): 113-16.

the English citizen. By quoting Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751), the critic linked the painting of cottagers to naturalized pastoral poetry—in effect he thereby asserted the reality of the subjects depicted in these paintings. This characterization was emphasized in the authors' conclusion: "Thus the national Art of England has become the counterpart of the people's life."³³ Throughout this review, particularly in using the phrase "the people's life," the author minimized the differences in lifestyle between those whom are represented within these scenes and those who were purchasing these images. Indeed, these rustic images were popular especially among the middle class—a relatively new and rapidly growing segment of the art market.³⁴ In some manner, pictures of domestic scenes reinforced the domestic ideals of the middle class. As one critic in the June 1866 *Art-Journal* wrote: "Such homeish themes are in every way suited to the adorning of our houses. They are cheerful as the domestic hearth, and varied as life itself. In fact, no apology can be called for in extenuation of the known predilection of our people for small cabinet pictures of this humble and essentially naturalistic class...."³⁵

The defensive tone of this critic, revolving around this "humble class" of images, begs a brief history about the regard in which genre has been held.³⁶ In one of the term *genre's* earliest manifestations, André Félibien, a theoretician at the French Academy in the late

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Payne (as well as many others) has described the transition in art patronage over the course of the first few decades of the nineteenth century from that of the landed aristocracy to those of lower or middle class origin who either made or inherited their wealth from industry or commerce.

³⁵ Unidentified author, "Royal Academy," in *The Art-Journal* 5 (June 1, 1866): 166.

seventeenth century, established a hierarchy of painting consisting of history painting (including religious and historical subjects) and genre painting, which included all of the other minor subjects, such as landscape, still life, animal subjects, and every day scenes.³⁷ Diderot endorsed this simple division in his *Essais sur la Peinture*, written in 1766 and published in 1795. Diderot included under the category *peinture de genre*: “those who busy themselves with flowers, fruits, animals, woods, forests, mountains, as well as those who borrow their scenes from common and domestic life: [e.g.] Teniers, Wouwermans, Greuze, Chardin....³⁸ By 1791 the theorist Quatremere de Quincy sought to clarify and narrow the usage of “genre.” He was the first to substitute the word genre for phrases such as “scene of domestic life.” He also referred to them as bourgeois scenes. According to Stechow and Comer, both de Quincy’s more narrow and Diderot’s more inclusive usages of genre continued to be used concurrently in art criticism.

In England, Sir Joshua Reynolds discussed the various classes of subjects most extensively in his Fourth Discourse, delivered in 1771. In it he ranked the Dutch school below all others. He characterized this school as depicting “local” circumstances and character, rather than the more universal ones. “The circumstances that enter into a picture of this kind,” he wrote, “are so far from giving a general view of human life, that they exhibit all the minute particularities of a nation differing in several respects from the

³⁶ Much of this discussion is based upon Wolfgang Stechow and Christopher Comer, “The History of the Term *Genre*,” in *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin* 33, no. 2 (1975-76): 89-94.

³⁷ As noted in Vernon Hyde Minor, *Baroque & Rococo: Art and Culture* (London: Calman & King Ltd., 1999), 209.

³⁸ Translated by Stechow and Comer, “The History of the Term *Genre*,” 89, from *Essais sur la Peinture* in Denis Diderot, *Oeuvres esthétiques*, ed. Paul Verniere (Paris: Editions Garnier Freres, 1959), 725.

rest of mankind.”³⁹ While Reynolds did not employ the word *genre*, he grouped together roughly the same subjects as Diderot’s ranking. In ranking various subjects in painting, Reynolds placed history painting at the top. Below them were the “lower exercises of the art, or the humbler walks of the profession” which were comprised of domestic scenes, portraits, landscapes and still life.⁴⁰ Stechow and Comer trace the first English usage of the term *genre* to an 1846 translation of Franz Kugler’s *Handbuch der Geschichte der Malerei* (1837), which contained a section entitled *Genre-Malerei*. Kugler characterized *genre* in the familiar terminology of “the representation of every day life” (die Darstellungen der gewöhnlichen Lebens).⁴¹ Importantly, Kugler differentiated these images from images of “religious, heroic, or any other elevated moments which constitute the subjects of history painting,”⁴² thus continuing the appraisal of *genre* as occupying a lower station than history or religious painting. To bring this survey up to Robinson’s time, we may turn to F.W. Fairholt’s 1870 edition of his *Dictionary of Terms in Art* to see how *genre* was considered.⁴³ Fairholt first broadly defined *genre-painting* as “pictures of life and manners” and later narrowed this by describing the principal examples as “scenes of everyday life.” Although he allowed that a range of subjects may be described by *genre*, Fairholt described a typical *genre* painting to be “a view of an open house, into which the sun is shining, [or] a peasant lighting his pipe.” He then

³⁹ Reynolds, from Discourse IV, in Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses*, ed. Pat Rogers (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), 129.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁴¹ Franz Kugler, *Handbuch der Geschichte der Malerei* (Berlin, Duncker und Humblot, 1837), II, 187, as referenced in Stechow and Comer, “The History of the Term *Genre*,” 92.

⁴² Translated by Stechow and Comer, “The History of the Term *Genre*,” 92.

addressed its status: “Those of the Netherlands...though far from the ideal of Art, show a cleverness and execution and lead to higher thoughts.” Fairholt then asserted that Hogarth similarly was able to elevate this class of painting “into a high school of morality.” Reflecting the same anxiety about genre painting patronage as was demonstrated in the 1866 *Art-Journal* article reference above, Fairholt was careful to contrast Hogarth’s higher examples with so-called “low attempts”: “The anecdotal and trifling *genre* pictures, on the contrary, are very reprehensible, although the most popular among the vulgar-minded patrons of Art.”

Indeed, there was a widespread ambivalence about genre painting’s popularity in nineteenth-century Britain. For some, the middle class’ patronage of genre painting did not reflect a sophisticated taste. For these skeptical critics, the middle class’ demand for genre had a detrimental influence upon the type of works painters were producing. Du Camp pointed to this opinion when he asserted that British art “seems essentially adapted to be a portion of comfortable chamber furniture, and not to shed honour upon extensive galleries.”⁴⁴ He judged this domestic work to embody lowered aspirations. He added: “it is of the earth, earthy; always exact; often amusing; never elevated. It makes one smile and talk; but never promotes deep thought, much less imaginative reverie.”⁴⁵ The

⁴³ F.W. Fairholt, *A Dictionary of Terms in Art, Edited and Illustrated by F.W. Fairholt, F.S.A. with Five Hundred Engravings on Wood* (London: Strahan & Co, 1870). All references are from page 206. Fairholt, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, first published this dictionary in 1854.

⁴⁴ Du Camp, 77.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

dramatist and writer Tom Taylor shared Du Camps' view of genre as a lower class of painting.⁴⁶ In his review after the International Exhibition of 1862, he wrote:

The irresistible influence of 'the demand' in art tends daily to stifle more and more all aspiration to whatever does not appeal to immediate and obvious sources of pleasure in minds of no high or special culture. Homely and truthful landscape, striking expression, familiar, stirring, or moving incident, and effective story, pretty faces, nursery, kitchen, and cottage scenes, tend more and more to become the staple of English art. There are more and richer purchasers for such wares than ever. Within the present generation the patronage of living art has become tenfold what it was at the beginning of the century... The nobleman, as a rule, is no longer the principal picture-buyer. He is content with his family portraits and the gallery that his travelled grandfather got together.⁴⁷

Instead, Taylor insisted, the new art was being spurred on by a largely unsophisticated industrial and merchant class:

The great manufacturing and trading districts now open the best picture markets. The overflowings of wealth realized in Lancashire mills, and Liverpool or London offices, and Gloucestershire forges, are invested in pictures. Love of art, in some cases; ostentation, and the notion that a gallery of pictures is the becoming appendage of a fine house, in more; coupled with a keen eye to business, in most instances, are the motives for this kind of investment, which naturally flows to the art of the day.⁴⁸

While many critics shared this appraisal of genre in terms of its rank within the fine arts, some applauded these humble horizons. "We foresake these sublime heights," one critic for *The Art-Journal* wrote, "around which the eagles soar, and the clouds cluster; we escape the unfathomable abyss into which genius has too often plunged headlong; and now, taking to the level and unambitious pathway of life, we greet the peasant smiling at the cottage door... Such has been the daily walk of many of our English artists, intent

⁴⁶ Taylor, a dramatist and writer, had edited an autobiography of Haydon and had written "pictures in words" to accompany a selection of images by Leslie. The same year of this review, Taylor published 30 images by M.B. Foster.

⁴⁷ Tom Taylor, "English Painting in 1862," 14-15.

upon finding poetry which lurks in our common humanity.”⁴⁹ Supportive critics used this notion of “common humanity” to assert genre painting’s significance to counter charges of less-than-rhapsodic goals. By painting these types of scenes, these critics argued, genre painters used themes that could appeal to all Englishmen. These appeals to a “common humanity,” I would argue, were not radical attempts of proposed social change such as one finds in Courbet’s paintings, nor a humanistic concern regarding genre painting’s false idealism, as we find in Ruskin and Eliot. The appeal being made here is one of an emotional, and politically conservative, *sympathy* rather than one of *compassion*, which would inspire action. This distinction will be discussed later in the chapter. Here, this appeal was being made in the name of nationalism—it was this shared sense of humanity that linked the nation together. A critic of the 1863 Royal Academy exhibition in *The Art-Journal* stated this belief explicitly:

England, happy in her homes, and joyous in her hearty cheer, and peaceful in her snug firesides, is equally fortunate in a school of Art sacred to the hallowed relations of domestic life. From the prince to the peasant, from the palace to the cottage, the range in rank is wide; yet the same sentiments—love to God, charity to neighbors, duties of parents and children, sympathy ready to mourn with those who mourn, or to rejoice over those who are glad in heart—these principles and emotions, the outcomings of our universal humanity, have found earnest and literal expression through domestic pictures, which, both by their number and mastery, may almost claim to be national. The public at large naturally bring such compositions to the test of their own experience, and they are right in so doing. The most skilled critic, indeed, can scarcely do more; for works of this class are successful just as they awaken a dormant sympathy, just in the measure of the response they find within the breast of each one of us, beating to the same pulse of life. The life, indeed,

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁹ Unidentified author, “International Exhibition, 1862. Pictures of the British School,” in *The Art-Journal* 1 (July 1, 1862): 150.

which moves around us and within us is the same life which should live again within these pictorial transcripts.⁵⁰

For those photographers looking toward contemporary painting for a model, genre painting offered a combination of appealing factors. The same middle classes that sponsored genre painting also represented the largest patronage for most photographers. For Robinson, Rejlander, and other photographers who maintained commercial portrait studios while producing their more ambitious photographs on the side, it would have been to their advantage to mimic those paintings that were so popular with those who frequented their businesses. Robinson's studio business in Tunbridge Wells had galleries to display samples of his work.⁵¹ Alongside examples of hand-colored prints and photographic enamels, Robinson displayed his artistic compositions with an arrangement of his medals earned at various photographic exhibitions.⁵² Genre subjects also offered a painterly model that was attainable by photography, yet more elevated than landscape.⁵³ Less imaginative than history or allegorical painting, they were able to convey a certain amount of emotion, although this was often moralizing or sentimental. For these photographers, genre offered sufficient sentiment and narrative to raise photography above the level of pure document and fact.

Any analysis of British genre painting of the nineteenth century must address notions of whether any truth existed in these generally reassuring and pleasing renditions of rural

⁵⁰ Unidentified author, "The Royal Academy," in *The Art-Journal* 2 (June 1, 1863): 110-111.

⁵¹ Robinson moved his commercial practice to Tunbridge Wells, Kent, in 1868.

⁵² Unidentified author, "Mssrs. Robinson And Cherrill's Studio at Tunbridge Wells," in *Photographic News* 19, no. 887 (September 3, 1875): 427-9.

life. Extensive literature has already been written about the conflicts between these images and the “truth” of life in the landscape. Raymond Williams, Ann Bermingham, Michael Rosenthal, John Barrell, Christopher Wood, and Christiana Payne, to name only a few, have set the idealization of eighteenth and nineteenth-century British painting and poetry against the lives of the rural laborers that were characterized by exploitation.⁵⁴ As Christiana Payne neatly summarizes:

The day-labourers were the poorest members of British society, a class who suffered from low wages, poor housing and arduous working conditions. Until 1884 they had no political power, no votes (although the working class in the towns got the vote in 1867); they had a reputation for unrest, at least in the first half of the century, when rick-burning and machine-breaking were common features of country life. Most were landless labourers in tied cottages, damp and overcrowded, from which they could be turned out at short notice, living in villages where oppressive social hierarchies were more persistent than in the towns. Their children had limited educational opportunities, and were usually forced by economic necessity to work on the land from an early age. In old age, labourers often ended up in the degrading circumstances of the workhouse, separated from their spouses.⁵⁵

These images were extremely popular with the middle class despite the fact that they did not really represent the truth of life in the rural areas. Compared to the life of the working poor in the cities, much of British society viewed the rustics as comparatively well off.⁵⁶ Payne also locates a greater anxiety in British society about the morality of the urban worker than the rural one. Studies done on the working classes in Great Britain

⁵³ The same theorists discussed above regarding genre painting’s status generally ranked landscape and still life below that of genre.

⁵⁴ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*; John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape*; Christopher Wood, *Paradise Lost: Paintings of English Country Life and Landscape, 1850-1914* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1988); Christiana Payne’s work is cited in note #31, above.

⁵⁵ Payne, *Rustic Simplicity*, 17.

revealed terrible working conditions, some of which were markedly worse in the cities than in the country. For example, in 1842 the Report from the Poor Law Commissioners on Sanitary Conditions revealed that the average age of death among Manchester's working classes was considerably younger than that of the agricultural workers in Rutlandshire;⁵⁷ moreover, it revealed that infant mortality rates were much higher as well. The social unrest visible both in the cities and in the country was also viewed differently. Despite the reputation of the rural working class as rick-burners and machine-breakers, agitators from the cities were often viewed as the responsible catalysts, influencing the otherwise morally innocent rural poor.⁵⁸ Paintings of the happy and virtuous poor in the country were, therefore, more than simply a denial of poor living conditions in the countryside—they were a way to distinguish between the rural and urban poor. These images also served a reformist platform. As Payne writes: “The production of images of idyllic rural homes—whether at the Royal Academy, or in prints derived from the paintings, or in illustrations to periodicals—can be seen as an analogous attempt to give visual form to the ideal family life to which, it was hoped, the [working class] inhabitants of the city would wish to inspire.”⁵⁹ Genre paintings, therefore, were analogous to efforts

⁵⁶ Payne's two books *Rustic Simplicity: Scenes of Cottage Life in Nineteenth-Century British Art* and *Toil and Plenty: Images of the Agricultural Landscape in England, 1780-1890* consider what these images might have signified to their audiences.

⁵⁷ Edwin Chadwick, *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain*, in *Report to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department, from the Poor Law Commissioners on an Inquiry into the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain* (London: Printed by W. Clowes and sons, 1842).

⁵⁸ See Payne, “Rural Virtues for Urban Consumption,” 45-68.

⁵⁹ Payne, “Rural Virtues for Urban Consumption,” 50. Payne addresses how there were efforts to increase the urban working class's exposure to art. Firstly, the hours of the Royal Academy exhibitions were expanded for increased working class attendance. Additionally, John Sheepshanks' gift to the museum in South Kensington in 1856 included a stipulation that it be open on Sundays after divine service.

by various religious societies to encourage virtue in the urban poor.⁶⁰ These societies encouraged the urban poor to accept their position in society by embracing allegedly rustic traits such as thrift, cleanliness, and resisting vice. This encouragement could take pictorial form in illustrating these moral qualities in religious societies' publications.

Robinson's Genre Photography

In surveying some of the many genre subject photographs that Robinson produced over the course of his career, it is useful to approach these by theme—for Robinson exploited many standard themes that English genre painting had already established. Robinson understood these themes well, and he produced a wide variety of images that neatly operated within these categories. An undated sketchbook [Plates 41-43] of Robinson's in the collection of the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television contains, along with sketches for building a photographic studio, three pages of sketches for scenes of everyday life, both rustic and middle class women. These sketches mirror many of the subjects Robinson employed in his genre photographs, such as women carrying sheaves of wheat, water jugs and baskets, picking wild flowers and standing on the seashore. My argument is that Robinson adopted these familiar subjects not only to encourage sales, but also so that photography, by this immediate association with a long-established class of painting, would be more readily accepted as a creative pictorial medium.

⁶⁰ The pioneering work of analysis of British society's extolling rural virtues to the urban population is

Tradition and Continuity

One of the more important themes of British genre painting was tradition, or the continuity of cultural values. Indeed, this theme could characterize most rustic genre painting. As Lynda Nead has written: “the image of a timeless and traditional way of life, of a dependable and solid rural community, indeed, the myth of ‘Old England’ itself was part of the construction of an English national identity. The image of an unchanging rural past and present, unified through the fulfillment of honest toil, was central to the ways in which England was represented as ‘nation.’”⁶¹

Yet life was changing in the mid-century British countryside. I have already alluded above to social unrest that exploded in machine-wrecking and rick-burning, which were outward manifestations against changes in land ownership.⁶² England was experiencing the end of the golden age of English agriculture at this time. Although work in agriculture was still expanding, it was in decreasing proportion to the total population.⁶³ Agriculture was also becoming a smaller part of the national economy in comparison to industry. As Raymond Williams writes: “At the beginning of the nineteenth century it [agriculture] provided forty per cent of the national product, in mid-century twenty per cent; by the end of the century less than ten per cent.”⁶⁴ There was a long-term, but

Williams’ *The Country and the City*.

⁶¹ Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 42. As above, Williams’ *The Country and the City* was the foundation of more recent research in this area.

⁶² See Christopher Wood, *Paradise Lost: Paintings of English Country Life and Landscape, 1850-1914* and Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*.

⁶³ Williams, *The Country and the City*, 185-7.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 186.

nonetheless dramatic, shift in economic resources for the poor due to land enclosure of common lands, begun in the eighteenth century and continuing to increase in the nineteenth. Parliament passed a series of laws that permitted lands once held in common by tenant farmers to be enclosed into large, private farms. Around one quarter of cultivated acreage was enclosed between 1761 and 1845, about three-quarters of which were open fields.⁶⁵ To increase agricultural productivity, Parliament also sanctioned landowners to buy up smaller farms, so that 300-500 acre farms absorbed those of twenty to thirty acres. By 1851 farms larger than 300 acres occupied more than one-third of cultivated land; farms smaller than 100 acres occupied only about one-fifth. Owner-occupiers held about twenty per cent of the land at the turn of the nineteenth century; by the turn of the twentieth, they held only about twelve per cent.⁶⁶ As Christopher Wood writes, this was a devastating process for the agricultural worker: “Although [enclosure] brought more land under cultivation, and increased the efficiency and productivity of agriculture, it reduced the farm labouring class to a state of servile dependence on wages. Both farmers and landowners conspired to keep wages as low as possible, and this was the source of most of the evils of the Victorian countryside.”⁶⁷ Both Raymond Williams and Chambers and Mingay also point to the rapid population increase as contributing significantly to the worsening of rural poverty.⁶⁸ In the face of these changes, tradition, or the enduring qualities of life in the landscape, served as an essential part of the

⁶⁵ J.D. Chambers and G.E. Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution 1750-1880* (London: Batsford, 1966), 192, as quoted in Payne, *Toil and Plenty*, 10.

⁶⁶ Williams, *The Country and the City*, 185.

⁶⁷ Wood, *Paradise Lost*, 19.

⁶⁸ Williams, *The Country and the City*, 185; Chambers and Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution, 1750-1880*.

ideology that promoted images of rustic life. Particularly important was the set of traditional rustic values that were held as to what the urban poor should aspire.

We have already seen that virtue was one of the hallmarks of rustic life. Also important were the rural cultural celebrations that had been passed on from generation to generation. One of these was May Day and the May Queen celebration, which was one of the popular themes of English genre painting and illustration. *Old May-Day*, a painting by R. Morris, A.R.A. from 1894, demonstrates the hold this nostalgia had over popular imagination at least through the end of the century [Plate 44]. *Old May-Day* depicts the climax of the May Day celebration, a procession through the village with a large garland made from branches of the spring hawthorn and often decorated with violets, primroses, daisies and buttercups. An illustration [Plate 45] drawn by Cuthbert Bede for *The Illustrated London News* in 1857, called *The May Queen and Her Garland, at Glatton, Huntingdonshire*, depicts another version of the garland. This garland is headed by a gaily-dressed doll intended to represent Flora and from which hang ribbons and pieces of silk.⁶⁹ Leading the procession is the May Queen, elected by the village schoolgirls. This parade went from door to door, and the May Queen accepted contributions of halfpennies in order to meet the expenses of the “coronation banquet.” A feast would then take place in a schoolroom, or in some large-roomed cottage, during tea time.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the holiday celebration of May Day had changed from its heyday. As *The Illustrated London News* article glossed this illustration:

Notwithstanding the fact that the ‘times are altered’ from what they were in Goldsmith’s day, and that ‘trade’s unfeeling train’ has ‘usurped the land,’ and put to flight many of the picturesque old customs that won for our country the name of ‘Merry England,’ yet the May-day festival is still observed in some of the nooks and corners of our isle. Its ceremonials vary, according to local customs. In Cornwall it is the “dipping-day,” when those who do not sport a piece of “May” in their hats or button-holes are squirted upon with syringes, or visited with an impromptu *douche* bath. In a few—a very few—villages they retain the true May-day merrymaking....”⁷⁰

By mid century the traditional May pole and May dances were largely gone, and the day was focused solely upon children through the May Queen and the procession of the garland.⁷¹ Depictions in mid-century, therefore, generally drew upon contemporary practice, since the holiday was still celebrated in some way. Yet these images also implicitly asserted that the rustics were keeping part of the tradition alive as it had existed for centuries. The stability thus demonstrated by these images was reassuring to the middle class purchaser that things could stay the same in the face of change in the rural landscape.

Yet all images of May Day celebration that featured the hawthorn flower were necessarily nostalgic. In 1752 Britain’s Julian calendar was changed by eleven days to bring it into conformity with the Gregorian calendar, which had already been largely adopted in Europe. In 1582 Pope Gregory XIII had shifted the calendar due to the

⁶⁹ Unidentified author, “The May Queen and her Garland, Glatton, Huntingdonshire,” in *The Illustrated London News* 30 (May 2, 1857), 414.

miscalculation in the Julian calendar of the length of the year by eleven minutes and 14 seconds. The shift in 1582 was for ten days; by 1752 eleven days were needed to restore the calendar to the seasonal dates of AD 325. As a result of this shift, the hawthorn blossom in general came eleven days later, or well into the month of May.

Representations depicting the gathering of hawthorn for May Day celebrations after 1752 were therefore either nostalgic, as in Morris' 1894 *Old May-Day*, or wishful thinking.

Many genre paintings and illustrations depicting part of the May celebrations in fact focused upon the gathering of flowers for the garland. The cover illustration for the May 1, 1861 issue of *The Cottager in Town and Country*, entitled *May Flowers* is one such image [Plate 46]. Published in London and intended for an urban working class readership, the image reinforced the notion of the idyllic life of the country cottager. Acknowledging the difference between the lives of rustic and the urban children (i.e. that urban children could not gather flowers for May Day), the article accompanying the illustration encouraged the town dweller to think of flowers as signs of God's goodness and to "remember God in his gifts."⁷²

In 1862 Robinson prepared and exhibited a large combination print entitled *Bringing Home the May* [Plate 47]. Like *Old May-Day*, Robinson's combination print depicts a group of children gathering hawthorn for the May procession. By choosing this subject,

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Wood, *Paradise Lost*, 101.

⁷² Unidentified author, "May Flowers," in *The Cottager in Town and Country* 1, no. 5 (May 1, 1861) 34.

Robinson was consciously attempting to tie his photographic practice with paintings and prints that emphasized the tradition and continuity of the rural community. Whereas *The Lady of Shalott* was a subject that could never have happened, *May* was, in effect, a photograph of the connection between present and past. As we have seen, critics of artistic photography pointed out that the medium was essentially tied to the present moment, thus limiting its potential expressive scope. For Robinson, *Bringing Home the May* was his response to this challenge. By using the hawthorn specifically, Robinson boldly negated this image's connection with the present day. To further emphasize its independence from the present, Robinson included some lines on the exhibition mat from Edmund Spenser's fifteenth-century poem *May* in the *Shepherd's Calendar*:

When all is ycladde
With pleasuance; the ground with grasse, the woods
With greene leaves, the bushes with blosoming buds,
The younge folke, now flocken in every where,
To gather May-baskets and smelling brere
An home they hasten, the postes to dight,
And all the kirk-pillours eare daylight
With hawthorn buds.

Here, the poem sets the viewer in a frame of mind to accept the fiction of the image, to project oneself back into the time of the poem. Robinson also sought to tie this image to the present by depicting a part of the May festivities that was still celebrated, thus tapping into the sense of continuity and consistency within the rural community that the public found so appealing.

Curiously, Robinson tempered the nostalgia of viewing an image so tied to the past by inscribing on the presentation mat "Photographed from nature by Henry Peach Robinson,

Leamington, May 1862.”⁷³ This phrase served to signify that the photographer took this composition photograph with actors (and thus under the photographer’s total control), rather than of a painting. Yet this inscription consequently asserted its contemporaneous, as opposed to its historic, nature, as well as implying its basis in fact. There is, therefore, a paradox presented here that embodies Robinson’s photography aesthetic: asserting that his photographs were fictive aesthetic statements while attempting to balance that assertion with the medium’s inherent tie to a specific shared moment(s) between the photographer and the subject(s).

How did Robinson’s audience react to a photograph so clearly adopting this type of artistic theme? Not surprisingly, *May* was extremely popular with the photographic press, but unpopular with the fine art critics. For *The Photographic News*, *The British Journal of Photography*, and *The Journal of the Photographic Society*, Robinson’s photograph was the highest achievement in artistic photography to date. It not only proved that the challenges of combination printing could be largely overcome, it also demonstrated that photography could attain artistic status. Even Alfred Wall admired the work, writing that “in those qualities which are of the utmost importance to pictorial beauty, . . . it is perfect.”⁷⁴

⁷³ This inscription is found on the print in the Royal Photographic Society collection at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, in Bradford, UK. It is very similar to Julia Margaret Cameron’s later use of “From Life,” as she inscribed many of her photographs.

⁷⁴ Wall, “In Search of Truth,” in *The British Journal of Photography* 10, no. 194 (July 15, 1863): 285.

For the *Daily News*, however, this photograph represented all of what was wrong with “composition photography.” The critic wrote: “If there is a development of the photographic art more offensive than any other, it is that in which the aim is to make a subject-picture by ‘arranging,’ as the phrase is, so many properties and living lay figures as a picturesque composition.”⁷⁵ The *Illustrated London News* voiced these same objections. While it admitted that photography did allow for artistic taste in selection and lighting, it insisted that photographs could not diverge in any way from “mere reproduction.”⁷⁶ This, it felt, was a particular problem in relying upon models’ expressions. The *Illustrated Times* felt that *Bringing Home the May* was foolhardy by “making subjects out of dressed-up figures, and sundry shrivelled greenery and rock-work.”⁷⁷ The *Journal of the Photographic Society* felt that this was an inappropriate criticism, and it defended Robinson’s models as “manifestly belong[ing] to the soil.” “They are just such girls in just such dress as we see in the charming Warwickshire lanes,” the critic wrote, “where we also see just such leafy landscapes.”⁷⁸

Two distinct points are being argued here. All three papers voiced objection to the use of dressed-up models, despite their common use by painters to create their compositions. While these critics weighed in against the use of dressed-up figures in principle, the

⁷⁵ From *The Daily News*, as quoted in “On Composition Photographs,” in *The Journal of the Photographic Society* 8, no. 130 (February 16, 1863): 234.

⁷⁶ Unidentified author, “Bringing Home the May,” in *Illustrated London News* 42, no. 1190 (February 28, 1863): 217.

⁷⁷ From *The Illustrated Times*, quoted in G. Wharton Simpson, “Art-Photography and its Critics,” in *The Photographic News* 7, no. 231 (February 6, 1863): 61.

⁷⁸ Unidentified author, “Review: ‘Bringing Home the May’: photographed from nature, and printed from several negatives,” in *The Journal of the Photographic Society* 8, no. 130 (February 16, 1863): 235.

Journal of the Photographic Society defended the accuracy of their dress. While it is possible that the art critics objected to photographic dressed characters because the photographic medium would betray the charade, it is also possible that they felt that any substitute for the “real thing” was inauthentic and unrealistic. According to Christiana Payne, art critics began in the 1850s to object pointedly to genre painters’ mythologizing of the rustic character.⁷⁹ These criticisms of Robinson’s work, then, may have sprung from growing doubts about the type of imagery on which Robinson was basing his photographic compositions. Interestingly, the *Daily News* critic cited above continued his disapproval of Robinson’s photograph by examining the hawthorn: “but the May, intended to be as beautiful as the real flower, is a ridiculous-looking stuff, more like sponge than hawthorn-blossom.”⁸⁰ It is possible that this critic, knowing that the hawthorn did not bloom until after the first of May, concluded that Robinson’s flowers had to have been props. Either way, this critic is sensing, and deriding, the inherent fakery.

Bringing Home the May was also Robinson’s most ambitious work to date in terms of its size and price. *May* was essentially panorama in format, a rather large 40 x 15 inches. This was much bigger than his previously-largest work, *Holiday in the Wood*, which measured 22 x 17 inches. (*Fading Away* was a comparatively small 9.4 x 15 inches, and *The Lady of Shalott* measured 12.5 x 20.5 inches.) *May* also listed for the highest price

⁷⁹ Payne, “Rural Values for Urban Consumption,” 62-3. Also, I discussed in the Introduction, both Ruskin and Eliot participated during the 1850s in an active critique of this idealization within the context of the Picturesque.

⁸⁰ From the *Daily News*, as quoted in “On Composition Photographs,” 234.

by far compared to his previous works. While *Fading Away* was listed in 1859 for 15/- (fifteen shillings), *The Lady of Shalott* in 1860 for 7/6 (7 shillings, 6 pence), Robinson asked 42/- (forty-two shillings or two guineas) for *Holiday in the Wood* in 1861. *Bringing Home the May* was listed in 1863 for ten times that amount at the relatively huge sum of £21 (the equivalent of twenty guineas). This was a very ambitious price for a photograph. To compare to other large prices for photographs, Rejlander offered *The Two Ways of Life* for a hefty £10/10 in 1857. While a few photographers did ask for larger sums for their images, these prices were only for sets of images. Roger Fenton, for example, sold sets of his approximately 300 images of the Crimean War for £63 in 1855-6, and Francis Bedford asked 43 guineas for his 172 images of Egypt and the Holy Land in 1862. Although paintings from the Royal Academy exhibitions could sell for hundreds of pounds or more (Frith's massive 1858 painting *Derby Day* sold for £1,500), Robinson's was still far and away the highest price for a single photograph to date. Robinson must have hoped this value would be read as reflecting its artistic value. He was thus staking a claim to fine art status for photography, not only through subject matter, but also through the market. There is no evidence that the art critics published any comments upon Robinson's price for *May*, but his prices may well have been a contributing factor for the change in reception from *Holiday in the Wood*'s ambivalent success and *May*'s outright rejection.⁸¹

⁸¹ There is no evidence that Robinson sold any of *May* at this price. In the year of Robinson's death, his son, Ralph Winwood Robinson, offered for sale a large number of platinum prints made from his father's negatives. Because of the enormous effort to piece the negatives together and the size of the print, Ralph

Frugality and Industriousness

Other moral virtues embodied in many genre paintings were the twin traits of frugality and industriousness. These images suggested that life could really be not so difficult for the poor if they worked hard and saved money. Religious societies published tracts promoting these values, although not strictly related to piety. One such society was the Religious Tract Society, based in London. The inaugural issue of its mouthpiece, *The Cottager in Town and Country*, offered narrative lessons to demonstrate the benefits of industry, cleanliness, and eschewing vice. In an article called “Taxes,” for example, the writer admitted that taxes in England were high, but he pointed out that the majority of taxes paid by the working man were those on beer, spirits, and tobacco.⁸² By renouncing them, the “town cottager” could dramatically decrease his expenses. Such renunciation also had deeper rewards:

He has but to give up the use of the articles, and he may laugh at the tax-gatherer. And why should he not give them up? There are thousands of our countrymen—and their number is every day increasing—who have done so; and they all say that they are healthier, stronger, more cheerful, and richer than they were while they used them...What does it buy now? How much of sorrow! what heaps of vice! what a great load of ignorance, poverty, and early death!

Another story in this issue, entitled “Two Families,” compared the lives of two households. The wife who managed the first house was unkempt; she did not clean the house or her children. Although the husband woke up and went to work at six in the morning (embodying industry), “she lay in bed till the last minute, and then all was hurry

asked £3/3/0—considerably less than his father had asked so long before. Ralph W. Robinson, *Catalogue of Pictorial Photographs by the late H.P. Robinson* (Redhill, Surrey: R.W. Robinson, 1901).

⁸² All citations from this and the next article are from *The Cottager in Town and Country*, 1 (January 1, 1861): 8.

to get breakfast ready in time [for her husband's return mid-morning]." When her husband entered the house, he saw such a mess that "he turned on his heel, and went to breakfast at a coffee-house, which he had visited so often under similar circumstances, that he looked upon it as a much more comfortable place than his own house." By contrast, another workman at the same foundry returned to a clean, orderly house managed by his neatly dressed wife who had her children dressed and breakfast ready. The story concluded: "The immediate cause of his comfort and good temper lay in his wife's habits of early rising and prudent management." The moral of this latter story is that industry and cleanliness are wifely "duties" since they comfort and please others.

Two of Robinson's photographs that demonstrate these qualities of industriousness and frugality are *Preparing Spring Flowers for Market* (1873) [Plate 48] and *Somebody Coming* (1864) [Plate 49].⁸³ The former shows two rustic-clad young women in a cottage interior. Surrounding them are the spring flowers that they are preparing for sale at the local market. While the cottage is filled with flowers in various states of preparation, it does not seem disorderly or dirty. Indeed, the left half of the picture, with two chairs and a small table underneath the window, is very tightly arranged. The plants on this table seem healthy and well looked after. One of the young women sits and gathers flowers into a bunch, while the other brings the next basket of flowers to the large table. Their production seems, by all appearances, to be neat and well organized. While the

⁸³ *Somebody Coming* was a study for another work, also from the same year, *Autumn*. (Both were exhibited.) It depicts the same two children generally posed in the same way, along with other children and a background landscape. I use *Somebody Coming* because it shows the girl with gleanings much larger.

photographic journals each recognized the photographic composition to be the best since *Bringing Home the May* (1862), none of them offered much praise in addition to this comment. The *Illustrated London News*, however, gave the photograph a moderate-length notice, engraving it for their November 8 issue [Plate 50]. The *ILN* critic praised its taste of arrangement. However, the critic objected to its combination printing technique as a vain attempt to compete with painters.⁸⁴

Preparing Spring Flowers for Market is an unusual genre photograph in that Robinson chose to depict labor actually in process. Even when work was being done, rustic genre paintings generally showed people at rest from the work itself. At the same time, John Barrell has pointed out that even in images of rest the signs of industry in these paintings were apparent: “It does not of course always mean that they must never be shown at rest, though it comes close to mean something very near that, but it does prescribe the terms on which they may relax—in the evening, after a hard day’s work; after the harvest, on their way to the ritual feast; during the harvest, at meal-breaks, but never far from the hooks and scythes which indicate that they are resting only for a moment.”⁸⁵ *Preparing Spring Flowers for Market* was quite close to the common genre type of the rustic girl at market. This type ranged from flower sellers [Plate 51], such as pictured in *Violets and Primroses* engraved from a painting by Thomas Faed from 1874, to fern gatherers, to *The Watercress Girl* [Plate 52]. As the article accompanying *The Watercress Girl* in *The*

⁸⁴ Unidentified author, “The Winter Exhibitions: Photographic Society,” in *The Illustrated London News* 63, no. 1784 (November 8, 1873): 443.

⁸⁵ Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape*, 21.

Cottager in Town and Country made clear, many market girls (including the girl in *Violets and Primroses*) only acted as final agents of sale. These girls bought their goods from dealers or the farmers themselves, so their labor, though demanding, consisted of staying at a corner and selling.⁸⁶ Not only was Robinson's photograph remarkable because it depicted a scene of industriousness, *Preparing Spring Flowers* was unusual because it depicted market girls hard at work before they went to market.

As mentioned above, scenes of rustic people resting from work were common in British genre painting. By showing scenes of rest, these images could deflect any direct confrontations of the hard labor that agricultural workers had to perform, or that the rural laborer was either physically threatening or ripe for revolt. John Barrell also points out how the scale of the agricultural worker becomes much smaller in early to mid nineteenth-century painting, as exemplified by the work of John Constable.⁸⁷ Clearly painters (and photographers who imitated them) had to walk a narrow line between showing idealized industry and the realities of hard labor. It is important to point out that women and children would not have been seen as threatening as laboring men. Robinson's imagery by and large depicts young women and not men. The old men in *Dawn and Sunset* and *When the Day's Work is Done* also could not have been seen as a threat.

⁸⁶ Unidentified, "The Watercress Girl," in *The Cottager in Town and Country* 2, no. 16 (April, 1862): 26.

⁸⁷ Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape*, 131-64.

The resting gleaner offered one popular solution wherein only the results of labor were depicted [Plate 53]. This image, from the August 1, 1864 issue of *The Cottager in Town and Country*, is a typical rendition of a sweet young gleaner girl. Gleaning was an annual activity of rural women and children who gathered for their own use the remnants of crops dropped by the harvesters.⁸⁸ Because these remnants amounted to such a small percentage of the total take, landowners usually turned a blind eye to this practice. To the rural poor, however, who often lived without adequate food, gleanings were a significant part of their diet, and they depended on this wheat and corn for a good part of the year.⁸⁹ Images of gleaners, then, served not only as images of an industrious and frugal poor who did not let food go to waste, but also as images implying ruling class or farmers' charity.

Robinson produced three images of gleaners during his career. One of these was *Somebody Coming* [Plate 49], a finished study for another work called *Autumn*, both of which were exhibited in the Photographic Society of London exhibition in the summer of 1864. In *Somebody Coming* the seated girl's pose is strikingly similar to the little girl's on the cover of *The Cottager in Town and Country*, although it was produced before this engraving was published. There was only one brief review of *Somebody Coming* in the photographic press, but it was positive. The critic judged: "taken simply as a study of chiaroscuro, and viewed in the twilight or with half-closed eyes, it is a wonderfully perfect composition, whilst for the skilful rendering of an idea, and for perfectly detailed

⁸⁸ See Wood, *Paradise Lost*.

⁸⁹ Payne (*Toil and Plenty*, 17) cites one source who estimates that gleaning provided up to an eighth of a family's annual income (P.King, "Customary Rights and Women's Earnings: The Importance of Gleaning to the Rural Labouring Poor, 1750-1850," in *Economic History Review* 44, no. 3 (1991), 461-76).

and, at the same time, brilliant photography, it is most admirable.”⁹⁰ This praise is significant given the fact that the photograph was not a combination print but rather a photograph of two girls posed in front of a painted backdrop. Moreover, Robinson clearly used a studio prop tree and log to act as supports for the figures. Despite the obvious artificiality of the image, the critic felt justified in praising it.

Images of gleaners also drew upon the middle class’ sense of nostalgia, for despite the appeal of the timeless traditions, celebrations, and morals in the landscape of myth, times were changing. In a review of an image of a sweet and innocent gleaner in *The Art-Journal* from 1864 [Plate 54], the critic indicated the disparity between truth and aesthetic appeal:

The application, within the last few years, of the modern discoveries of science to husbandry of almost every kind must be obvious to all who reside in, or visit, the agricultural districts of England. The steam-engine is at work not only in the fields, but almost within the precincts of the farmyard, where the barn oftentimes no longer echoes the dull ‘thud’ of the labourer’s flail in the autumn and winter months. Whatever aid the farmer receives from the locomotive, it certainly is not a picturesque object in the field or stack-yard.⁹¹

For Robinson to produce these types of genre photographs, he had the complex challenge of doubly denying the present captured so well in his photographs. As discussed in relation to *Bringing Home the May*, Robinson’s fictive spaces needed to counter any evidence that this photograph depicted a specific moment in time. For this image of a gleaner, Robinson was using a type or rustic character that was in reality becoming more

⁹⁰ Unidentified author, “The Photographic Exhibition: Studies and Genre Subjects,” in *The Photographic News* 8, no. 303 (June 24, 1864), 302.

rare. While not as fictitious as *The Lady of Shalott, Somebody Coming* depicted a moment that would have been increasingly hard to find in the landscape.

Piety

The Christian Church was an influential force in the lives of the cottagers in mid-century England, and British genre painters made the devout cottager a staple of their painting for several decades. As Christopher Wood writes: “The Victorians cherished the idea that the rustic was a simple, pious soul, who went to church every Sunday, and also read the family bible, possibly every day.”⁹² Wood continues: “Certainly the family bible, often the only book in a country cottage, was a treasured possession, handed down from generation to generation, and often inscribed with the names and the birth dates of all the family.”⁹³ Paintings and illustrations, as well as religious societies, promoted rustic piety to an urban working class that seemed to stop going to church when they moved to the city. One such illustration was *The Agricultural Laborer—Sunday* [Plate 55] by Roberts, Jr. that shows a rustic man reading from the family bible. This image is taken from the October 9, 1875 issue of *The Graphic*, a weekly illustrated magazine. The accompanying commentary revealed the prevalent attitude toward the rural working class:

If, however, such a patriarch as is here represented can read, we may be pretty sure that he spends some of his well-earned leisure over the well-worn pages of his family Bible, and that, poor and humble as his lot may be, he derives thence lessons of cheerfulness and contentment, as well as a foretaste of the happy future which awaits him in the next state of being.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Unidentified author, “Selected Pictures: The Gleaner. P.F. Poole, R.A., Painter; J.C. Armytage, Engraver,” in *The Art-Journal* 3 (November 1, 1864): 320.

⁹² Wood, *Paradise Lost*, 139.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Unidentified author, “The Agricultural Labourer—Sunday,” in *The Graphic* 12 (October 9, 1875): 360.

This commentary encouraged the reader to believe that the pious cottager was, no doubt because of his religion, happy and content and willing to accept his station in life. Piety thus led to other virtues (perhaps most importantly social stability), and was thus highly regarded by British society. *The Graphic* often featured less idealized rustic figures, and in this illustration we can see the man's worn hands and clothing. Despite these realistic details, the image fit well within the pious rustic class of genre imagery.

Robinson only produced one such pious rustic in his career; however, it was his most popular work in terms of sales.⁹⁵ *When the Day's Work is Done* [Plate 56], from the Photographic Exhibition of 1877, shows two old cottagers sitting in what is not only the evening of the day, but also the evening of their lives. An old man, posed in a nearly identical position to the figure in *The Agricultural Laborer—Sunday* [Plate 55], reads from a book to his wife. Because the theme of reading from the bible was common, we can assume that it is a bible that the man in *When the Day's Work is Done* is reading. It also is a large and thick book, lending further evidence to this hypothesis. *The Graphic's* commentary could equally apply to Robinson's composition; we see a man and woman contemplating the life beyond this one. The domicile also exudes orderliness—a clear sign of an industrious wife. The cottage is crowded but organized, rather than dirty, thus connoting that “everything is in its place.” Like the engraving of *The Agricultural Laborer—Sunday*, Robinson has chosen to illustrate people who are neither too attractive nor too ugly. This quality was praised in one of the reviews of the work, wherein the

critic complained about other genre photographers who either exclusively used pretty maidens or who dressed up their models in vulgar costumes.⁹⁶ Instead, the critic praised Robinson's models as "the noblest part of the picture."⁹⁷ Robinson, in his attempt to fit his work within the traditions and virtues of the rustic genre style, must have been pleased with the critique.

Family / Cycle of Life

Another common virtue, of sorts, found in much British genre painting was the multi-generational family. Often depicted home in their cottage, the family was an immensely important institution to Victorian Britain. Yet, these images were particularly promoted to the urban working class, as Christiana Payne writes, because it was thought that "a father who was devoted to his children would work hard and avoid the alehouse; his children would grow up to be moral and law-abiding...; if they were well looked after by their children, old people could enjoy a seat in the chimney corner and avoid having to go to the workhouse...[and] could play a valuable role in passing on the rural virtues to their grandchildren."⁹⁸ As with religious virtue, the concept of family was also associated with virtues such as industriousness, the avoidance of vice, and tradition.

Robinson's *Dawn and Sunset* [Plate 57], which won a medal at the 1885 Exhibition of the Photographic Society of London, is a good example of this familial virtue. In another

⁹⁵ Harker, *Henry Peach Robinson*, 61.

⁹⁶ Unidentified author, "The Photographic Exhibition: Subject Pictures," in *The Photographic News* 21, no. 1,000 (November 2, 1877), 523.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

orderly cottage sits an old man, in the words of one critic: “in the aimless, musing attitude of extreme age.”⁹⁹ Across the room sits his daughter holding an infant who reaches up to touch her. The cottage itself is neat and tidy: the objects on the mantle are carefully arranged, as are the plants on the desk underneath the window. A bassinet sits near the mother, ready to accept the infant, while between the adults is a wash basin with soap sitting on a chair.¹⁰⁰ As with *When the Day’s Work is Done*, the elderly man seems content and resigned to his present station as well as his future. Like *When Day’s Work is Done*, this image operated well within prescribed bounds of the theme of continuity and renewal. It was as if Robinson was reassuring the rustic class that their lives were to remain largely the same, continually renewed, in the face of social and economic change.

Class Stability

Behind much of the desire to promote a content, frugal, industrious and pious rural working class was the anxiety of civil unrest. As mentioned above, the conflicts in the countryside had largely died down by mid century. The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 largely satisfied both the merchant and working classes by making food cheaper through permitting imports, and the Chartist movement had largely dissolved within two years. Yet the Reform Act of 1832 had not, in retrospect, delivered as widespread suffrage as had been hoped. The Reform Act of 1867, however, did extend the vote to the male

⁹⁸ Payne, *Rustic Simplicity*, 19.

⁹⁹ Unidentified author, “The Photographic Exhibition: First Notice,” in *The Photographic News* 29, no. 1414 (October 8, 1885): 641.

¹⁰⁰ In his review of this work, Wall criticized Robinson for placing these unattractive objects in the center of the composition. He felt it needlessly divided the picture into two separate halves. [Wall, “The Photographic Exhibition—No. I,” in *The Photographic News* 29, no. 1416 (October 23, 1885): 675.]

working classes in the cities, but it wasn't until 1884 that this was further extended out into the countryside. Nonetheless, the revolutions on the Continent in 1848 added to a keen awareness of class conflict in the middle class mind.

Paintings that depicted class stability were a welcome theme for middle class (or aristocratic) consumers of genre painting. Under this category might well fall the hundreds (perhaps thousands) of paintings of what might be called "rustic idylls," images of pretty rustic maids carrying water or gossiping with other maids. These idylls served as reaffirmation that the rural poor were virtuous, and above all, guileless in social/political matters. Robinson photographed these rustic idylls perhaps more than any other category of subject matter. Such photographs as *Down to the Well*, *Basket of Ferns*, *Wayside Gossip*, *Gossip on the Beach*, *Can I Jump It?*, *A Merry Tale*, and even *He Never Told His Love* and *A Chat with the Miller* promote the concept of the carefree life of the rustic (particularly the rustic maiden).

Undoubtedly the most famous pictorial example of class stability is William Collins' 1832 painting *Rustic Civility* [Plate 58] seen here in an engraving published in the August 1865 issue of *The Art-Journal*. In this image a group of rustic children, presumably children of the tenant farmers, deferentially opens a gate for a landowner on horseback, whose shadow is defined on the ground and whose property we see in the distance. The commentary in *The Art-Journal* characterized the children's "rustic civility" as a performance done in anticipation of charity. Christiana Payne has pointed out that

Collins was a Tory and that this painting was done during the debates over the Reform Act of 1832 that removed all qualifications for voting other than ownership of a household worth £10. Collins' painting implicitly supported the status quo through the respectful attitudes of the children, particularly the boy who tugs his forelock to the approaching squire.

This painting presents an interesting point of departure when analyzing four of Robinson's images made between 1884-95: *In Welsh and English* (1884) [Plate 59], a published sketch entitled *Trespassers* (1887) [Plate 60], [*Meadow with boy and two rustic girls*] (circa 1884) [Plate 61], and "*At Sunset Leaps the Lusty Trout*" (circa 1885) [Plate 62].¹⁰¹ The first image, *In Welsh and English* (also called *A Trespass Notice*) pictures two rustic-dressed girls pointing to a sign posted on the door of a stone building. It reads:

NOTICE
To All Whom it May Concern
The Right of Fishing in River Alyn is Strictly Reserved
All Trespassers will be Prosecuted
BY ORDER

What initially appears to be a simple "slice of life" of rustic maids becomes an image characterized in terms of land ownership and legal coercion. The rights to fish in the local river were restricted by law to the landowner, and the rustics, who may have wished to fish for food, were prohibited by strict penalty. While poaching of game and rabbits had been a problem between the aristocracy and the peasant since the establishment of

¹⁰¹ In a "Catalogue of Pictorial Photographs by the late H.P. Robinson," "*At Sunset Leaps the Lusty Trout*" is dated 1895. Harker dates it circa 1885, and stylistically it seems to fit more with the earlier date.

the Game Laws in the seventeenth century, it escalated with the enclosures and clearances of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁰² As common land became property of the large landowners, the right to hunt on that land transferred to the landowner. In 1816 the Night Poaching Act introduced the penalty of “transportation” (deportation to Australia) for seven years if one were apprehended while intending to poach. This punishment was broadened in 1828 to transportation of 14 years for certain poaching offenses. These increasingly harsh punishments led to violence between the police or gamekeepers and the peasants when the latter were apprehended. Although the 1831 Game Reform Bill removed the “qualifications” that restricted game shooting to the aristocracy, the game itself became the property of the landowner when it was killed. As a result, “trespassing with the intent to poach” was generally used by law enforcement to prosecute suspected poachers, and it carried stiffer penalties than mere trespassing. An ever-expanding profession of gamekeepers seriously enforced trespassing laws. As indicated by the posted sign in Robinson’s photograph, trespassing was serious business.

In 1887 Robinson published a series of letters in the New York-based *Photographic Times* called “Letters on Landscape, Addressed to an American Friend.” As part of the illustrations for these letters he included *Trespassers* [Plate 60]. In it we see three rustic girls on the edge of a meadow being confronted by a landowner with a walking stick. Perhaps significantly, this is the only illustration in all of these nine letters that Robinson does not comment upon directly. Viewed in the context of *In Welsh and English*, which

¹⁰² For this section I rely upon Harry Hopkins’ excellent analysis of poaching laws in Britain. Harry

was made three years earlier, this image might represent the next episode of the narrative—the girls, ignoring the trespass notice, have now been caught. The narrative is frozen at this climactic moment; we do not know what will happen to these rustic characters. When viewing Robinson’s photograph [*Meadow with boy and two rustic girls*] [Plate 61], we see another image that appears to be a simple rustic idyll of two girls strolling through the landscape. In fact, given the scale of the figures to the land, the girls appear to function more as visual incident to the landscape than as a central part of the narrative. Yet, upon close examination, we notice a young man at the fence, and we realize that the girls are walking over to speak to him. Could this be another depiction of trespassing? The answer remains unclear, but Robinson is clearly occupied to some extent with this trespassing issue. Moreover, I would argue that this is the only theme that emerges in images depicting the interaction of rustic and middle classes. Sometime between 1885 and 1895 Robinson produced “*At Sunset Leaps the Lusty Trout*,” a fourth image depicting the relationship between landowner and peasant [Plate 62]. In this beautiful photograph a young man fishes under a cloudy sky while two rustic girls look on from a distance. For Robinson’s middle and upper class audience who would have taken the young man’s point of view, this image would have likely served as a nostalgic reflection upon young adulthood. Considering the other images we have just examined, however, it has distinctly different overtones; today we would more likely read this image from the girls’ perspective. Likely prevented from legally fishing in the river for food, these rustics watch a member of the landowner’s family (or party) enjoy these privileges

Hopkins, *The Long Affray: the Poaching Wars, 1760 – 1914* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1985).

for sport. This photograph, like the rest of these images, evokes the conflicting rights of the middle and lower classes.

Do these images protest against the inequity of the Game Laws in British society, or do they, like Collins' *Rustic Civility*, somehow affirm the legitimacy of class divisions? In the images themselves we are given few clues. The rustic characters in *In Welsh and English* are given prominence, yet they are unable to counter the force of the threat of prosecution. In "At Sunset Leaps the Lusty Trout" the rustic girls are marginalized into the middle distance up against the fence, while the boy is given center stage. The title offers no sympathy to the rustics, and it aestheticizes the act of fishing. Taking Robinson's biography into account, we get a much clearer picture. *In Welsh and English* (and likely the rest of these images) was made as part of a series of photographs while on holiday in Gelligynan, Northern Wales on the country residence of his brother's father-in-law, Sir Henry Tate. Tate, therefore, was the landowner who controlled the property and the hunting and fishing rights thereon, and so it is likely that the building and the actual sign are on Tate's property. Although Robinson was not a landowner himself, as extended family one would expect that Robinson sympathized with the Tate family against poachers and trespassers.

After years of struggle against the Game Laws that pitted game preservationists against the rural tenant farmer and agricultural laborer, there was a dramatic change in 1880. That year, after William Gladstone's Liberal Party regained control for his second

ministry, Parliament passed the Ground Game Act in 1881, conferring upon tenant farmers the “unalienable, concurrent right” to shoot hares and rabbits on their land. In this the majority might have agreed with Joseph Chamberlain, Gladstone’s President of the Board of Trade, who wrote: “Are the game laws a right of property? Is it just and expedient that the amusements of the rich, carried even to barbarous excess, should be protected by an anomalous and Draconian code of law, and that the community should be called upon to maintain in gaol men made criminal by this legislation, although they have committed no moral offence?”¹⁰³ Yet this change was less effective overall than expected, Hopkins writes. By giving both landowners and tenant farmers “concurrent” rights to game, this Act only altered the specifics of conflict between these classes. Moreover, as Harry Hopkins points out, the tenant farmer and agricultural worker had long-standing deference to the landowner, leading Disraeli to reassure the Queen that the Ground Game Act was “a mere phantom” and the *Graphic* to assert that “things will probably go on very much as in times past.”¹⁰⁴

Despite the passage of the Ground Game Act in London, many rural landowners continued to enforce previous rules. The Act also did not ease the long-standing landowner’s protected rights to other animals, such as deer, pheasant, and partridges. One of Robinson’s photographs from a series done in 1881 on a previous holiday in Gwysaney, North Wales, is called *Rook Shooting* [Plate 63] and depicts a middle-class boy shooting into the air. Writing about photographing in Gelligynan a few years later,

¹⁰³ As quoted in Hopkins, *The Long Affray*, 272-3.

Robinson described his holiday as highlighted by pursuits of leisure afforded by rank: “It is not necessary here to say anything about the fishing, which was not very successful...; or the tennis, of which there was a furious hour or two every day; or the visits to the young pheasants, of which vast numbers are reared, and which I hope to meet again in November.”¹⁰⁵ Robinson then commented that in recent years his “Artists’ Party” (derived from the popular upper class “Shooting Party”) had had to relocate to Gelligynan. He attributed this change partly to the Ground Game Act, which he characterized as being passed “for the purpose of setting landlords and tenants by the ears, and breaking contracts.”¹⁰⁶ This comment sounds much like remarks made by the (Tory) Duke of Rutland who described the Act as “unsound and pernicious, interfering as it does with freedom of contract.” Rutland also insisted it would “sow a suspicious feeling between landlords and tenants and make them imagine their interests are not identical.”¹⁰⁷

By closely examining these images and understanding the political and social context in which they were made, we can confirm that Robinson created photographs (not only those of the peasants, but also *Rook Shooting*) that served as aesthetic statements in support of the status quo and class harmony. In these images, Robinson, whether consciously or not, reaffirmed the socially-entrenched differences between levels of franchisement, wealth and property rights. He also depicted, particularly in “*At Sunset*

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 269. Hopkins quotes from Robert Blake, *Disraeli* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966).

¹⁰⁵ Robinson, “Brush and Camera in Wales,” in *The Photographic News* 28, no. 1351 (July 25, 1884): 468.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 467.

¹⁰⁷ Hopkins, *The Long Affray*, 269.

Leaps the Lusty Trout,” a rustic class that seemed to accept their station relative to landowners. While Robinson’s images of rustics and landowners do not strictly fit into a common trope of British genre painting, they should be seen as linked with other images that promoted class stability and continuity.

We now return to consider *In Welsh and English*, which of these images is the most overt case of potential class conflict, or the most obvious image wherein it is plain that the interests between these classes were not, in fact, identical. Given the evidence above that Robinson supported the status quo, how did he mean for these images to be read? *In Welsh and English* is clearly anti-pastoral at first glance— the peasant girls forcibly direct the viewer’s attention toward the warning notice by their stick. Yet this conflict is simultaneously undercut by the size of the sign and particularly of its print, which is very hard to read without magnification.¹⁰⁸ The potential gravity of conflict is also undercut by the use of female “peasants” rather than male, since young women would have not been seen as particularly threatening to social stability. It is, therefore, very doubtful that Robinson intended this image as an indictment of class differences. This reading of Robinson is further demonstrated by his views regarding the use of “real” models versus middle and upper class young women posed to look like them. This issue will be discussed further below.

¹⁰⁸ If this were a painting Robinson, could have easily made the text completely indecipherable. But because he photographed an actual notice sign, the text is plainly visible when magnified. ?? look up our size vs. TW.

Sympathy

At the same time that British genre painting portrayed “Hodge” and his family as hard-working, moral, pious, and largely content with their position in life, these paintings also depicted the less happy moments of life. Scenes of the sick, especially children, were not uncommon. In the previous chapter Thomas Webster’s painting *Sickness and Health* [Plate 30], exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1843, was mentioned; I also reproduced a published description of Joseph Clark’s *The Sick Child*. Many of these paintings were admired (at least to some extent) by the critics because they were able to stir the viewer’s emotions. In the parlance of the day, these paintings had “sentiment,” or the ability to elicit thoughts via passion or feeling.¹⁰⁹ Another much-used word in nineteenth-century art criticism was “sympathy,” or one’s feeling corresponding to that felt by another.¹¹⁰ As the *Encyclopaedic Dictionary* of 1887 asserted, sympathy could be either joyful or sorrowful: “According to the derivation of the words, *sympathy* may be said of either pleasure or pain; *compassion* and *condolence* only of that which is painful. *Sympathy* preserves its original meaning in its application, for we laugh or cry by *sympathy*.”¹¹¹ At the beginning of this chapter I quoted an *Art-Journal* critic who asserted the nationalism of English genre painting through the unity of emotion. Here again is the germinal sentence of that quote:

From the prince to the peasant, from the palace to the cottage, the range in rank is wide; yet the same sentiments—love to God, charity to neighbors, duties of parents and children, sympathy ready to mourn with those who mourn, or to rejoice over those who are glad in heart—these principles and

¹⁰⁹ Robert Hunter, *The Encyclopaedic Dictionary* (London: Cassell & Co., Ltd, 1884-8), 339.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 726.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 727.

emotions, the outcomings of our universal humanity, have found earnest and literal expression through domestic pictures, which, both by their number and mastery, may almost claim to be national.¹¹²

Through these genre paintings, the viewer was supposed to feel sympathy for these characters, both positively and negatively. It is unknown whether any of this sympathy, generated by viewing a tragic scene, for example, turned into charitable actions by the viewer. Given the meaning of the word, this action would not have been expected, for sympathy was inherently a passive act. Again, turning to the *Encyclopaedic Dictionary*: “*Compassion* is altogether a moral feeling, which makes us enter into the distress of others; we may, therefore, *sympathize* with others, without essentially serving them; but if we feel *compassion*, we naturally turn our thoughts towards relieving them...*Compassion* may be awakened by persons in very unequal conditions of life; *condolence* supposes an entire equality.”¹¹³ The “sympathy” that became such a feature of nineteenth century art criticism, as we can see, was meant to raise emotion rather than action in the middle and upper class viewer of genre painting. It was about an inward emotional aesthetic experience rather than an outward-oriented empathy.

One of the more tragic sub-genres of nineteenth-century English painting and illustration were the wives, sisters and daughters of fishermen anxiously awaiting their return each evening [Plates 64 – 66]. In *The Turn of the Tide* [Plate 64] by Davidson Knowles (engraved in the June 18, 1881 issue of *The Illustrated London News*) a young woman looks out to sea. Other vignettes, ranging from a shipwreck to boats returning home

¹¹² Unidentified author, “The Royal Academy,” in *The Art-Journal*, 2 (June 1, 1863): 110.

safely and the warm hearth that awaits the fortunate sailor, surround the central scene. All of these possibilities, surely, are on this woman's mind as she awaits the return of her husband. In Thomas Faed's *The Anxious Look-Out* [Plate 65] (reproduced in *Royal Academy Pictures*, 1890), we see a mother, flanked by her children, as they wait literally on the edge of the sea. The mother's unfocused stare does not foretell a happy resolution. Finally, we have *After the Storm* [Plate 66] by W. Colomb and reproduced in the October 1864 issue of *Good Words*—a monthly journal that paired illustrations with poetry. Here we see an extremely anxious-looking woman looking out to sea as the sun sets. The last stanza of the poem that accompanies the drawing reads:

Along the shore, along the shore,
That skirts the everlasting main,
How oft we weep what never more
The waves of Time bring back again!
And while years rolling *boom* the dirge
Of hopes long swallow'd by the brine,
How oft a fruitless search we urge,
And vainly scan the dark sea-line!¹¹⁴

Fishing and shipping were difficult and dangerous occupations. As seen in the accompanying chart [Plate 67] from *The Illustrated London News*, in 1868 there were 2,131 vessels wrecked off the coast of Great Britain, with 824 lives lost. In 1873, there were 728 lives lost off the coast of Britain in the first six months alone. In addition, 1,813 British lives were lost in foreign waters and 1,025 lives were lost in missing British ships, all during this same six-month period. This made a grand total of 3,566 drowned men. An article in the January 23, 1875 issue of *The Graphic* blamed the ship owners for

¹¹³ Hunter, *The Encyclopaedic Dictionary*, 727.

¹¹⁴ Unidentified author, "After the Storm," in *Good Words* 5 (October 1864): 777.

a large percentage of these deaths. It cited parts of a report written in 1871 by the Assistant Secretary to the Board of Trade:

Notwithstanding the various means for inquiry to which we have referred, there are innumerable preventable losses on our coast and at sea....A great number of preventable losses happen to ships unsurveyed and unclassed... It will be seen that we fully accept the fact that such ships are sometimes knowingly sent to sea, and that loss of life is too often the result....Ships are also at times bought, equipped, manned and loaded with deliberation for the express purpose of being thrown away at sea, without regard to loss of life, and with regard solely to recovering of insurance....Shipwrecks and marine disasters, so far from always being what is irreverently and generally termed the "act of God," are frequently nothing less than the result of the culpable negligence, or direct and premeditated misdeed, of man.¹¹⁵

These are the aesthetic and historical contexts in which to view two photographs by Robinson: *A Nor'Easter* [Plate 68] from 1883, and *Coming Boats* [Plate 69] from 1893. Neither of these photographs is explicitly tragic. While the subject of *A Nor'Easter* seems more potentially disastrous than the title *Coming Boats*, both of these photographs would have been instantly recognized as operating within the context of "lost at sea" paintings. Of the two photographs, there are only two reviews for *A Nor'Easter* and none for *Coming Boats*. One of those of *A Nor'Easter* agreed that this image should be read in the context of paintings of widowed fisher wives. The author wrote: "The figure, alone in the landscape, imparts a deep pathos to the picture that the spectator cannot fail to appreciate."¹¹⁶ Maidens on the beach looking out to sea could only mean two things: either he is coming back or he isn't. (There are plenty of examples that I am not reproducing that depict the happy return of the sailor.) In these two images, Robinson

¹¹⁵ Unidentified author, "The Wreck Chart of the British Islands" in *The Graphic* 11, no. 269 (January 23, 1875): 86.

seems to imply in *A Nor'Easter* that he is *not* coming back, whereas in *Coming Boats* he likely is. Either way, Robinson's desire to convey sentiment was successfully achieved in these two images. Sentiment in a painting could cause a vicarious celebration or a pitying empathy, and these photographs evoke both of these emotions. While the viewer can clearly sympathize with the (potentially) mournful girl in *A Nor'Easter*, one can also experience the girl's relief in *Coming Boats*.

Analysis

One of the fundamental questions about Robinson's career is how these genre subjects, which dominated his career, were so successful. How was photography able to create these images of dressed-up figures, carefully posed in scenes that bore tremendous resemblance to popular painting and prints, and fundamentally deny some of the medium's presumed trenchant qualities: the ability to render scientific detail and its inherent factuality?

Part of the answer has to do with the paintings on which these photographs were based and how their contemporary public read them. For this we turn to an argument by Sam Smiles about the reception of genre painting in early to mid-century Britain.¹¹⁷ In seeking to expand upon the differences between these paintings and "reality" (as best we

¹¹⁶ Unidentified author, "The Photographic Exhibition," in *The Photographic News* 27, no. 1310 (October 12, 1883): 641.

understand it), Smiles tries to determine how such images were understood. He writes: “The meaning of such art, then, would lie in its reception, which stemmed neither purely from nostalgia nor from ignorance but was a form of autonomous enjoyment, something much closer to what Coleridge famously called a willing suspension of disbelief.”¹¹⁸ He continues by asserting that genre painting was “an art poised self-consciously between observation and aesthetic protocols, and its conception as such needs to be distinguished from mere ideological mystification or a species of false consciousness as regards the world of labor.”¹¹⁹ Smiles points out that painting at the turn of the century needed to satisfy basic criteria of taste or risk being considered vulgar. Peasants were seen as vulgar, so too much realism was discouraged. Because of this, nineteenth-century Britons, as had Reynolds in the previous century, criticized Teniers and other Flemish painters for their “inability to escape the vulgar, for [their] preoccupation with detail and with unidealized documentation, and for [their] consequent inability to elevate the mind of the spectator above the routine, the base and the commonplace.”¹²⁰ As we have already discussed, one of the prime characteristics for fine art was that it was mediated by the mind of the painter—literal transcriptions were not artistic.¹²¹ Therefore, according to Smiles, the British public accepted genre paintings as mediated representations, not strict copies, of rural life. As Smiles asserts, to believe that a happy painting of benevolent

¹¹⁷ Sam Smiles, “Dressed to Till: Representational Strategies in the Depiction of Rural Labor, c. 1790-1830,” in *Prospects for the Nation: Recent Essays in British Landscape, 1750-1880*, ed. Michael Rosenthal, Christiana Payne, and Scott Wilcox (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 79-95.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹²¹ Even John Ruskin, as discussed in the Introduction, encouraged painters to render the type of tree rather than the specific tree.

agriculture “necessarily stood in anything other than a poetic relationship to agriculture itself” would have been a serious error of judgment.¹²² For Smiles, paintings that breached these bounds of decorum were threatening “precisely because they promised to collapse the separate worlds of agriculture and aesthetics into one another.”¹²³

If we can accept Smiles’ argument that the viewing audience understood genre paintings to be mediated depictions of rustic life, could viewers of similar subjects in *photography* approach them in the same way? Robinson and other artist photographers certainly hoped so. For Robinson, the goal would be nearly the opposite, though closely related, to that of the painter. The goal was to create genre photographs that looked and operated so similarly to paintings that the viewer’s suspension of disbelief brought to painted scenes would be carried over to his photographs since they used such similar subject matter. The goal was the same, but Robinson’s technique was opposed to that of painting. His genre photographs required the willing suspension of *belief*, rather than disbelief, that photography was a clear window to the world, unaffected by the photographer’s mind.¹²⁴

¹²² Ibid., 89.

¹²³ Ibid., 92.

¹²⁴ There is very little indication that nineteenth-century viewers thought these were accurate depictions of actual rustics. There is a scene in Thomas Hardy’s 1881 novel *A Laodicean* in which the lead female character believes that a trick photograph (depicting a male character as if drunk) is accurate. However, she later doubts its accuracy and discovers from a photographer that such tricks were possible (Thomas Hardy, *A Laodicean* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997). Regarding Robinson’s work, the only published instance wherein either a critic or the public felt that one of his photographs was documentary is with *Fading Away*. Even in this case, however, there is ambiguity whether the public’s emotional reaction was caused by seeing what they thought was a representation of a real, dying girl, or by a fictionalized representation of death.

This was a difficult line to walk. In the Photographic Society of London exhibition in 1857, Oscar Rejlander submitted several genre photographs. A critic for *The Illustrated London News* responded: “Of Mr. Rejlander’s many contributions it is difficult to speak; they are mostly attempts to make up pictures of the *genre* school; and, we must say, as compositions they are utter failures. He chooses his subjects chiefly from vulgar life; and all we can say of them is, they are faithfully represented.”¹²⁵ In other words, the critic felt that Rejlander’s photographs were too accurate in their depiction of “vulgar life.” At the same time, the reviewer for *The Art-Journal* felt that in looking at Rejlander’s works, “that we are looking at portraits of actors—excellent in their way, but still actors.”¹²⁶ Given these two somewhat contradictory reviews, one cannot determine if Rejlander used posed models or posed “authentic” people as models. Either way, the first critic certainly felt that the subjects themselves were not worthy of fine art.

At the 1860 Photographic Society exhibition, the same one where he first showed *The Lady of Shalott*, Robinson exhibited a combination print entitled *A Cottage Home* [Plate 70], which was made from three negatives. In the image we see three women, one of whom sits and holds a small child. Another woman irons while standing with her back to the camera. The third woman kneels down and as she either picks up or places a cloth into a basket, rests her head on her hand and leans on the ironing table. On the floor in the immediate foreground lies a sleeping dog. The upper part of the image is dominated

¹²⁵ Unidentified author, “Photographic Society Exhibition,” in *The Illustrated London News* 30, no. 841 (January 24, 1857): 61.

¹²⁶ Unidentified author, “Photographic Exhibition,” in *The Art-Journal* 3 (February 1, 1857): 40.

by sharp contrasts of light and shadow. On the left side of the photograph the light coming through the window is juxtaposed against the very dark wall underneath and to the right of the window. The seated woman has on a white shirt that also contrasts against the dark walls. The right half of the photograph is similarly marked by juxtaposed light and dark passages. The woman ironing wears a black shirt, whereas the wall behind her is lit with an arched-shaped light that encloses the two figures on the right. On the very top edge of this arch shape is a clock, whose bright face contrasts against the shadow on the wall above it. *A Cottage Home* barely received any notice in the press.¹²⁷ While there are many factors that could have led critics to not pay particular attention to the print, such as the large quantity of photographs exhibited in these exhibitions and the placement of these photographs, it is possible that the critics found *A Cottage Home* unappealing. If this were the case, one could point to the photograph's muted mood as a significant factor. While *A Cottage Home* was not Robinson's first genre photograph, it seems to have been his first cottage interior. He had not yet formulated his sweeter, happier scenes of holidays and celebrations. *A Cottage Home* does not even fit comfortably within the theme of industry as *Preparing Spring Flowers for Market* [Plate 48]. While labor is certainly being presented (ironing and folding the clothes), this type of labor is purely domestic. By contrast, the theme of industry in British painting was associated with work that produced some tangible (and marketable) good. Of course, there is an irony in this difference—the wife who kept an orderly and

¹²⁷ Only one review mentions it, suggesting that it was part of a group of Robinson images that were “deserving of attention.” Unidentified author, “London Photographic Society’s Exhibition,” in *The British Journal of Photography* 7, no. 111 (February 1, 1860): 41-2.

tidy home, as we have seen, was extolled as a model of behavior, yet a class of images that depict the labor necessary to obtain this goal seems not to have developed.

Indeed, Robinson's *A Cottage Home* does not present the tidiness that we see in his later work. We see the sole of the child's right foot in partial shadow, unfortunately conveying the connotation of dirt. The cottage is rather stark as well. There is also none of the picturesque visual incident that was such a hallmark of genre painting and that featured so strongly in Robinson's later cottage scenes *Dawn and Sunset*, *When the Day's Work is Done* and *Preparing Spring Flowers for Market*. Although Robinson's shadows and highlights make for bold aesthetic elements and compositional devices, they cast a rather somber mood over the scene. There is none of the real sentiment that is the hallmark of Robinson's successful work. The models ultimately convey an unidealized mood of boredom and fatigue. Moreover, the image was also probably not marketable. While all classes could surely identify with this type of moment, it was not the kind of moment that anyone would aspire to. Genre paintings at the time were generally more charged with sentiment or some moral lesson, and *A Cottage Home* fell, like Rejlander's earlier works cited above, within the hazardous trap of being too realistic ("vulgar" in contemporary language) for its acceptance into the aesthetic realm. *A Cottage Home* might well have proved to be a lesson learned for Robinson in his early career. It is a unique image in his oeuvre, and he quickly returned to the more idealized genre subject matter.

This image brings back into the discussion the role of reality in genre photography at the time. In October 1858 a critic for *The Photographic News* wrote a long comparison between the work of Robinson and William Grundy [see Plate 71, Grundy's *Gleaners*, from 1857]:

The former [Robinson]...attempts to delineate sentiment of a high class; and more or less illustrates poetic subjects. The latter [Grundy] chooses subjects from every-day life, and in contradistinction to Mr. Robinson, portrays the real, rather than the ideal. He [Grundy] is to photography what Teniers and Wilkie were to art. He portrays, as they did, those characteristics of human nature which are seen in every-day life. His most successful pictures are decidedly Dutch in feeling, and, therefore, more or less gross. By this we do not mean anything derogatory to the class of picture, any more than that Dutch pictures of the highest class never exhibit anything bordering on the ideal.¹²⁸

For this critic this “gross” reality of the subject was complimented by the fact that Grundy took his compositions on one negative, rather than by combination printing. This critic also found “the real” in the appropriateness of the accouterments in Grundy’s photograph *Dutch Fisherman*. He marveled at the detailed rendition of these items, but it interesting to note that this critic drew a comparison of these things not to a real Dutch fisherman (for this is surely a model dressed in character) but to a painting by Teniers “at his best period.”¹²⁹ As we have seen with Robinson’s aesthetic theory, the truth of genre photographs was measured in their comparison to *painting* rather than to any actual living conditions. Despite the attribution of notions like “truth” and “reality” to Grundy’s works, the critic felt these were due to his sense of painterly composition and to the

¹²⁸ Unidentified author, “Critical Notices: The Photographic Exhibition at the Crystal Palace: Concluding Notice,” in *The Photographic News* 1, no. 5 (October 8, 1858): 52.

¹²⁹ Ibid. “There is such clearness in the tone of the picture, such true feeling in the expression of the Fisherman’s face, such exquisite detail in regard to the furniture of the interior and the dress of the figure,

quality of his models.¹³⁰ For this critic, as for Robinson, a photograph could be described as “real” although its subject was an actor pretending to be a cultural type. Despite the fact that some photography critics urged artistic photographers to create truthful pictures, we are still no closer to real “truth,” unless we mean either a painterly truth or some universal condition.

Models

Various critics and photographers’ comments upon models provide a good study in the relativity of truth in genre photography. For the art photographers and their critics throughout the 1850s – 1870s, the use of models to create composition photographs was quite acceptable. Indeed, for Robinson, the use of models was essential to the type of fiction he was depicting. While there were occasional criticisms about the dress of certain models, or for choosing an inappropriately attractive (or unattractive) model, there was never a hint that the use of “authentic” models would be preferable for ideological reasons. The idea of art photography was to control the scene as much as possible, and posed models were obviously much easier to guide than their authentic counterparts. In this approach, art photographers were reacting against some of the medium’s more popularly-believed qualities, such as its automatic truth telling and its penchant for detail. Detailed views of country life were not particularly desirable for the middle class, for these images would not have served as the types moral guides that I have outlined above.

even to the darned stockings, the wooden clogs, the stunted chairs and tables, the oval goblet, all of which strongly call to mind a copy of a picture by Teniers at his best period.”

¹³⁰ Ibid.

The primary goal of these photographers was to create aesthetically pleasing images that entertained or educated in some way. Dressed-up milkmaids and other rural idylls, ironically, were seen as more “true” than others despite the fact that they would never have been confused for what we today might call documentary photographs. At this point we may return to the image of gleaners by Grundy [Plate 71], part of a series of photograph of “English Views” owned by Getty Images. Plate 72, *Window Call*, is also part of this series. In this image we see a veritable document of how gleaners looked in the mid-nineteenth century. *Gleaners* shows much more detail of the women’s clothing, for example, than most genre photographs from the time. Ultimately, it is likely impossible to determine whether the models in these photographs were “actual” rustics posed by Grundy or middle class people dressed in rustic garb.¹³¹ The dress certainly appears to be authentic. It is clear that regardless of these peoples’ identities, they have been carefully posed and perform as models for the photographer. One doubts, however, that *Gleaners* would have received such high praise as *Dutch Fishermen*, for these models expressions are neither conventional nor pleasing. The standing figure, in particular, is caught in what appears to be a proud, almost defiant, stare directly at the camera. We may assume that this expression betrayed a certain hostility of the model for the photographer, although this hostility could be felt a model of any social class during a photographic session that involved such careful posing.

¹³¹ It is clear that Grundy did use models in some of his photography. In the review cited above, the critic points out that his portraits of Turkish characters betray Anglo-Saxon faces. In 1869 Francis Bedford recalled that Grundy once used model boats in a puddle of water for some shipping-scene photographs (in commentary at meeting of Photographic Society of London, published with Nelson K. Cherrill’s article “On Combination Printing,” in *Journal of the Photographic Society of London* 14, no. 201 (January 16, 1869): 208.

It was this type of expression that art photographers such as Robinson sought to avoid. The chief objection to the use of real rustic people for models was that rustics were thought incapable of showing a “pleasing” expression because artistic sentiment was beyond their comprehension. This opinion was held not only by photographers such as Robinson, but also by many photography critics at the time. In a review of the 1859 Exhibition of the Photographic Society of London, William Crookes commented on the work of the Truefit Brothers:

These artists have attempted by means of photography to give us some pictures of country life. This as all our readers know, is a class of subjects which finds great favour, both with artists and the public generally. But the pictures by Truefit Brothers have neither sentiment nor form in them; indeed there is an absolute absence of that naïve simplicity which is the charming characteristic of pictures of rural life. The reason of this is plain, and it is one of the strongest arguments against composition in photography. There can be no doubt but that the models are genuine country children; but then, as photographic models, they are told to assume a class of sentiments which it is impossible for them to understand or appreciate, and which, as a matter of course, they fail to personate.¹³²

Of course, this is tremendously ironic. The country type was seen as naïve but those children who were truly naïve of artistic training could not show this naivete aesthetically. The best rustic, in other words, were those who were more cultured than those they were representing.

Later that same year Alfred Wall continued this line of thought. In his first manifesto supporting artistic photography entitled *Photography as one of the Fine Arts*, he had a

section devoted to the use of models. In determining which kind of person made a good model, he dismissed painters' models as useless because they did not have good expressions. Instead, Wall recommended a different type of person. He wrote:

Our best models must be sought among men and women whose minds are imbued by nature or by cultivation with poetical conceptions, who, feeling deeply, will express correctly the various passions or sentiments required...I would therefore advise the photographer who takes up this department to cultivate his conception of the picturesque, and look about him for models in the almost unexplored scenes of humble life."¹³³

It is the former category, those whose minds were “imbued by nature,” which is so interesting. Wall described coming across a “ragged and dirty young urchin” one day who was listening to a story with a fantastic expression. Wall felt this boy would make a wonderful model—not so much for his own sake (such as his clothing) as for his *capability* for expression. Even for Wall, whose primary emphasis in art photography was its truthfulness, the boy in this story would still have had to be trained to be a model to play other subjects.¹³⁴ While Wall admired the urchin's unaffected and natural expression, he nonetheless maintained that the boy required education in acting. For Wall, expression for aesthetic effect was still more important than how “authentic” the person was. At the same time, Wall felt that the painter's professional was often difficult to manage “because he or she has been educated rather to express the desired feeling by assuming a certain pose, than by working upon the feelings until they find expression in

¹³² Crookes, “The Exhibition of the Photographic Society,” in *The Photographic News* 1, no. 21 (January 25, 1859): 241.

¹³³ Wall, “Photography as one of the Fine Arts,” in *The Photographic News* 3, no. 69 (December 30, 1859): 194.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

both attitude and face.”¹³⁵ Wall here revealed that the wrong type of education would not suffice for someone to be adequate photographic model; his or her expressions needed to come from within. In this way Wall perpetuated the notion, discussed above, that the simple folk of the working classes were more emotionally pure than the middle and upper classes, yet he seemed unaware of the contradiction inherent in his insistence that this emotional purity be educated and trained.

Another story that Wall told asserted that the rustic peasant was incapable of appreciating aesthetics.¹³⁶ He related an incident during the career of the painter William Collins, R.A. who one day saw a picturesque cottage boy [top of Plate 73]¹³⁷ that he thought would be useful for painting as a character. The boy’s mother brought him to the studio the next day, but she had dressed him up nicely and combed his hair [bottom of Plate 73]. Wall’s view was that a portrait painting of the dressed up boy would have been no more accurate in presenting the boy’s character than the façade of a house representing the thoughts of the individuals inside. By contrast, Collins’ treatment of the boy in his rustic garb would have been “telling a story, *expressing feeling*, and illustrating character.”¹³⁸ Once again, Wall characterized the working class as naïve. He wrote: “The blunder of this ignorant unsympathising peasant was very excusable...being as careful to repress every touch of sentiment, feeling, and character when before the camera.” It all depended upon whose point of view was more important, the viewer or the subject—one

¹³⁵ Wall, “The Technology of Art as applied to Photography,” in *The Photographic News* 5, no. 148 (July 5, 1861): 313.

¹³⁶ Wall, “Artistic Feeling in Photographs,” in *The Photographic News* 29, no. 1387 (April 3, 1885): 218.

¹³⁷ Ibid. Wall’s drawings of the boy, both ‘before’ and ‘after.’

person's shame was another person's "character." Wall felt that the most important characteristic of painting was its aesthetic and its potential for sentiment, so he chose this person's aesthetic effect over his personal vulnerability.

Robinson, for once, agreed with Wall in this matter. In his book *Picture Making by Photography*, from 1884, Robinson devoted an entire chapter to choosing models for pictorial photographs. In it, he discussed the same scenario as Wall, first with middle-class children and then with rustic ones. He wrote: "Young children make good models; but you must capture them wild. To ask their mothers if you may have them is fatal. They insist on dressing them in their Sunday-school clothes to 'have their pictures took.'"¹³⁹ He then continued: "Now a dirty country child is often a delightful lump of picturesque humanity; but when it is 'washed and dressed all in its best,' it is about the most priggish bit of nature I know. It loses all its freedom, and becomes stiff and awkward."¹⁴⁰

In both of these stories related by Wall and Robinson we see the fundamental difference between the desires of the subjects (represented by the children's mothers) and the artists. Each of these mothers interacted with the artist/photographer with the likely expectation that a portrait, or something close to it, would be done. Accordingly, each cleaned up their child so that he would look his best. Part of this transformation by the mothers was

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Robinson, *Picture Making by Photography*, 53.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

out of respect due to the artists, who were men of higher social standing. No peasant mother would rightly send their unkempt child as they were when they were noticed by the artist/photographer. The same expectation was obviously shared by the middle class mother-type in Robinson's story. Clearly anticipating a fine studio portrait, these mothers dressed up their children in their finest outfits. No doubt Collins and Robinson both patiently explained their type of interest in these children, and it would be reasonably expected that these mothers would not have understood the role their children would play. Even if, however, these mothers did understand that these artists were interested in composing scenes with their children that took place in the countryside as part of a genre painting/photograph, they would naturally expect their children to be fully recognizable in the final product. But this is not what Collins, and likely Robinson, would have wanted. These children were instead to be used to portray a cultural type rather than themselves individually.

For Collins this transformation would have been a simple enough task in painting the picture. He could have based a particular figure on the child but generalized it so that it would not be a straightforward representation. Artistic photographers saw this ability as a goal to which they should aspire. In one of the early meetings of the Photographic Society of London, John Leighton, F.S.A., read a paper about photography as a fine art in which he Leighton asserted that painting's primary purpose was to create images derived from nature wherein nature's abstract was given without the minutia, or details. By contrast, Leighton felt that photography was "too literal to compete with works of art,

containing ‘near and distant objects upon the same plane, [and] backgrounds and foregrounds of equal intensity.’”¹⁴¹ Leighton also felt that despite photography’s difficulties with accurate portraiture [rendered by early photographic technology], the camera also found it impossible to represent *types* of characters. He wrote: “The camera can only give the individual, not the type of a class, whereas the artist portrays this by selecting the best expression of each feature from a series of individuals.”¹⁴² It was against this presumed inability that Robinson and other artistic photographers struggled in an effort to replicate painting’s easy transformative technique. This is the basic difference between Robinson and the mothers of these rustic children—the mothers could not comprehend that a particular photograph reproducing their child could possibly represent an entire class of society.

Another method artistic photographers used to de-individualize their subjects was through dress. The dress of the rustic figure was seen, in large part, to have changed little over time. An article by Graham Balfour, who wrote a type of manifesto for the naturalist photography movement in 1889, shows just how tenacious this concept was.¹⁴³ For the naturalists, most of the types of “untruths” that Robinson promoted, such as imaginary subjects and combination printing, were completely unacceptable. Through these efforts the naturalists severely narrowed the acceptable parameters of artistic photography. Balfour, for example, stated his displeasure with anachronistic dress in

¹⁴¹ John Leighton, “On Photography as a Means or an End...,” in *The Journal of the Photographic Society* 1, no. 6 (June 21, 1853): 74.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 75.

photographic subjects, but he acknowledged that this was less of an issue in rustic subjects, because their dress had changed so little over time. Even for a naturalist like Balfour, rustic dress was an essential component of the theme of tradition and continuity in genre photography.

By contrast, another naturalist photographer, Peter Emerson, refused to dress his figures, even when the image may have called for it. In *A Dame's School*, seen in Plate 74 (reproduced in *Photographic News* on October 23, 1885), we see child agricultural laborers learning their lessons—a common theme of English genre painting in mid-nineteenth century. The commentary published in *The Photographic News* believed that the subject probably belonged “to a bygone generation,” so that “costumes of an earlier day would seem more appropriate to the picture.”¹⁴⁴ Indeed, board schools had largely replaced Dame schools by the mid-1880s. In an effort to resist the “false” practices of dressing up models, Emerson created an anachronism in their clothing—in the opposite direction, but as inaccurate as Robinson.

In his book *Picture Making by Photography*, Robinson was intent to clarify why he used posed models rather than authentic rustic figures. Like Alfred Wall, Robinson felt it was basically a matter of intelligence and education. He wrote: “Now, as regards models, I seldom find the ‘real thing’ to quite answer my purpose. The aboriginal is seldom

¹⁴³ Graham Balfour, “Figure in Landscape and Genre,” in *The Photographic News* 33, no. 1588 (February 8, 1889): 89-90.

¹⁴⁴ Unidentified author, “The Photographic Exhibition, Third Notice,” in *The Photographic News* 29, no. 1416 (October 23, 1885): 673.

sufficiently intelligent to be of use, especially if you have ‘intention’ in your work.”¹⁴⁵

He recalled a story of trying to get a beautiful rustic girl to pose for him. He was successful in convincing her, but could not get a good expression. In addressing his use of models, he continued:

I am quite conscious that I am laying myself open to the charge of masquerading, but art is a state of compromises and sacrifices, and I cannot but think that what is lost in absolute unrelenting naturalness when substituting trained models for the newly-caught raw nature, is compensated for in many ways. Graceful figures, if not over-done, give an ideal tinge to the picture that lifts it above the cleverest transcript of mere prosaic fact. My models may be called to some extent artificial, but they are so near the real thing as to be taken for it by the real natives, just as the trout does not seem to know the difference between the natural and the artificial fly.¹⁴⁶

For Robinson, this aesthetic gain that could be had by using posed models ensured that the photographs he produced would not be mistaken for “the cleverest transcript of mere prosaic fact.” Using models in this way was, in fact, essential to his overall project. He required the ideal out of his images, and it was very unlikely he could find this in the countryside. In a very defensive gesture, he maintained that the agricultural worker himself was often not able to distinguish the difference between dressed up figures and rustic folk, thus implying that there was, in fact, little difference between the two, yet he undercut his point by implying that the laborers were no more intelligent than trout.

Ultimately, Robinson’s theory of photographic imitation prioritized the role of the photographer’s mind in creating art—the photographer’s ability to control the content of

¹⁴⁵ Robinson, *Picture Making by Photography*, 50.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 50-1.

his pictures and to mediate between nature and its representation. In a final defense of his use of models, he wrote: “There are those who go for absolute purity of production, unmitigated nature, who will admit nothing in a picture but what is indigenous to that picture, so to speak; but Art, according to Lord Bacon, is man added to nature, and unmitigated nature is certainly not art. I do not fear to say that nature alone, as a picture, has far less interest than the same nature represented by an artist.”¹⁴⁷ Once again, Robinson implied that the rustic is actually part of nature. He also reaffirmed his view that nature needed to be composed and altered for the best aesthetic effect.

The 1880s were a time of increased visibility for the rustic classes as they gained various rights, particularly the right to vote as given by the Reform Act of 1884. In the photographic world at this time there was also a significant transformation slowly taking place, as implied in Robinson’s comments just cited above. Critics began to make objections to photographers dressing up models to portray rustic characters. Back in 1877 Robinson’s cottage interior *When the Day’s Work is Done* was praised for its tasteful choice of models—they were neither too attractive nor too unattractive and marked a difference from other photographers’ work.¹⁴⁸ In 1882, however, the *Times* asserted:

There is always a terribly artificial look about Mr. Robinson’s groups of picturesquely-attired maidens in more or less conventional attitudes; and clever as the groups are, they always seem to carry with them a taint of the theatre into the woods and fields, where we find them planted. This

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 49.

¹⁴⁸ Unidentified author, “The Photographic Exhibition. Subject Pictures,” in *The Photographic News* 21, no. 1000 (November 2, 1877): 522-3.

objectionable feature is emphasized when, as in the present exhibition, half-a-dozen such pictures are placed together showing, apparently, the same girls in the same dresses, enacting different little rustic dramas in different scenes.¹⁴⁹

During the peak of the very public debates between Robinson and the naturalist photographers Emerson, Davison, and Balfour in 1889, Robinson's use of dressed models came under attack. In an article published in September of that year, Davison gave a biting, if brief, condemnation of dressing up models. He wrote:

For if he brought into prominence a defence of combination printing, and of dressing ladies as country girls and fisher lasses for his pictures, he would find even his quondam retainers, the topographers, alienated. It is not in man, even if f-64 man, to overlook the unnaturalness of joinings in photographic pictures and the too-visible drawing room drapery air about attractive ladies playing at haymakers and fishwives.¹⁵⁰

Davison, and more particularly Emerson, worked in conscious opposition to Robinson's techniques, photographing the actual rustic laborer in the field under the banner of "truth." Emerson's ideas did permit him, however, to compose these figures to produce aesthetic images. This turned these real people, in effect, into models as well. For Emerson, their indigenous character was of paramount importance, and he spent his brief photographic career photographing the real rustic in the landscape.

While occasional art critics or those from the non-photographic press had criticized composition photographers such as Robinson who used dressed up models, these criticisms were generally leveled at their lack of expression or of their obvious actor-

¹⁴⁹ Reprinted as "The Photographic Exhibition," in *The Photographic News*, 26, no. 1258 (October 13, 1882): 618-9.

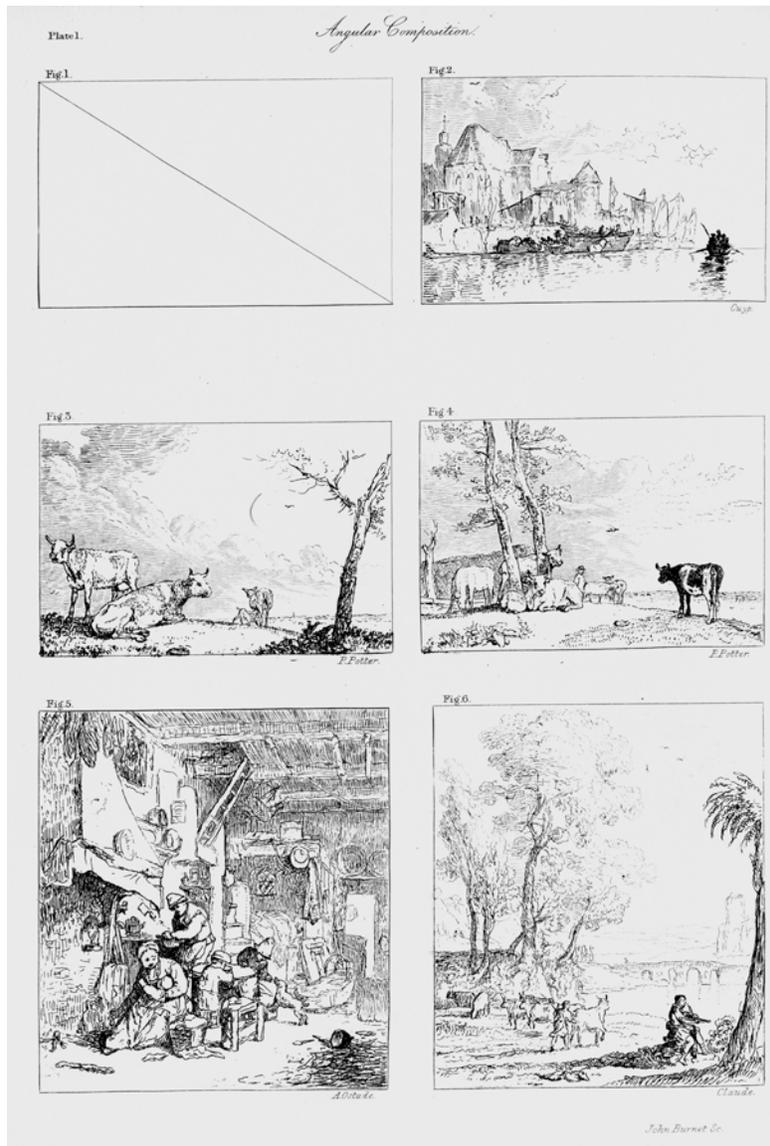
¹⁵⁰ Davison, "Correspondence, Naturalistic Photography," in *The British Journal of Photography* 36, no. 1532 (September 13, 1889): 611.

status (rather than as false in comparison to actual rustics). Davison's and Emerson's comments were the first to criticize them on the basis of their lack of "truth." Robinson continued to maintain throughout the rest of his active career that these dressed up models were justified for reasons we have already discussed. He also continued to produce idyllic rustic genre scenes such as *The Gilly Flower*, from 1891 [Plate 75] and *Old Dapple*, from 1899 [Plate 76].

Yet, there are two images from this time that may have been influenced, in some indirect way, by this criticism. The first is *The Lobster Boat* from 1888 [Plate 77]. In this image we see two fishermen gathering their baskets on their boat. Robinson has clearly used actual fishermen, and he has created a somewhat spontaneous image of their daily life. It is remarkable in his oeuvre for its depiction of labor by real laborers. The second image dates from 1894 and is called, *Ready for the Collier, Morning* [Plate 78]. In this remarkable image we see men loaded onto a cart, ready for work either in the mines or on a collier ship. Might these images been produced in response to criticisms from the naturalists that Robinson was living in the past with his dress-up models? It is unclear, though it is very likely they were created with the full expectation that they would sell.¹⁵¹ If Robinson did not feel these were more morally sound than the idyllic scenes he was producing concurrently, then this type of imagery must have been popular enough to induce him to create these images.

While many critics of today pass off Robinson's genre imagery as being wholly uninteresting, we have discovered that there was a method to Robinson's motives. Intent in creating images that would be accepted as representations by his audience, he exploited some of the major themes in contemporary genre painting. Genre subjects also represented a very acceptable type of imagery for his harshest critics who felt that if art photography were to succeed at all, it would be by imitating nature. Of course, these genre subjects were as idealized as any of Robinson's other works. We have also seen that Robinson's genre subjects depicted more than simple rustic idylls. His images *Preparing Spring Flowers for Market* and *A Nor'Easter* reveal that industry could be represented and that sympathy could be evoked through photography as well. Finally, through an analysis of contemporary social issues such as game laws, we are able to decipher some of Robinson's more enigmatic images that represent interactions between the middle and rustic classes. These images reveal a conservative viewpoint, of a man who believed that the real rustics, as he represented so often in his imagery, were (and should be) content with their station.

¹⁵¹ Both of these, among many others, were offered for sale by Robinson's son, Ralph, in Robinson, *Catalogue of Pictorial Photographs by the late H.P. Robinson*.



1. John Burnet, Plate I. Burnet, John. *Practical Hints on Composition in Painting*, in *A Practical Treatise on Painting in Three Parts: consisting of hints on composition, chiaroscuro, and colouring: the whole illustrated by examples from the Italian, Venetian, Flemish and Dutch schools*. London: J. Carpenter, 1827



2. George Grundy & Son, *Old Manchester*, undated. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin. [All subsequent images are found in the Harry Ransom Center, unless otherwise noted.]



3. Henry Peach Robinson, [*Landscape with houses*], undated. [All subsequent images are by Henry Peach Robinson unless otherwise noted.]



4. [*Landscape with houses*], undated. RPS Collection, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television, UK.



5. Oscar Rejlander, *The Two Ways of Life*, 1857. RPS Collection, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television, UK.



6. [*Photographic sketch for Carolling*], c. 1887.



7. [*Photographic sketch for Carolling*], c. 1887. (Plate digitally altered by the author.)



8. [*Photographic sketch for Carolling*], c. 1887. (Plate digitally altered by the author.)



9. [*Photographic sketch for Carolling*], c. 1887. (Plate digitally altered by the author.)



10. [*Photographic sketch for Carolling*], c. 1887. (Plate digitally altered by the author.)



11. [*Photographic sketch for Carolling*], c. 1887. (Plate digitally altered by the author.)



12. Oscar Rejlander, *St. John the Baptist*, c. 1858.



13. *Holiday in the Wood*, 1860. George Eastman House.



14. *Bringing Home the May, 1862.*



15. William Frith, *Derby Day*, 1858. Tate Britain.



16. *Autumn*, 1863. RPS Collection, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television.



17. *Watching the Lark*, 1868.



18. *Sleep*, 1867. RPS Collection, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television.



19. *When the Day's Work is Done*, 1877.



20. *Little Red Riding Hood*, 1858. RPS Collection, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television.



21. *Down to the Well*, 1864-66.



22. *On the Hill-Top*, c. 1868. Robinson, Henry Peach. *Pictorial Effect in Photography*. London: Piper & Carter, 1869.



23. Dr. John Percy and John Spiller, *The New Mill, Near Lynton, North Devon*, 1857. *The Photographic Album for the Year 1857: Being Contributions from the Members of the Photographic Club*. London: Charles Whittingham, 1857.

The New Mill, Near Lynton, North Devon.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DR. PERCY AND MR. JOHN SPILLER.

 LOVED the brimming wave that swam
Through quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.

TENNYSON.



AKEN on Collodion, at the end of September, 1856; in feeble and not continuous sunshine; Exposure about eight minutes, the mill being almost entirely in shadow; developed with Pyrogallic Acid. The Lens was focussed to the wheel.

Lens by Ross; focal length eighteen inches; diameter three and a half inches; Diaphragm five-eighths of an inch.

Printed and toned with Gold by Mr. Hardwich, King's College.

24. Lord Alfred Tennyson, *The Miller's Daughter*. *The Photographic Album for the Year 1857: Being Contributions from the Members of the Photographic Club*. London: Charles Whittingham, 1857.



25. Mark Anthony, *Wild Flowers*, 1856. *The Photographic Album for the Year 1857: Being Contributions from the Members of the Photographic Club*. London: Charles Whittingham, 1857.

Wild Flowers.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARK ANTHONY.



THE flowers were beautiful to me,
When childhood lured the way
Along the green and sunny slope,
Or through the groves to stray.

They were to me as playmates dear,
And when upon my knee
I whisper'd to them in their beds,
Methought they answer'd me.

Then countless gay and fairy forms
Gleamed by on pinions rare,
And many a castle's turret bright
Was pictured on the air.

For fancy held me so in thrall,
And peopled every scene,
That flowers might only fill the space,
A thousand joys between.

MRS. SIGOURNEY.



TAKEN on Collodion, June, 1856; weather, sunny morning; Exposure twenty-five seconds; developed with Pyrogallic Acid.

Lens, French (name unknown); focal length fifteen inches; diameter, combination, four and a half and six inches; Diaphragm one inch.

Printed on Toogood's plain paper, Ammonio-Nitrate of Silver and Sel d'Or toning bath, by Spencer.

26. Mrs. Sigourney, Untitled poem. *The Photographic Album for the Year 1857: Being Contributions from the Members of the Photographic Club*. London: Charles Whittingham, 1857.



27. William Lake Price, *The Soldier's Toast*, c. 1856. *Photographic Art Treasures, or, Nature and art illustrated by art and nature: by this new and beautiful art of engraving, the uncertainty of colour and the liability to fade, so objectionable in photographs, is obviated, while the detail and touch of nature is faithfully preserved.* London: Patent Photo-Galvano-Graphic Co., 1856. [The author has modified the scan of this image to increase readability of the text.]



28. *Fading Away*, 1858. RPS Collection, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television.



29. *Fading Away*. *Harper's Weekly* 2, no. 99 (November 20, 1858): 740.



30. Thomas Webster, *Sickness and Health*, 1843. Victoria & Albert Museum.



31. *The Lady of Shalott*, 1861.



32. Negative for *The Lady of Shalott*, 1861. RPS Collection, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television.



33. William Holman Hunt, *The Lady of Shalott*. Tennyson, Alfred Tennyson, Baron, *Poems*, London: Edward Moxon, 1857. Page 67.



34. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Lady of Shalott*. Tennyson, Alfred Tennyson, Baron, *Poems*, London: Edward Moxon, 1857. Page 75.



35. William Holman Hunt, *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia from Proteus*, 1851. Tate Britain.



36. Henry Wallis, *Chatterton*, 1856. Tate Britain.



37. John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1852. Tate Britain.



38. *Sleep*, 1867. RPS Collection, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television.



39. *A Holiday in the Wood*, 1860. George Eastman House.



40. *A Holiday in the Wood*. *The Illustrated London News* 38, no. 1079 (March 16, 1861): 239.



41. Sketchbook, undated. RPS Collection, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television.



42 Sketchbook, undated. RPS Collection, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television.



43 Sketchbook, undated. RPS Collection, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television.



44. R. Morris, *Old May-Day*, 1894. *Royal Academy Pictures: Being the Royal Academy Supplement of "The Magazine of Art,"* 1894. Page 7.



45. Cuthbert Bede, *The May Queen and Her Garland at Glatton, Huntingdonshire*. *The Illustrated London News* 30 (May 2, 1857): 414.



46. Unidentified, *May Flowers*. *The Cottager in Town and Country* 1, No. 5 (May 1, 1861): 33.



47. *Bringing Home the May, 1862.*



48. *Preparing Spring Flowers for Market*, 1873. Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery.



49. *Somebody Coming*, 1864.



50. *Preparing Spring Flowers for Market*. *The Illustrated London News* 63, no. 1784 (November 8, 1873): 429.



51. Thomas Faed, *Violets and Primroses*, 1874. *The Graphic* Vol. 10 (July 11, 1874): 40.



52. Unidentified, *The Watercress Girl. The Cottager in Town and Country* 2, no. 16 (April 1, 1862): 25.



53. Unidentified, *The Gleaner. The Cottager in Town and Country* 4, no. 44 (August 1, 1864): 57.



54. P.F. Poole, *The Gleaner*. *The Art-Journal*, 3 (November 1, 1864): 320.



55. Roberts, Jr., *The Agricultural Labourer—Sunday*. *The Graphic* Vol. 12 (October 9, 1875): 360.



56. *When the Day's Work is Done*, 1877.



57. *Dawn and Sunset*, 1885.



58. William Collins, *Rustic Civility*, 1832. *The Art-Journal* 4 (August 1, 1865: opposite p. 234.



59. *In Welsh and English*, 1884.



60. *Trespassers*, 1887. Robinson, *Letters on Landscape Photography* (New York: Scovill Manufacturing Company, 1888).



61. [*Meadow with boy and two rustic girls*], c. 1884.



62. *“At Sunset Leaps the Lusty Trout,”* c. 1885.



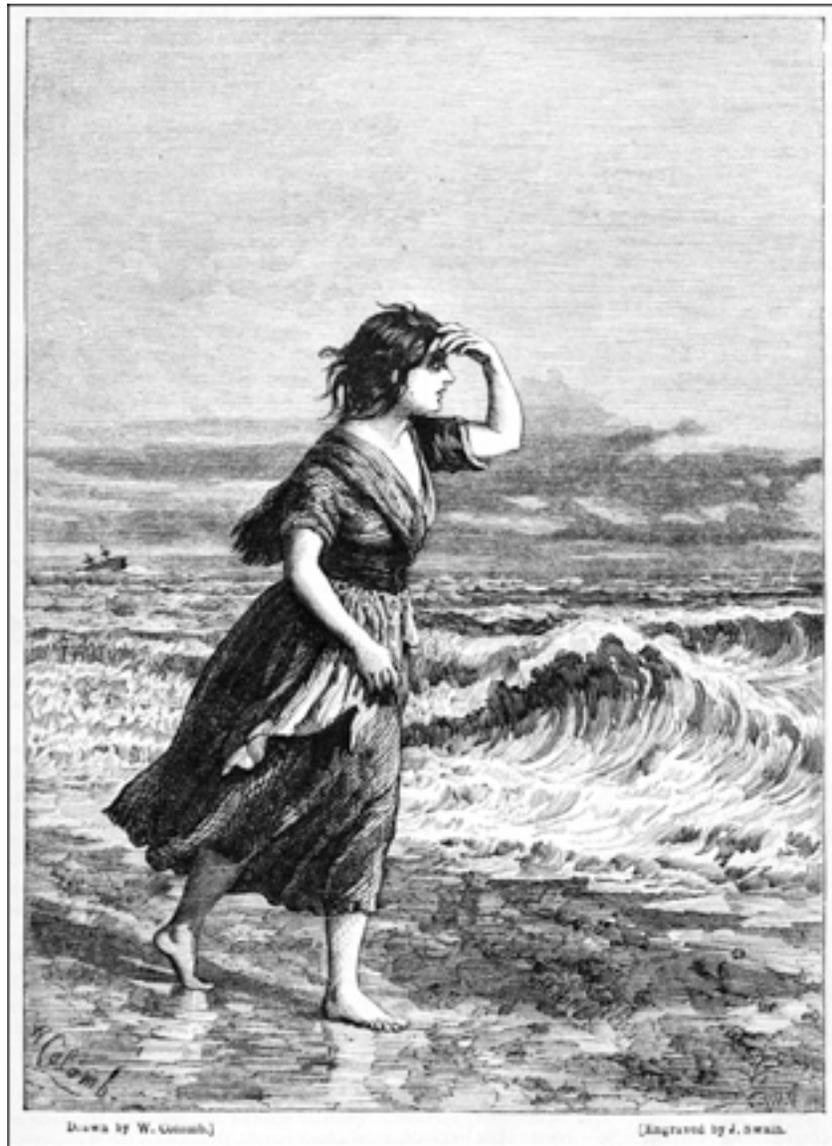
63. *Rook Shooting*, 1881. Private Collection.



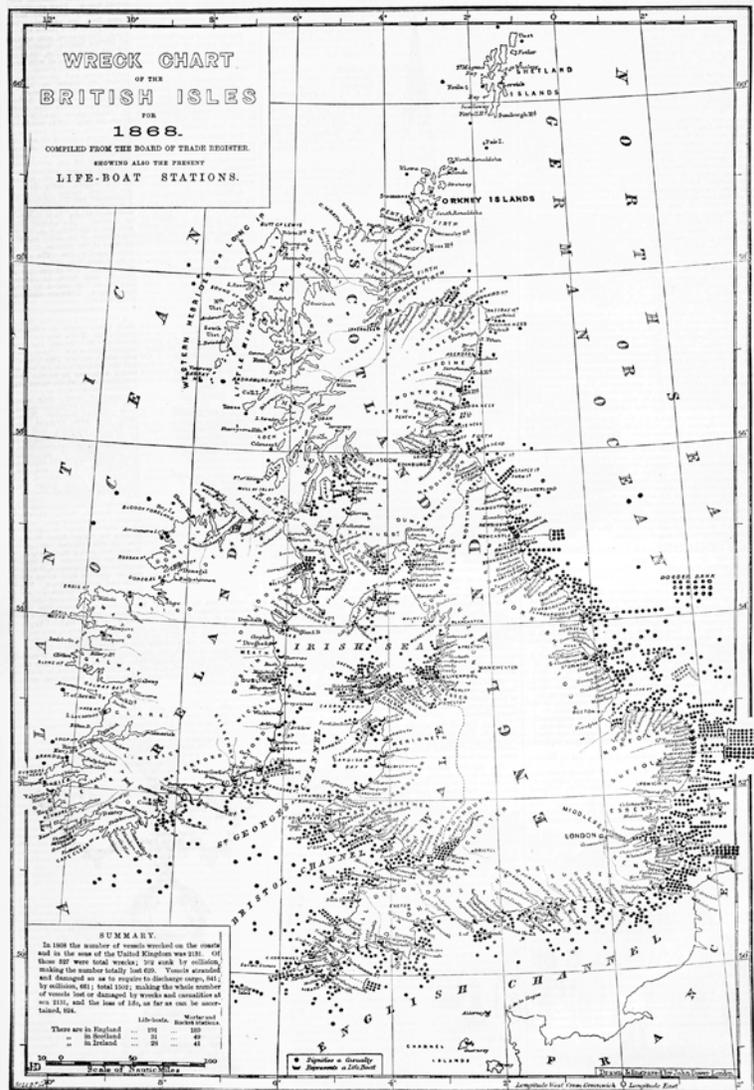
64. Davidson Knowles, *The Turn of the Tide*. *The Illustrated London News* 78 (June 18, 1881): 601.



65. Thomas Faed, *The Anxious Look-Out*. *Royal Academy Pictures: Being the Royal Academy Supplement of "The Magazine of Art,"* 1890. Page 9.



66. W. Colomb, *After the Storm*. *Good Words* 5 (October 1864): 776.



67. *Wreck Chart of the British Isles.* *The Illustrated London News* 55 (October 30, 1869): 432.



68. *A Nor'Easter*, 1883. RPS Collection, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television.



69. *Coming Boats*, 1893.



70. *A Cottage Home*, 1860. RPS Collection, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television.



71. William Grundy, *Gleaners*, 1857. Getty Images, London.



72. William Grundy, *Window Call*, 1857. Getty Images, London.



little fellow's highly-gratified, and
bring the boy to his studio in the
Imagine the painter's dismay;
time, mother and son were used



the latter's car
hair flattened
grease, and
exchanged for
covered him in
tony of spec
ankles. His
been put into
the laces near
brown flesh with
thick woollen
fold. The artist
that what I
elaborate household
clothes, but
with all the grace
freedom and
by a single

73. Alfred H. Wall, [Two sketches of a boy], 1885. *The Photographic News* 29, no. 1387 (April 3, 1885): 218.



74. Peter Henry Emerson, *A Dame's School*, 1885. *The Photographic News* 29, no. 1416 (October 23, 1885): 673.



75. *The Gilly Flower*, 1891. Kodak Collection, National Museum of Photography, Film & Television.



76. *Old Dapple*, 1889. Private Collection.



77. *The Lobster Boat*, 1888. Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery.



78. *Ready for the Collier, Morning, 1894.*

Appendix A

The Lady of Shalott (1842)

Alfred Tennyson

From: Tennyson, Alfred Lord. *Poems*. London: Edward Moxon, 1857

Part I

On either side of the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the world and meet the sky;
And through the filed the road runs by
 To many-towered Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow veil'd
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,

Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott."

Part II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
 To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hands before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the curly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to towered Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,

For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights,
 And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half-sick of shadows" said
 The Lady of Shalott.

Part III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
 Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
 As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
 Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
 Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra." by the river

Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
 She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

Part IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
 Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
 The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
 Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Through the noises of the night
 She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
 Turned to tower'd Camelot.

For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
 Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little;
He said, "She has a love face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
 The Lady of Shalott."

Appendix B

Tristram and Iseult (1852) Matthew Arnold

From: Arnold, Matthew. *Poetical Works of Matthew Arnold*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1892.

I
Tristram

Tristram

Is she not come? The messenger was sure.
Prop me upon the pillows once again—
Raise me, my page! this cannot long endure.
—Christ, what a night! how the sleet whips the pane!
What lights will those out to the northward be?

The Page

The lanterns of the fishing-boats at sea.

Tristram

Soft—who is that, stands by the dying fire?

The Page

Iseult.

Tristram

Ah! not the Iseult I desire.

* * * *

What Knight is this so weak and pale,
Though the locks are yet brown on his noble head,
Propt on pillows in his bed,
Gazing seaward for the light
Of some ship that fights the gale
On this wild December night?
Over the sick man's feet is spread
A dark green forest-dress;
A gold harp leans against the bed,
Ruddy in the fire's light.
I know him by his harp of gold,
Famous in Arthur's court of old;
I know him by his forest-dress—
The peerless hunter, harper, knight,
Tristram of Lyonesse.

What Lady is this, whose silk attire
Gleams so rich in the light of the fire?
The ringlets on her shoulders lying
In their flitting lustre vying
With the clasp of burnish'd gold
Which her heavy robe doth hold.
Her looks are mild, her fingers slight
As the driven snow are white;
But her cheeks are sunk and pale.
Is it that the bleak sea-gale
Beating from the Atlantic sea
On this coast of Brittany,
Nips too keenly the sweet flower?
Is it that a deep fatigue
Hath come on her, a chilly fear,
Passing all her youthful hour
Spinning with her maidens here,

Listlessly through the window-bars
Gazing seawards many a league,
From her lonely shore-built tower,
While the knights are at the wars?
Or, perhaps, has her young heart
Felt already some deeper smart,
Of those that in secret the heart-strings rive,
Leaving her sunk and pale, though fair?
Who is this snowdrop by the sea?—
I know her by her mildness rare,
Her snow-white hands, her golden hair;
I know her by her rich silk dress,
And her fragile loveliness—
The sweetest Christian soul alive,
Iseult of Brittany.

Iseult of Brittany?—but where
is that other Iseult fair,
That proud, first Iseult, Cornwall's queen?
She, whom Tristram's ship of yore
From Ireland to Cornwall bore,
To Tyntagel, to the side
Of King Marc, to be his bride?
She who, as they voyaged, quaff'd
With Tristram that spiced magic draught,
Which since then for ever rolls
Through their blood, and binds their souls,
Working love, but working teen?—
There were two Iseults who did sway

Each her hour of Tristram's day;
 But one possess'd his waning time,
 The other his resplendent prime.
 Behold her here, the patient flower,
 Who possess'd his darker hour!
 Iseult of the Snow-White Hand
 Watches pale by Tristram's bed.
 She is here who had his gloom,
 Where art thou who hadst his bloom?
 One such kiss as those of yore
 Might thy dying knight restore!
 Does the love-draught work no more?
 Art thou cold, or false, or dead,
 Iseult of Ireland?

* * * *

Loud howls the wind, sharp patters the rain,
 And the knight sinks back on his pillows again.
 He is weak with fever and pain,
 And his spirit is not clear.
 Hark ! he mutters in his sleep,
 As he wanders far from here,
 Changes place and time of year,
 And his closed eye doth sweep
 O'er some fair unwintry sea,
 Not this fierce Atlantic deep,
 While he mutters brokenly:—

Tristram

The calm sea shines, loose hang the vessel's sails;
 Before us are the sweet green fields of Wales,
 And overhead the cloudless sky of May—
 "Ah, would I were in those green fields at play,
 Not pent on ship-board this delicious day!
 Tristram, I pray thee, of thy courtesy,
 Reach me my golden phial stands by thee,
 But pledge me in it first for courtesy.—"

Ha! dost thou start? are thy lips blanch'd like mine?
 Child, 'tis no true draught this, 'tis poison'd wine!
 Iseult!.....

* * * *

Ah, sweet angels, let him dream!
 Keep his eyelids! let him seem
 Not this fever-wasted wight
 Thinn'd and paled before his time,
 But the brilliant youthful knight
 In the glory of his prime,
 Sitting in the gilded barge,
 At thy side, thou lovely charge,
 Bending gaily o'er thy hand,
 Iseult of Ireland!
 And she too, that princess fair,
 If her bloom be now less rare,
 Let her have her youth again—
 Let her be as she was then!

Let her have her proud dark eyes,
 And her petulant quick replies—
 Let her sweep her dazzling hand
 With its gesture of command,
 And shake back her raven hair
 With the old imperious air!
 As of old, so let her be,
 That first Iseult, princess bright,
 Chatting with her youthful knight
 As he steers her o'er the sea,
 Quitting at her father's will
 The green isle where she was bred,
 And her bower in Ireland,
 For the surge-beat Cornish strand;
 Where the prince whom she must wed
 Dwells on loud Tyntagel's hill,
 High above the sounding sea.
 And that potion rare her mother
 Gave her, that her future lord,
 Gave her, that King Marc and she,
 Might drink it on their marriage-day,
 And for ever love each other—
 Let her, as she sits on board,
 Ah, sweet saints, unwittingly!
 See it shine, and take it up,
 And to Tristram laughing say:
 "Sir Tristram, of thy courtesy,
 Pledge me in my golden cup!"
 Let them drink it—let their hands
 Tremble, and their cheeks be flame,
 As they feel the fatal bands
 Of a love they dare not name,
 With a wild delicious pain,
 Twine about their hearts again!
 Let the early summer be
 Once more round them, and the sea
 Blue, and o'er its mirror kind
 Let the breath of the May-wind,
 Wandering through their drooping sails,
 Die on the green fields of Wales!
 Let a dream like this restore
 What his eye must see no more!

Tristram

Chill blows the wind, the pleasaunce-walks are drear—
 Madcap, what jest was this, to meet me here?
 Were feet like those made for so wild a way?
 The southern winter-parlour, by my fay,
 Had been the likeliest trysting-place to-day!
 "Tristram!—nay, nay—thou must not take my hand!—
 Tristram!—sweet love!—we are betray'd—out plann'd.
 Fly—save thyself—save me!—I dare not stay."—
 One last kiss first!—"Tis vain—to horse—away!"

* * * *

Ah! sweet saints, his dream doth move
 Faster surely than it should,

From the fever in his blood!
 All the spring-time of his love
 Is already gone and past,
 And instead thereof is seen
 Its winter, which endureth still—
 Tyntagel on its surge-beat, hill,
 The pleasaunce-walks, the weeping queen,
 The flying leaves, the straining blast,
 And that long, wild kiss—their last.
 And this rough December-night,
 And his burning fever-pain,
 Mingle with his hurrying dream,
 Till they rule it, till he seem
 The press'd fugitive again,
 The love-desperate banish'd knight
 With a fire in his brain
 Flying o'er the stormy main.
 -Whither does he wander now?
 Haply in his dreams the wind
 Wafts him here, and lets him find
 The lovely orphan child again
 In her castle by the coast;
 The youngest, fairest chatelaine,
 Whom this realm of France can boast,
 Our snowdrop by the Atlantic sea,
 Iseult of Brittany.
 And—for through the haggard air,
 The stain'd arms, the matted hair
 Of that stranger-knight ill-starr'd,
 There gleam'd something, which recall'd
 The Tristram who in better days
 Was Launcelot's guest at joyous Gard-
 Welcomed here, and here install'd,
 Tended of his fever here,

Haply he seems again to move
 His young guardian's heart with love;
 In his exiled loneliness,
 In his stately, deep distress,
 Without a word, without a tear.
 —Ah! 'tis well he should retrace
 His tranquil life in this lone place;
 His gentle bearing at the side
 Of his timid youthful bride;
 His long rambles by the shore
 On winter-evenings, when the roar
 Of the near waves came, sadly grand,
 Through the dark, up the drown'd sand,
 Or his endless reveries
 In the woods, where the gleams play
 On the grass under the trees,
 Passing the long summer's day
 Idle as a mossy stone
 In the forest-depths alone,
 The chase neglected, and his hound
 Couch'd beside him on the ground.
 —Ah! what trouble 's on his brow?
 Hither let him wander now;
 Hither, to the quiet hours

Pass'd among these heaths of ours
 By the grey Atlantic sea;
 Hours, if not of ecstasy,
 From violent anguish surely free!

Tristram

All red with blood the whirling river flows,
 The wide plain rings, the dazed air throbs with blows.
 Upon us are the chivalry of Rome—
 Their spears are down, their steeds are bathed in foam.
 "Up, Tristram, up," men cry, "thou moonstruck knight!
 What foul fiend rides thee? On into the fight!"
 —Above the din her voice is in my ears;
 I see her form glide through the crossing spears.—
 Iseult!....

* * * *

Ah! he wanders forth again;
 We cannot keep him; now, as then,
 There 's a secret in his breast
 Which will never let him rest.
 These musing fits in the green wood
 They cloud the brain, they dull the blood!
 —His sword is sharp, his horse is good;
 Beyond the mountains will he see
 The famous towns of Italy,
 And label with the blessed sign
 The heathen Saxons on the Rhine.
 At Arthur's side he fights once more
 With the Roman Emperor.
 There's many a gay knight where he goes
 Will help him to forget his care;
 The march, the leaguer, Heaven's blithe air,
 The neighing steeds, the ringing blows—
 Sick pining comes not where these are.
 Ah! what boots it, that the jest
 Lightens every other brow,
 What, that every other breast
 Dances as the trumpets blow,
 If one's own heart beats not light
 On the waves of the toss'd fight,
 If oneself cannot get free
 From the clog of misery?
 Thy lovely youthful wife grows pale
 Watching by the salt sea-tide
 With her children at her side
 For the gleam of thy white sail.
 Home, Tristram, to thy halls again!
 To our lonely sea complain,
 To our forests tell thy pain!

Tristram

All round the forest sweeps off, black in shade,
 But it is moonlight in the open glade;
 And in the bottom of the glade shine clear
 The forest-chapel and the fountain near.

—I think, I have a fever in my blood;
 Come, let me leave the shadow of this wood,
 Ride down, and bathe my hot brow in the flood.
 —Mild shines the cold spring in the moon's clear light;
 God ! 'tis *her* face plays in the waters bright.
 " Fair love," she says, "canst thou forget so soon,
 At this soft hour, under this sweet moon?"—
 Iseult!...

* * * *

Ah, poor soul! if this be so,
 Only death can balm thy woe.
 The solitudes of the green wood
 Had no medicine for thy mood;
 The rushing battle clear'd thy blood
 As little as did solitude.
 —Ah! his eyelids slowly break
 Their hot seals, and let him wake;
 What new change shall we now see?
 A happier? Worse it cannot be.

Tristram

Is my page here? Come, turn me to the fire!
 Upon the window-panes the moon shines bright;
 The wind is down—but she'll not come to-night.
 Ah no! she is asleep in Cornwall now,
 Far hence; her dreams are fair—smooth is her brow
 Of me she recks not, nor my vain desire.
 —I have had dreams, I have had dreams, my page,
 Would take a score years from a strong man's age;
 And with a blood like mine, will leave, I fear,
 Scant leisure for a second messenger.
 —My princess, art thou there ? Sweet, do not wait!
 To bed, and sleep! my fever is gone by;
 To-night my page shall keep me company.
 Where do the children sleep? kiss them for me!
 Poor child, thou art almost as pale as I;
 This comes of nursing long and watching late.
 To bed—good night!

* * * *

She left the gleam-lit fireplace,
 She came to the bed-side;
 She took his hands in hers—her tears
 Down on his wasted fingers rain'd.
 She raised her eyes upon his face—
 Not with a look of wounded pride,
 A look as if the heart complained—
 Her look was like a sad embrace;
 The gaze of one who can divine
 A grief, and sympathise.
 Sweet flower! thy children's eyes
 Are not more innocent than thine.
 But they sleep in shelter'd rest,
 Like helpless birds in the warm nest,
 On the castle's southern side;

Where feebly comes the mournful roar
 Of buffeting wind and surging tide
 Through many a room and corridor.
 —Full on their window the moon's ray
 Makes their chamber as bright as day.
 It shines upon the blank white walls,
 And on the snowy pillow falls,
 And on two angel-heads doth play
 Turn'd to each other—the eyes closed,
 The lashes on the cheeks reposed.
 Round each sweet brow the cap close-set
 Hardly lets peep the golden hair;
 Through the soft-open'd lips the air
 Scarcely moves the coverlet.
 One little wandering arm is thrown
 At random on the counterpane,
 And often the fingers close in haste
 As if their baby-owner chased
 The butterflies again.
 This stir they have, and this alone;
 But else they are so still!
 —Ah, tired madcaps! You lie still;
 But were you at the window now,
 To look forth on the fairy sight
 Of your illumined haunts by night,
 To see the park-glades where you play
 Far lovelier than they are by day,
 To see the sparkle on the eaves,
 And upon every giant-bough
 Of those old oaks, whose wet red leaves
 Are jewell'd with bright drops of rain—
 How would your voices run again!
 And far beyond the sparkling trees
 Of the castle-park one sees
 The bare heaths spreading, clear as day,
 Moor behind moor, far, far away,
 Into the heart of Brittany.
 And here and there, lock'd by the land,
 Long inlets of smooth glittering sea,
 And many a stretch of watery sand
 All shining in the white moon-beams—
 you see fairer in your dreams!

What voices are these on the clear night-air?
 What lights in the court—what steps on the stair?

II

Iseult of Ireland

Tristram

Raise the light, my page! that I may see her.—
 Thou art come at last, then, haughty Queen!
 Long I've waited, long I've fought my fever;
 Late thou comest, cruel thou hast been.

Iseult

Blame me not, poor sufferer! that I tarried;
Bound I was, I could not break the band.
Chide not with the past, but feel the present!
I am here—we meet—I hold thy hand.

Tristram

Thou art come, indeed—thou hast rejoin'd me;
Thou hast dared it—but too late to save.
Fear not now that men should tax thine honour!
I am dying: build—(thou may'st)—my grave!

Iseult

Tristram, ah, for love of Heaven, speak kindly!
What, I hear these bitter words from thee?
Sick with grief I am, and faint with travel—
Take my hand—dear Tristram, look on me!

Tristram

I forgot, thou comest from thy voyage—
Yes, the spray is on thy cloak and hair.
But thy dark eyes are not dimm'd, proud Iseult!
And thy beauty never was more fair.

Iseult

Ah, harsh flatterer! let alone my beauty!
I, like thee, have left my youth afar.
Take my hand, and touch these wasted fingers—
See my cheek and lips, how white they are!

Tristram

Thou art paler—but thy sweet charm, Iseult!
Would not fade with the dull years away.
Ah, how fair thou standest in the moonlight!
I forgive thee, Iseult!—thou wilt stay?

Iseult

Fear me not, I will be always with thee;
I will watch thee, tend thee, soothe thy pain;
Sing thee tales of true, long-parted lovers,
Join'd at evening of their days again.

Tristram

No, thou shalt not speak! I should be finding
Something alter'd in thy courtly tone.
Sit—sit by me! I will think, we've lived so
In the green wood, all our lives, alone.

Iseult

Alter'd, Tristram? Not in courts, believe me,
Love like mine is alter'd in the breast;
Courtly life is light and cannot reach it—
Ah! it lives, because so deep-suppress'd!

What, thou think'st men speak in courtly chambers
Words by which the wretched are consoled?
What, thou think'st this aching brow was cooler,
Circled, Tristram, by a band of gold?

Royal state with Marc, my deep-wrong'd husband—
That was bliss to make my sorrows flee!
Silken courtiers whispering honied nothings—
Those were friends to make me false to thee!

Ah, on which, if both our lots were balanced,
Was indeed the heaviest burden thrown—
Thee, a pining exile in thy forest,
Me, a smiling queen upon my throne?

Vain and strange debate, where both have suffer'd
Both have pass'd a youth consumed and sad,
Both have brought their anxious day to evening,
And have now short space for being glad!

Join'd we are henceforth; nor will thy people,
Nor thy younger Iseult take it ill,
That a former rival shares her office,
When she sees her humbled, pale, and still.

I, a faded watcher by thy pillow,
I, a statue on thy chapel-floor,
Pour'd in prayer before the Virgin-Mother,
Rouse no anger, make no rivals more.

She will cry: "Is this the foe I dreaded?
This his idol? this that royal bride?
Ah, an hour of health would purge his eyesight!
Stay, pale queen! for ever by my side."

Hush, no words! that smile, I see, forgives me.
I am now thy nurse, I bid thee sleep.
Close thine eyes—this flooding moonlight blinds
them!—
Nay, all's well again! thou must not weep.

Tristram

I am happy! yet I feel, there's something
Swells my heart, and takes my breath away.
Through a mist I see thee; near—come nearer!
Bend—bend down!—I yet have much to say.

Iseult

Heaven! his head sinks back upon the pillow—
Tristram! Tristram! let thy heart not fail!

Call on God and on the holy angels!
What, love, courage!—Christ! he is so pale.

Tristram

Hush, 'tis vain, I feel my end approaching!
This is what my mother said should be,
When the fierce pains took her in the forest,
The deep draughts of death, in bearing me.

“Son,” she said, “thy name shall be of sorrow;
Tristram art thou call'd for my death's sake.”
So she said, and died in the drear forest.
Grief since then his home with me doth make.

I am dying.—Start not, nor look wildly!
Me, thy living friend, thou canst not save.
But, since living we were ununited,
Go not far, O Iseult! from my grave.

Close mine eyes, then seek the princess Iseult;
Speak her fair, she is of royal blood!
Say, I will'd so, that thou stay beside me—
She will grant it; she is kind and good.

Now to sail the seas of death I leave thee—
One last kiss upon the living shore!

Iseult

Tristram!—Tristram!—stay—receive me with thee!
Iseult leaves thee, Tristram! never more.

* * * *

You see them clear—the moon shines bright.
Slow, slow and softly, where she stood,
She sinks upon the ground;—her hood
Had fallen back; her arms outspread
Still hold her lover's hand; her head
Is bow'd, half-buried, on the bed.
O'er the blanch'd sheet her raven hair
Lies in disorder'd streams; and there,
Strung like white stars, the pearls still are,
And the golden bracelets, heavy and rare,
Flash on her white arms still.
The very same which yesternight
Flash'd in the silver sconces' light,
When the feast was gay and the laughter loud
In Tyntagel's palace proud.
But then they deck'd a restless ghost
With hot-flush'd cheeks and brilliant eyes,
And quivering lips on which the tide
Of courtly speech abruptly died,
And a glance which over the crowded floor,
The dancers, and the festive host,
Flew ever to the door.
That the knights eyed her in surprise,

And the dames whispered scoffingly:
“Her moods, good lack, they pass like showers!
But yesternight and she would be
As pale and still as wither'd flowers,
And now to-night she laughs and speaks
And has a colour in her cheeks;
Christ keep us from such fantasy!”—

Yes, now the longing is o'erpast,
Which, dogg'd by fear and fought by shame,
Shook her weak bosom day and night,
Consumed her beauty like a flame,
And dimm'd it like the desert-blast.
And though the bed-clothes hide her face,
Yet were it lifted to the light,
The sweet expression of her brow
Would charm the gazer, till his thought
Erased the ravages of time,
Fill'd up the hollow cheek, and brought
A freshness back as of her prime—
So healing is her quiet now.
So perfectly the lines express
A tranquil, settled loveliness,
Her younger rival's purest grace.

The air of the December-night
Steals coldly around the chamber bright,
Where those lifeless lovers be
Swinging with it, in the light
Flaps the ghostlike tapestry.
And on the arras wrought you see
A stately Huntsman, clad in green,
And round him a fresh forest-scene.
On that clear forest-knoll he stays,
With his pack round him, and delays.
He stares and stares, with troubled face,
At this huge, gleam-lit fireplace,
At that bright, iron-figured door,
And those blown rushes on the floor.
He gazes down into the room
With heated cheeks and flurried air,
And to himself he seems to say:
“*What place is this, and who are they?
Who is that kneeling Lady fair?
And on his pillows that pale Knight
Who seems of marble on a tomb?
How comes it here, this chamber bright,
Through whose mullion'd windows clear
The castle-court all wet with rain,
The drawbridge and the moat appear,
And then the beach, and, mark'd with spray,
The sunken reefs, and far away
The unquiet bright Atlantic plain?
—What, has some glamour made me sleep,
And sent me with my dogs to sweep,
By night, with boisterous bugle-peal,
Through some old, sea-side, knightly hall,
Not in the free green wood at all?
That Knight's asleep, and at her prayer*”

*That Lady by the bed doth kneel
Then hush, thou boisterous bugle-peal!"*

—The wild boar rustles in his lair;
The fierce hounds snuff the tainted air;
But lord and hounds keep rooted there.

Cheer, cheer thy dogs into the brake,
O Hunter! and without a fear
Thy golden-tassell'd bugle blow,
And through the glades thy pastime take—
For thou wilt rouse no sleepers here!
For these thou seest are unmoved;
Cold, cold as those who lived and loved
A thousand years ago.

III Iseult of Brittany

A year had flown, and o'er the sea away,
In Cornwall, Tristram and Queen Iseult lay;
In King Marc's chapel, in Tyntagel old—
There in a ship they bore those lovers cold.

The young surviving Iseult, one bright day,
Had wander'd forth. Her children were at play
In a green circular hollow in the heath
Which borders the sea-shore—a country path
Creeps over it from the till'd fields behind.
The hollow's grassy banks are soft-inclined,
And to one standing on them, far and near
The lone unbroken view spreads bright and clear

Over the waste. This cirque of open ground
Is light and green; the heather, which all round
Creeps thickly, grows not here; but the pale grass
Is strewn with rocks, and many a shiver'd mass
Of vein'd white-gleaming quartz, and here and there
Dotted with holly-trees and juniper.
In the smooth centre of the opening stood
Three hollies side by side, and made a screen,
Warm with the winter-sun, of burnish'd green
With scarlet berries gemm'd, the fell-fare's food.
Under the glittering hollies Iseult stands,
Watching her children play; their little hands
Are busy gathering spars of quartz, and streams
Of stagshorn for their hats; anon, with screams
Of mad delight they drop their spoils, and bound
Among the holly-clumps and broken ground,
Racing full speed, and startling in their rush
The fell-fares and the speckled missel-thrush
Out of their glossy coverts;—but when now
Their cheeks were flush'd, and over each hot brow, Under
the feather'd hats of the sweet pair,
In blinding masses shower'd the golden hair—
Then Iseult call'd them to her, and the three
Cluster'd under the holly-screen, and she
Told them an old-world Breton history.

Warm in their mantles wrapt the three stood there,
Under the hollies, in the clear still air—
Mantles with those rich furs deep glistening
Which Venice ships do from swart Egypt bring.
Long they stay'd still—then, pacing at their ease,
Moved up and down under the glossy trees.
But still, as they pursued their warm dry road,
From Iseult's lips the unbroken story flow'd,
And still the children listen'd, their blue eyes
Fix'd on their mother's face in wide surprise;
Nor did their looks stray once to the sea-side,
Nor to the brown heaths round them, bright and wide,
Nor to the snow, which, thought't was all away
From the open heath, still by the hedgerows lay,
Nor to the shining sea-fowl, that with screams
Bore up from where the bright Atlantic gleams,
Swooping to landward; nor to where, quite clear,
The fell-fares settled on the thickets near.
And they would still have listen'd, till dark night
Came keen and chill down on the heather bright;
But, when the red glow on the sea grew cold,
And the grey turrets of the castle old
Look'd sternly through the frosty evening-air,
Then Iseult took by the hand those children fair,
And brought her tale to an end, and found the path, And
led them home over the darkening heath.

And is she happy? Does she see unmoved
The days in which she might have lived and loved
Slip without bringing bliss slowly away,
One after one, to-morrow like to-day?
Joy has not found her yet, nor ever will—
Is it this thought which makes her mien so still,
Her features so fatigued, her eyes, though sweet,
So sunk, so rarely lifted save to meet
Her children's? She moves slow; her voice alone
Hath yet an infantine and silver tone,
But even that comes languidly; in truth,
She seems one dying in a mask of youth
And now she will go home, and softly lay
Her laughing children in their beds, and play
Awhile with them before they sleep; and then
She'll light her silver lamp, which fishermen
Dragging their nets through the rough waves, afar,
Along this iron coast, know like a star,
And take her broidery-frame, and there she'll sit
Hour after hour, her gold curls sweeping it;
Lifting her soft-bent head only to mind
Her children, or to listen to the wind.
And when the clock peals midnight, she will move
Her work away, and let her fingers rove
Across the shaggy brows of Tristram's hound
Who lies, guarding her feet, along the ground;
Or else she will fall musing, her blue eyes
Fixt, her slight hands clasp'd on her lap; then rise,
And at her prie-dieu kneel, until she have told
Her rosary-beads of ebony tipp'd with gold,
Then to her soft sleep—and to-morrow 'll be
To-day's exact repeated effigy.

Yes, it is lonely for her in her hall.
 The children, and the grey-hair'd seneschal,
 Her women, and Sir Tristram's aged hound,
 Are there the sole companions to be found.
 But these she loves; and noisier life than this
 She would find ill to bear, weak as she is.
 She has her children, too, and night and day
 Is with them; and the wide heaths where they play,
 The hollies, and the cliff, and the sea-shore,
 The sand, the -sea-birds, and the distant sails,
 These are to her dear as to them; the tales
 With which this day the children she beguiled
 She gleaned from Breton grandames, when a child,
 In every hut along this sea-coast wild.
 She herself loves them still, and, when they are told,
 Can forget all to hear them, as of old.

Dear saints, it is not sorrow, as I hear,
 Not suffering, which shuts up eye and ear
 To all that has delighted them before,
 And lets us be what we were once no more.
 No, we may suffer deeply, yet retain
 Power to be moved and soothed, for all our pain,
 By what of old pleased us, and will again.
 No, 'tis the gradual furnace of the world,
 In whose hot air our spirits are upcurl'd
 Until they crumble, or else grow like steel—
 Which kills in us the bloom, the youth, the spring—
 Which leaves the fierce necessity to feel,
 But takes away the power—this can avail,
 By drying up, our joy in everything,
 To make our former pleasures all seem stale.
 This, or some tyrannous single thought some fit
 Of passion, which subdues our souls to it,
 Till for its sake alone we live and move—
 Call it ambition, or remorse, or love—
 This too can change us wholly, and make seem
 All which we did before, shadow and dream.

And yet, I swear, it angers me to see
 How this fool passion gulls men potently;
 Being, in truth, but a diseased unrest,
 And an unnatural overheat at best.
 How they are full of languor and distress
 Not having it; which when they do possess,
 They straightway are burnt up with fume and care,
 And spend their lives in posting here and there
 Where this plague drives them; and have little ease, Are
 furious with themselves, and hard to please.
 Like that bold Caesar, the famed Roman wight,
 Who wept at reading of a Grecian knight
 Who made a name at younger years than he;
 Or that renown'd mirror of chivalry,
 Prince Alexander, Philip's peerless son,
 Who carried the great war from Macedon
 Into the Soudan's realm, and thundered on
 To die at thirty-five in Babylon.

What tale did Iseult to the children say,
 Under the hollies, that bright winter's day?

She told them of the fairy-haunted land
 Away the other side of Brittany,
 Beyond the heaths, edged by the lonely sea;
 Of the deep forest-glades of Broce-liande,
 Through whose green boughs the golden sunshine
 creeps,
 Where Merlin by the enchanted thorn-tree sleeps.
 For here he came with the fay Vivian,
 One April, when the warm days first began.
 He was on foot, and that false fay, his friend,
 On her white palfrey; here he met his end,
 In these lone sylvan glades, that April-day.
 This tale of Merlin and the lovely fay
 Was the one Iseult chose, and she brought clear
 Before the children's fancy him and her.

Blowing between the stems, the forest-air
 Had loosen'd the brown locks of Vivian's hair,
 Which play'd on her flush'd cheek, and her blue eyes
 Sparkled with mocking glee and exercise.
 Her palfrey's flanks were mired and bathed in sweat, For
 they had travell'd far and not stopp'd yet.
 A brier in that tangled wilderness
 Had scored her white right hand, which she allows
 To rest ungloved on her green riding-dress;
 The other ward off the drooping boughs.
 But still she chatted on, with her blue eyes
 Fix'd full on Merlin's face, her stately prize.
 Her 'haviour had the morning's fresh clear grace,
 The spirit of the woods was in her face.
 She look'd so witching fair, that learned wight
 Forgot his craft, and his best wits took flight;
 And he grew fond, and eager to obey
 His mistress, use her empire as she may.

They came to where the brushwood ceased, and day
 Peer'd 'twixt the stems; and the ground broke away;
 In a sloped sward down to a brawling brook;
 And up as high as where they stood to look
 On the brook's farther side was clear, but then
 The underwood and trees began again.
 This open glen was studded thick with thorns
 Then white with blossom; and you saw the horns, Through
 last year's fern, of the shy fallow-deer
 Who come at noon down to the water here.
 You saw the bright-eyed squirrels dart along
 Under the thorns on the green sward; and strong
 The blackbird whistled from the dingles near,
 And the weird chipping of the woodpecker
 Rang lonelily and sharp; the sky was fair,
 And a fresh breath of spring stirr'd everywhere.
 Merlin and Vivian stopp'd on the slope's brow,
 To gaze on the light sea of leaf and bough
 Which glistening plays all round them, lone and mild, As
 if to itself the quiet forest smiled.
 Upon the brow-top grew a thorn, and here

The grass was dry and moss'd, and you saw clear Across
the hollow; white anemonies
Starr'd the cool turf, and clumps of primroses
Ran out from the dark underwood behind.
No fairer resting-place a man could find.
"Here let us halt," said Merlin then; and she
Nodded, and tied her palfrey to a tree.

They sate them down together, and a sleep
Fell upon Merlin, more like death, so deep.
Her finger on her lips, then Vivian rose,
And from her brown-lock'd head the wimple throws, And
takes it in her hand, and waves it over
The blossom'd thorn-tree and her sleeping lover.
Nine times she waved the fluttering wimple round, And
made a little plot of magic ground.
And in that daisied circle, as men say,
Is Merlin prisoner till the judgment-day;
But she herself whither she will can rove—
For she was passing weary of his love.

Appendix C

Bibliography of Nineteenth-Century Journal Articles

Code	Journal Title		
A	Athenaeum	IAA	International Annual of Anthony's Photographic Bulletin
AanP	American Annual of Photography	ILN	Illustrated London News
AAP	American Amateur Photographer	IP	Illustrated Photographer
AJ	Art Journal	JCC	Journal of the Camera Club
AJP	American Journal of Photography	JPS	Journal of the Photographic Society of London
AM	Atlantic Monthly	LMPJ	Liverpool and Manchester Photographic Journal
AP	Amateur Photographer	LPJ	Liverpool Photographic Journal
APB	Anthony's Photographic Bulletin	MA	Magazine of Art
BJP	British Journal of Photography	PhP	Philadelphia Photograher
BJPA	British Journal of Photography Almanac	PJ	Photographic Journal
BM	Blackwood's Magazine	PN	Photographic News
C	The Camera	Pno	Photographic Notes
CTC	The Cottager in Town and Country	PQ	Photographic Quarterly
EW	Edinburgh Weekly Herald	PrP	Practical Photographer
FQ	Fine Arts Quarterly	PT	Photographic Times
G	The Graphic	PW	Photographic World
GW	Good Words	QR	Quarterly Review
H	Humphries	T	Times (London)
HW	Harper's Weekly	YP	Year-book of Photography

Jrnl	Y	M	D	P	Vol, #	Title	Author	Notes
JPS	1853	3	3	6-7	1, no. 1	Upon Photography in an Artistic View, and in its relations to the Arts	Wm. J. Newton	Photography still can't get nature's atmosphere of light and shade. Links detail with scientific applications. When photos hang with pictures and engravings, they should be artistically beautiful. For painters he urges soft focus to capture breadth of light. Also advocates touching the negative for effect. Architectural studies should have detail; to produce a picturesque effect softer focus.
JPS	1853	6	21	74	1, no. 6	On Photography as a Means or an End—Perfection and Imperfection of Sun Pictures—Nature and Art Contrasted; their Requirements—The Relation of the Camera to Science and Art	John Leighton	About focus. Feels scientists want detail; artists want breadth of effect; art cannot rival nature, [implying] scientific detailed photos are not art; only lowest walks of art strive for direct imitation; photographs too literal, only representing <i>specific</i> people, not general classes as painting can do and not accurate at portraits either.
JPS	1853	6	21	75-6	1, no. 6	On the Use of Photography to Artists	Mr. R.W. Buss	Two distinct paths at the beginning of the society: perfecting process, camera and lenses; other in which the "amateurs in art would recreate themselves." Artist may plunge into Pre-Raffaellism, Rembrandtism or Reynoldsism. Feels there is a lot in photography to explore and society is a good place to each share their findings, as rarely does the artist have time to consider scientific aspects, and vice versa.
JPS	1853	6	21	76-8	1, no. 6	[Discussion of Leighton's and Buss' papers]		Newton refutes notion that image can be thrown out of focus and therefore make it more artistic; he was recommending this for artists. Photo and painting cannot be compared. Photo detail, if sought by painters, would be servile copying and not art. He also encourages capturing middle tones. Shadbolt says you can't get enough details in scientific photos, scientists wish to create art not for art but for science, and supersede art. Artists want it for different things. Newton reveals that painters want to help photographers, and also want help of scientists. Cook asserts that photographers should be allowed to do anything they want to the negatives. Hunt objects to touching up negatives. Newton agrees with him.
A	1855	1	20	86	No. 1421	Photographic Society		"A bad artist may make a good photographer; and so two arts will be benefited." "It is rather as thus superseding engraving than painting that any fear need be felt of photography by those who are fed by art."
A	1855	1	27	113	No. 1422			Photography as useful, domestic art, if not fine art
ILN	1855	1	27	95	26, no. 725	Photographic Society Exhibition		Painting has nothing to fear from photo; can't do motion.
LPJ	1855	3	10	43	2, no. 15	Correspondence [exhibition review]	J.B.E.	Rejlander combination print: one print from five distinct negatives "but the edges of each have by some ingenious management been so shaded in, as to give no clue to the composite nature of the picture"
JPS	1855	9	21	233	2, no. 34	Miscellaneous: Berwick and Annan's Method of Double Printing	Berwick and Annan	Photographic exhibition with British Association in Glasgow. Two negatives.
A	1856	1	12	46-7	No. 1472	The Photographic Society		Progress in photography: "Exactness is the tendency of the age. Here we have details that will verify and vivify history." Lake Price and Rejlander are the best. Photo will never achieve High Art. "a photographic Teniers,

									but not a photographic Raphael.”
A	1856	1	19	78	No. 1473	The Photographic Society			Photography improving. Those who cannot buy pictures or engravings will buy photographs.
AJ	1856	2	1	49-50	2	Photographic Exhibitions	Robert Hunt		Collodion’s rise to predominance: of 606 total works: 461 collodion, 142 wax paper and calotype, 3 daguerreotypes. No one is improving photo science; photo society journal doesn’t report about it. Painters are looking at photos rather than nature because of details. Criticizes Lake Price and Rejlander’s models as passionless actors. Doubts the ‘propriety’ of attempting to rival history painting, as they will lower the appreciation of Art in the eyes of the public.
ILN	1856	3	22			Illustration of The Monk by Lake Price			Glowing review; engraving. It improves photography’s artistic goals. But it can never rival painting; it more closely rivals engraving. Will lead to closer study of nature by some artists, who hide their lack of draftsmanship under gaudy coloring.
AJ	1856	10	1	311	2	The British Association in its Relations to Art	[Hunt]		Hand-working photographs causes it to lose its photographic character; very dangerous. Photos best capture detail. Photography is dangerous handmaid to art; artists adopt its detail. Mr. Nasmyth observed that painters didn’t paint lightning correctly; it should be an irregular curved line, often with offshoots of an arborescent form.
A	1857	1	10	54-5	No. 1524	The Photographic Society [Exhibition]			Bad artists will become photographers; art will be weeded like a garden, to its benefit. Praise for Rejlander, especially his groupings and imagination.
A	1857	1	24	120	No. 1526				Praise for Rejlander: “Nature beats Raphael”
ILN	1857	1	24	61	30, no. 841	Photographic Society Exhibition			Rejlander’s genre pieces are faithfully represented from vulgar life; hates combination negatives.
AJ	1857	2	1	40	3	Photographic Exhibition			Feels that photographer uses a machine, not his mind, like a painter. Derides touching up / combo prints. Rejlander good, but they look like actors. “They cannot be regarded as works of Art, and, indeed, we should be sorry to see such productions taking place amongst us as works of Art.”
JPS	1857	5	21	286-7	3, no. 54	Simplicity of the Collodio-Albumen Process	Henry Peach Robinson		
JPS	1857	6	22	311	3, no. 55	Correspondence: Dry Collodion Processes	Anti-Humbug		Complains Robinson contribution unoriginal
A	1857	7	18	914	No. 1551	New Publications: <i>Two Ways of Life</i> . Photographed by Rejlander			Positive review
JPS	1857	7	21	7-8	3, no. ?	Photographic Processes. Notes on Collodio-Albumen	Robinson		
JPS	1857	7	21	11	3, no. ?	The Collodio-Albumen Process	Robinson		Claims he never said he was originator; but he has simplified it
JPS	1857	9	21	45-7	4, no. 58	Manchester Exhibition	Theta		<i>Two Ways</i> – “cannot yet compete with the figure-painter.”
AJ	1858	4	1	120-1	21	The Photographic Exhibition			Original negatives should be displayed alongside works. Hand work for artistic effect a ‘fatal facility.’ <i>Two Ways of Life</i> is ok, but no more. Photography should not pursue high art aims.
JPS	1858	4	21	191-7	4, no. 65	On Photographic Composition; with a Description of “The Two Ways of Life”	Oscar Rejlander		
JPS	1858	4	21	196-7	4, no. 65	[Discussion after Rejlander’s	Roger		Talks about photography as art; good for low art subjects; perhaps later for

						paper]	Fenton	high art subjects. Against mechanical interpretation of work.
JPS	1858	5	21	207-11	4, no. 66	The Exhibition [slightly different version of Photo Society exhibition]		<i>Two Ways of Life</i> , commentary on nudity. Long disapproval of composition work, unable to idealize figures. Grundy's genre works are the best the field can do. Criticism of his Turkish studies, for using a model with Anglo Saxon face. Likes Robinson's 'Fear' and vignettes of children.
LMPJ	1858	6	15	147-8	2, no. 12	Editorial	[George Shadbolt]	Photographs rapidly rising in character as artistic productions, even including sentiment, which has been intimated by some as impossible to be imported into a photographic subject. There is a point beyond which the photographer cannot pass; but the difference of opinion exists as to where the limit really is. Sentiment is possible. <i>Fading Away</i>
LMPJ	1858	6	15	153-5	2, no. 12	London Photographic Society's Fifth Annual Exhibition		Robinson's, four studies of the passions, together with a portrait of the model.
JPS	1858	8	21	14-5	5, no. 69	Photography, Artistic and Scientific	Robinson	Feels that Journal has related many things in relation to science, but little of art of photography.
AJ	1858	9	1	261-2	21	Photography: Considered in relation to its educational and practical value	Hunt	Warns artists of the dangers of "the mischief which photography is doing to Art." Engravers being put out of business.
AJ	1858	9	1	273-5	21	Photography for Portraits: A Dialogue Held in an Artist's Studio	Ronald Campbell	Photography's body is incompetent compared to soul of Art.
JPS	1858	9	21	30	5, no. 70	Reviews: The Story of Little Red Riding Hood. A series of Photographs by H.P. Robinson, of Leamington		
LMPJ	1858	10	1	237	2, no. 19	Editorial		More on liking <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> .
PN	1858	10	1	40-1	1, no. 4	The Photographic Exhibition at the Crystal Palace [2]		<i>Fading Away</i>
PN	1858	10	8	52-3	1, no. 5	The Photographic Exhibition at the Crystal Palace, Concluding Notice		Robinson portrays ideal; Grundy portrays real – the every day. Grundy the Teniers or Wilkie of photography.
JPS	1858	10	21	38-9	5, no. 71	Exhibition of Photographs, Leeds, in conjunction with British Association		<i>Fading Away</i>
JPS	1858	10	21	47-8	5, no. 71	Photography, Artistic and Scientific	Robinson	Most portrait photographs really poor.
LMPJ	1858	11	1	262	2, no. 21	Note	[Shadbolt]	About printing from various negatives and defects in print quality
LMPJ	1858	11	15	274	2, no. 22	Note	[Shadbolt]	About printing from various negatives. Certain parts fading more than others.
HW	1858	11	20	740-1	2, no. 99	"Fading Away"		Illustration and brief praise
EW	1859	1	1			Quoted in Harker, <i>Henry Peach Robinson: Master of Photographic Art</i> .		<i>Fading Away</i>
PJ	1859	1	1	7-8	6, no. 85	Notes on the Exhibition of the Photographic Society of Scotland	Sel d'or	<i>Fading Away</i>
	1859	1	14	217-8	1, no. 19	The Exhibition of the		Sharply critical of exhibition and Photo Society for only promoting art

PN						Photographic Society [1]		photography; Shows look the same year after year, and they are no different than a publishing establishment.
A	1859	1	15	86-7	No. 1629	Photographic Society		Photography can not be fine art; <i>Fading Away</i> “degrade art to the worshipper of a machine.”
ILN	1859	1	15	59	34, no. 955	Exhibition of the Photographic Society		Photography will never take place among painting and engraving, b/c of lack of control over components; likes <i>Red Riding Hood</i> ; not <i>Fading Away</i>
JPS	1859	1	21	143-150	5, no. 77	Exhibition in Suffolk Street		Clippings from various sources. Literary Gazette hates composition pictures, though thinks <i>Fading Away</i> may be the best of them.
PN	1859	1	21	237-8	1, no. 20	Nottingham Photographic Society: Exhibition at the Exchange Hall	F.R.F.	A portrait costs a sixpence and takes two or three seconds of time. <i>Fading Away</i> is praised, though criticizes the position of the woman’s hands.
PN	1859	1	28	241-2	1, no. 21	The Exhibition of the Photographic Society [3]		Composition photography not appropriate. Rejlander – happy catching peculiarities of low life, but feels that it’s too realistic and borders on disgusting. If this type of photography will succeed, it will be Rejlander. Scenes of country life, “This as all our readers know, is a class of subjects which finds great favour, both with artists and the public generally.
AJ	1859	2	1	45	5	Photographic Exhibition		<i>Two Ways of Life</i> : some objected to the work being taken by one negative. Exhibitions should show us more science. It’s beneath dignity to show works which have already been produced for sale and displayed in dealers’ shop windows. Exhibitions have been overridden by the commercialism.
PN	1859	2	4	254	1, no. 22	The Exhibition of the Photographic Society [4]		Diamond’s “Illustrations of Mental Disease” are inappropriate for public exhibition.
PN	1859	3	11	8-9	2, no. 27	Correspondence: Exhibition of the Photographic Society		<i>Fading Away</i>
JPS	1859	4	21	266	5, no. 83	New Portable Tent	Robinson	
A	1859	8	6	182	No. 1658	Fine-Art Gossip [Rejlander]		‘An Italian picture perfected with Dutch truth.’
PN	1859	12	30	193	3, no. 69	Photography as one of the Fine Arts	Alfred H. Wall	Few photographers are interested in art, and the ease of learning the process allows many to feel that they’ve accomplished all once they’ve mastered it. Mechanics are a means not an end. Light is to photo as pencil is to art; camera is to paint. Bad photographs are not more legitimate arguments against photography, than bad paintings are against paintings. Our most ambitious branch of photographing will not attain a permanent standing, “for in historical painting the grand aim is not to represent things in actual existence as they really are, but rather to select the scattered fragments of expression or beauty, and blend them into one harmonious whole.” Photographers should stop attempting high art. Artists’ models are useless because they don’t have good expressions; “Our best models must be sought among men and women whose minds are imbued by nature or by cultivation with poetical conceptions. Landscape photographers should be conscious of chiaroscuro and atmospheric effects. Rules of composition can be learned.
ILN	1860	1	14	35	36, no. 1012	Photographic Society		Photo leading artists to not use pencil freely
A	1860	1	21	98-9	no. 1682	The Photographic Exhibition		Pan of <i>Shalott</i>
PN	1860	1	27	241-3	3, no. 73	The Photographic Exhibition		Mention of Robinson <i>Ludlow Castle</i>
BJP	1860	2	1	41-2	7, no. 111	London Photographic Society’s Exhibition		Mentions <i>Shalott</i> among other Robinson works, such as <i>A Cottage Home</i> , as “deserving of attention.”

PN	1860	2	3	253-5	3, no. 74	The Photographic Exhibition. Second Notice		Pans each of Robinson's <i>Gleaners</i> , <i>Preparing to Cross the Brook</i> , <i>Cottage Window</i>
PN	1860	2	17	281-2	3, no. 76	On Composition and Chiar'oscuro--I	Lake Price	
PN	1860	2	24	294-6	3, no. 77	The Photographic Exhibition. Fourth and Concluding Notice		Likes Robinson <i>Here they Come!</i>
PN	1860	2	24	293-4	3, no. 77	On Composition and Chiar'oscuro--II	Lake Price	
AJ	1860	3	1	71-2	6	Exhibition of the Photographic Society		Of Robinson's images, 'Sour Apples' is the only one possessing any merit.
PN	1860	3	2	305-7	3, no. 78	On Composition and Chiar'oscuro--III	Lake Price	
PN	1860	3	9	317-9	3, no. 79	On Composition and Chiar'oscuro--IV	Lake Price	
PN	1860	3	15	86	5, no. 95	Photographic Exhibition	Wall	Calls Robinson's <i>Cottage Window</i> not worthy of its author's name.
PN	1860	3	16	332-4	3, no. 80	On Composition and Chiar'oscuro--V	Lake Price	
PN	1860	3	23	343-4	3, no. 81	On Composition and Chiar'oscuro--VI	Lake Price	
PN	1860	3	30	355-6	3, no. 82	On Composition and Chiar'oscuro--VII	Lake Price	
PN	1860	4	1	98-9	5, no. 96	Photographic Exhibition	Wall	Portrait 'commonplace' to come from Robinson; <i>Gleaners</i> : "tired girls would not have assumed such positions as are here represented"
BJP	1860	4	2	94-5	7, no. 115	On printing photographic prints from several negatives	Robinson	Artistic precedent of Zeuxis of Heraclea, painting a picture of Helena from five girls. He does the same thing with photo and encourages others as well. Talks about set up in his back yard with mound, brick wall, etc, all used for <i>Nearing Home</i> , <i>Here they come!</i> and <i>Preparing to Cross the Brook</i> . In detail he describes the combination printing process. Says that negatives gave about two hundred prints of <i>Fading Away</i> before an assistant damaged them. <i>Ophelia</i> head from one, body from another. Printing is relatively easy, he has boys do it. Says the process of conceptualizing and planning the work takes a lot of time, but that other art photographers must be out there. Actors are always bad models; "they know so much and allow the operator to know so little, that the result is not an artistic picture, but a theatrical study."
PN	1860	4	5	367-8	3, no. 83	On Composition and Chiar'oscuro--VIII	Lake Price	
PN	1860	4	13	384-6	3, no. 84	On Composition and Chiar'oscuro--IX	Lake Price	
PN	1860	4	15	112-4	5, no. 97	Photographic Exhibition	Wall	Robinson has not conquered the problems he confronts. Patchwork is apparent and unpleasant hard outlines appear. Landscape backgrounds seem unreal. Girls in unnatural poses. Beauty in shadows of drapery. Photographs have been pardoned many faults on the ground of their redeeming merit— <i>truth</i> . When it is confessed that this is wanting, what contemptible shame its productions become. <i>Ophelia</i> - Face is flat and devoid of half-tone. Drapery is good.

PN	1860	4	20	391-2	3, no. 85	On Composition and Chiar'oscuro--X	Lake Price	
PN	1860	4	27	406-7	3, no. 86	On Composition and Chiar'oscuro--XI	Lake Price	
BJP	1860	5	1		7, no. 117	Photographic Gossip	Hannaford	Criticizes Robinson for combination printing, and composition printing.
PN	1860	5	4	6-7	4, no. 87	On Composition and Chiar'oscuro--XII	Lake Price	
PN	1860	5	11	18-20	4, no. 88	On Composition and Chiar'oscuro--XIII	Lake Price	
PN	1860	5	18	30-1	4, no. 89	On Composition and Chiar'oscuro--XIV	Lake Price	
PN	1860	5	25	37-8	4, no. 90	On Composition and Chiar'oscuro--XIV	Lake Price	
BJP	1860	6	1	157-8	7, no. 119	Note	[George Shadbolt]	Combination printing is legitimate.
BJP	1860	6	1	172	7, no. 119	Mrs. Spriggins on Patchwork	'Penelope Ann Spriggins'	Satire of patchwork, combination printing process, from little bits.
BJP	1860	6	15	176	7, no. 120	'Composition' vs. 'Patchwork'	Wall	To the editor, 'you have mistaken deception for imitation.'" Implicates Robinson and Rejlander. 'This deception...is that which substitutes things unreal for others which they are palpably unlike, and so brings photography (as art) which has its highest and <i>only</i> value in its wondrous truthfulness into disrepute.' Doesn't mind composition work, just not done with scissors and paste pot.
BJP	1860	6	15	186	7, no. 120	An Opinion on 'Composition Pictures'	"Fairplay"	
BJP	1860	6	15	186	7, no. 120	Note	[Shadbolt]	
PN	1860	6	22	85-86	4, no. 94	On the Position Occupied by Photography Among the Fine Arts	[William Crookes]	
BJP	1860	7	2	187-8	7, no. 121	Editorial	[Shadbolt]	<i>Fading Away</i>
BJP	1860	7	2	189-90	7, no. 121	Composition NOT Patchwork	Robinson	
BJP	1860	7	2	190-1	7, no. 121	"Composition" versus "Patchwork"	Wall	
BJP	1860	8	1	216	7, no. 123	Photographic Contributions to Art		Loves Rejlander's <i>Head of John the Baptist</i>
PN	1860	8	24	197-9	4, no. 103	From a Photographer's Common-Place Book. Introductory Remarks	Wall	"with a view also to demonstrating the importance and practicability of securing the higher order of poetical effects, of depicting, as it were, not merely the form, but the very soul of nature..."
PN	1860	9	7	217-9	4, no. 105	From a Photographer's Common-Place Book [3]	Wall	Imitation is the foundation of photography, but not all; educated photographers can see the poetical and picturesque beauty in the landscape an uneducated photographer would miss; sharpness destroys atmosphere.
PN	1860	9	14	230-1	4, no. 106	From a Photographer's Common-Place Book [4]	Wall	Beginning photographers should do studies of small bits of nature, like artists.
BJP	1860	9	15	264	7, no. 126	Photographic Contributions to		Rejlander [loves more of his work]

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PN	1860	9	28	254-6	4, no. 108	From a Photographer's Common-Place Book [6]	Wall	Regrets neat, new buildings in rural areas.
PN	1860	10	19	293	4, no. 111	Photographic Exhibitions and Art Progress	Wall	Claims that Photo Society promotes the chemistry and optics over art.
PN	1860	10	26	302-3,	4, no. 112	An Hour with Rejlander	Wall	
PN	1860	11	2	314-5	4, no. 113	An Hour with Rejlander, cot'd	Wall	
PN	1860	11	9	327-8	4, no. 114	Photography as Imitative Art	Wall	
PN	1860	11	30	363-4	4, no. 117	Dialogue Sketches – No. 1 Photography to Art	Wall	Discussion between Lovetruth, a painter who adopts details of photo in his painting and adds 'color and poetry'. Brushart – a painter who feels Lovetruth is degrading himself and that photos cannot be art. Lovetruth feels that there must be a poetry of form as well and that color without form is like thought without speech. Newart is a photographer who uses aerial effect in his work, to the dismay of Process, who would rather him capture all possible details. Crackdbell a painter feels it's a drop for a painter to change professions to photographer.
PN	1860	11	30	366-7	4, no. 117	The Holiday in the Woods		
BJP	1860	12	1	346	7, no. 131	Photographic Contributions to Art		<i>Holiday in the Wood</i>
PN	1860	12	7	375-6	4, no. 118	Dialogue Sketches – No. 2 Photography to Art	Wall	Lovetruth feels that one can secure nature's spiritual aspects as her material. Feels that combination printing's success solely depends upon properly hiding joins, so is not really composition in the artistic sense. Process says all photographs are truthful, but not necessarily beautiful. Lovetruth: while photographs are not necessarily false, they are not necessarily true. Landscape photos don't usually have aerial effects, making them false.
PN	1860	12	14	386-7	4, no. 119	Dialogue Sketches – No. 3 In the Glass-Room	Wall	Snailowl, a commercial photographer, complains of declining business. Brushart thinks it's because of poor quality and that he should pay attention to the journals.
JPS	1860	12	15	72-3	7, no. 104	Review: 'A Holiday in the Wood'		
PN	1860	12	21	398-9	4, no. 120	Dialogue Sketches – No. 4 In and of the Glass-Room	Wall	Newart teaches Crackbell proper lighting for portraits.
PN	1860	12	28	411-2	4, no. 121	Hints on "Keeping" – In Composition Photography	Wall	
BJP	1861	1	1	8-9	8, no. 133	A Few Hints on Composition and Keeping	Wall	
PN	1861	1	4	2-4	5, no. 122	Art-Photography: Its Scope and Characteristics	C. Jabez Hughes	Divides photo into mechanical, art and high art. High art aspires to instruct, purify, and ennoble. Art aspires to involve the mind to make more beautiful. <i>Fading Away</i> : "a far higher place in my mind than any of his other productions." Combination printing isn't right, ultimately. Ok for skies, but should be taken on same negative. Photos should be judged on final product; too many photographs are judged excellent <i>because</i> they have been done from several negatives.
PN	1861	1	4	4-5	5, no. 122	The Technology of Art as Applied to Photography [1]	Wall	

PN	1861	1	11	14-5	5, no. 123	Dialogue Sketches – No. 5 – Nature’s Art	Wall	Lovetruth instructs Process about Landscape work – no need for details all through, and for seeing composition in landscape. Begs reader to pay attention to art principles as much as process and other technical information.
PN	1861	1	18	28-9	5, no. 124	The Technology of Art as Applied to Photography [2]	Wall	Aerial effect and depth, absence of detail, loss of highlights and shadows. Too much detail against beauty and science (it’s not what we see). Sharpness is hardness which sacrifices truth and loveliness.
PN	1861	1	18	25-6	5, no. 124	The Photographic Exhibition		Feels more processes should have been represented, such as carbon or photolithography. Of 622 works, 552 by wet collodion. Collodio-albumen process superior to wet collodion. Admires <i>Holiday in the Wood</i> : artistic and natural in grouping, fine in chiaroscuro, and full of life and sunshine. It’s worth two or three times the 22 shillings Robinson’s asking.
T	1861	1	18	7		Exhibition of the Photographic Society		Robinson’s “Summer Holiday” [<i>Holiday in the Wood</i>]. Photo shouldn’t intrude into space of art. Hates Robinson’s work.
A	1861	1	19	88-9	No. 1734	Photographic Society		Mixed review of <i>Holiday in the Wood</i>
PN	1861	1	25	38-9	5, no. 125	The Photographic Exhibition. Second Notice		Mentions that Robinson’s <i>Holiday in the Wood</i> is selling for 2 pounds, 2 shillings, not 22 shillings.
AJ	1861	2	1	47-8	23	Exhibition of the Photographic Society		Mixed <i>Holiday in the Wood</i> review.
PN	1861	2	1	49-50	5, no. 126	The Technology of Art as Applied to Photography [3]	Wall	Difficulties in printing combination prints well; allegory having two simultaneous meanings.
PN	1861	2	8	62-3	5, no. 127	The Scottish Photographic Exhibition (Edinburgh)	From <i>The Scotsman</i>	Loves <i>Holiday in the Wood</i> and <i>Top of the Hill</i> : “Rank with the best productions of modern art.” <i>Two Ways</i> ‘wanted the vitality and sentiment with which Mr. Robinson has imbued the present compositions, and which constitute them—works of intellect.’ “The time does not seem far distant when it may probably equally (as miniature painting) affect the painter of <i>genre</i> .”
PN	1861	2	8	63-5	5, no. 127	Dialogue Sketches – No. 6 – At a Photographic Exhibition	Wall	Caricature of someone who loves detail in distance in landscape who gets out magnifying glass. Wall’s summary: he is advocating photo and art as benefiting each other.
BJP	1861	2	15	68-9	8, no. 136	Exhibition of the Photographic Society of Scotland		Writer feels that Robinson’s work can’t compare in intellect to the Rejlander, “as water is to wine”.
JPS	1861	2	15	110-3	7, no. 106	Notes on the present Exhibition [Photo Society Exh]		Mentions some like <i>Holiday in the Wood</i> but that <i>Times</i> writer “has left the mark of his hoof in it.” Prefers <i>Top of the Hill</i> .
JPS	1861	2	15	116-21	7, no. 106	Criticisms on the Exhibition		Reproduces many criticisms [I refer to those about <i>Holiday in the Wood</i> .] <u>Court Circular</u> . “Ingeniously devised...Mr. Robinson seems to have distanced all others who have attempted this branch of the art”. <u>Illustrated News of the World</u> . Most successful combination printers are Lake Price, Messrs. Delferrier and Beer, Rejlander and Robinson. Thinks Robinson has done well “careful observation of light and shade.”
PN	1861	2	15	74-5	5, no. 128	The Technology of Art as Applied to Photography [4]	Wall	Discusses importance of knowledge of anatomy to get proper expression. Emphasizes feeling of emotion and passion by actor.
PN	1861	3	8	109-110	5, no. 131	The Technology of Art as Applied to Photography [5]	Wall	“It is now a question whether Photography can rightfully take rank with the art I have enumerated [painting, sculpture, architecture, music] or not; but sooner or later its claims <i>must</i> be admitted.”

PN	1861	3	15	122-3	5, no. 132	The Technology of Art as Applied to Photography [6]	Wall	Backgrounds should serve to give force, roundness, and brilliancy to the principal portions of your subject, by the judicious contrast of tones and intensity.
PN	1861	3	15	125-6	5, no. 132	An Appeal of the Practical in Artistic Photography [1]	Wall	
ILN	1861	3	16	239-40	38, no 1079	'A Holiday in the Wood,' Photograph from Nature by Henry Peach Robinson		Favorable review & engraving
PN	1861	3	22	134-5	5, no. 133	Art-Photography	[G. Wharton Simpson]	Editor thinks that Robinson and Rejlander's best works are those where it is difficult to tell if it's combination print. Offers a re-paraphrasing of Hughes' comment: the highest art conceals its art. Combination prints can be done well. Sky double printing is well accepted, if done with taste.
PN	1861	3	22	138-9	5, no. 133	An Appeal of the Practical in Artistic Photography [2]	Wall	
PN	1861	3	28	148-9	5, no. 134	The Technology of Art as Applied to Photography [7]	Wall	Beauty--'it is not the <i>truthfulness</i> of photography which tends to mar the beauty of its productions, far from it. Nature is prodigal of beauty, and we have but to acquire or cultivate the discernment which we call <i>taste</i> , and that power which we call <i>art</i> —recognizing beauty in whatever guise it may appear—we may mirror faithfully not only nature's outward form, but its very soul...''
PN	1861	4	5	166-7	5, no. 135	The Society of Scotland	A Believer in Photography, and a Lover of Art	Some believe that photographs render the eyes to small and the hands too large, so that some artists, in painting photographs, make the eyes large and hands small. Miniature painters used to delight in making eyes large.
PN	1861	4	5	167	5, no. 135	Art Photography	One in Search of Art-Knowledge	A photographer complains that there is no practical instruction out there to produce art.
PN	1861	4	12	172-4	5, no. 136	The Technology of Art as Applied to Photography [8]	Wall	Breadth – opposed to patchiness or spottiness.
PN	1861	4	12	179	5, no. 136	Art Teaching for Photographers	Wall	Feels humbled that “one in search of art knowledge” hasn't found his articles on art photography helpful. Suggests Ruskin, Reynolds, Howard, and Burnet for further assistance.
JPS	1861	4	15	147-50	7, no. 108	Photography and the Exhibition of 1862		First mention of placement of photography
PN	1861	4	15	110-1	6, no. 121	Editorial about International Exhibition of 1862		
PN	1861	5	10	217	5, no. 140	Photography and the International Exhibition of 1862	[Simpson]	Featuring a letter from Simpson and opinion.
JPS	1861	5	15	171-4	7, no. 109	[Editorial, Sandford's letter, and Pollock's response about the placement of photography in International Exhibition of 1862		
JPS	1861	5	15	175-6	7, no. 109	Photographic Society of London, Ordinary General Meeting, May		Questions from Vernon Heath about International Exhibition

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PN	1861	5	24	241-2	5, no. 142	Sharpness vs. Hardness	[Simpson]	Comment on Wall paper read on 5/16
PN	1861	5	24	242-3	5, no. 142	The Technology of Art as Applied to Photography [11]	Wall	On composition
PN	1861	5	31	253	5, no. 143	Photography and the Exhibition of 1862	[Simpson]	Report of negative response of commission for exhibition
BJP	1861	6	1	201-2		Sharpness—What is it?	A.H. Wall	Discusses Newton's suggestion for soft focus
PNo	1861	6	1	159-60	6, no. 124	[about the International Exhibition classes]		
PNo	1861	6	1	161-2	6, no. 124	[letter about placement of photography in International Exhibition]	Wm. Tudor Mabley	
PN	1861	6	7	268-9	5, no. 144	The Technology of Art as applied to Photography [13]	Wall	Discusses genre, cites Robinson (positively!) and Rejlander
PN	1861	6	7	272-3	5, no. 144	London Photographic Society	Shadbolt	Shadbolt: it's impossible to get things in different planes in focus at the same time.
PN	1861	6	7	274	5, no. 144	Art Photographic Society	A Photographer and Artist	Calls for new society for promoting photo as art
PN	1861	6	14	276-8	5, no. 145	The Technology of Art as Applied to Photography [14]	Wall	About pyramidal composition. In landscape: "it is astonishing what capital foregrounds may sometimes be got by a little artistic grouping of the stray articles chance may place within reach. High art – Too high for the reach of the cameraman.
PN	1861	6	14	282-3	5, no. 145	London Photographic Society	Shadbolt	Shadbolt on depth of field, contd.
BJP	1861	6	15	213-4	8, no. 144	Editorial	[Shadbolt]	Commenting on Wall's article "Sharpness, what is it?"; [Reaction by Wall in "Another half brick"]
BJP	1861	6	15	iv	8, no. 144	Advertisement	Wall	Advertises Wall's establishment; "happy to undertake agencies in connection with the works of our best landscape or 'composition' photographers.
JPS	1861	6	15	195-8	7, no. 110	[Editorial & Photographic Society of London, Ordinary General Meeting, June 4]		About photography in International Exhibition of 1862
JPS	1861	6	15	205-6	7, no. 110	Photography and the Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1862		from <i>London Review</i>
JPS	1861	6	15	204	7, no. 110	Fair Play for Photography		from <i>PUNCH</i>
PNo	1861	6	15	173	6, no. 125	[Jabez Hughes' remarks after Wall's paper "Sharpness, what is it?"]	Jabez Hughes	Hughes agrees with Wall on sharpness, but hardness comes from tonal qualities, not focal qualities.
PNo	1861	6	15	182	6, no. 125	Photography & The International Exhibition of 1862	Lyon Playfair	Letter to the Secretary of the Photographic Society of London
BJP	1861	6	16	232-4	9, no. 168	Exhibition of the South London Photographic Society	R.A.S	
PN	1861	6	21	287-8	5, no. 146	Depth of Focus: What is it?	[Simpson]	Defines difference b/w aerial effect and loss of focus. His defense is painting, which does not portray a landscape or even a portrait in widely

								different focal qualities.
PN	1861	6	21	296	5, no. 146	Depth of Focus in Pictures	A.H. Wall	Commenting on Shadbolt
PN	1861	6	21	296-7	5, no. 146	Pictorial versus Optical Focus	R.C.	Commenting on Shadbolt –Shadbolt is wrong because he’s not taking into account how eye changes focus over distance.
PN	1861	6	28	299	5, no. 147	Photography and the International Exhibition	[Simpson]	
PN	1861	6	28	300-2	5, no. 147	The Technology of Art as Applied to Photography [15]	A.H. Wall	Idealizing— “A perfect, or very nearly perfect model...would, even if executed with the fidelity of a photograph, be termed <i>ideal</i> , that is to say, <i>if painted</i> , for I do believe that were it possible to discover a living fac-simile of the Medicean Venus, and photograph the same, your bat of an art critic would, just now, see nothing in the picture but repulsive indelicacy and ugliness....” Also on imitation.
PN	1861	6	28	304-5	5, no. 147	The Societies and the International Exhibition		Comments by Davis, Simpson, Wall
PN	1861	6	28	309	5, no. 147	Depth of Focus	Lake Price	Lenses can depict things with depth over distance. Sends photograph to prove it.
AJ	1861	7	1	223	7	Minor Topics of the Month		Photo society protesting place at International Exhibition 1862
BJP	1861	7	1	235	8	Another “Half Brick”	Wall	and editorial reply
PN	1861	7	5	313-4	5, no. 148	The Technology of Art as Applied to Photography [16]	Wall	Keeping --harmony. Good models more important to photography than to painting. Professional model difficult to manage
PNo	1861	7	15	200-1	6, no. 127	Editorial about placement of photo in International Exhibition	[Thomas Sutton]	
PNo	1861	7	15	201-3	6, no. 127	Editorial about sharpness	[Sutton]	Chastises Wall for his article
JPS	1861	7	15	221-7	7, no. 111	[International exhibition 1862]	Laulerie, Adam, Brewster, Heisch, Wall, Barnett, Cramb, McKie, Thompson, Mabley, Playfair, Silvy, Price, Eaton	Lots of letters from various photo societies to Secretary of London Photo Society about the placement of photography
PN	1861	7	19	338-9	5, no. 150	The Technology of Art as Applied to Photography [18]	Wall	Sentiment -- “To imitate with no other motive than imitation, and to imitate in order to express sentiment, will constitute no small difference. In the one case, the operator will make his selection, choose his exposure, and regulate his development with one idea, viz., that of securing the best possible imitation; in the other, selection, exposure, and development will all become subservient to some leading sentiment, the expression of which will constitute the picture.”
BJP	1861	8	15	315-6	9, no. 172	Exhibition of the South London Photographic Society	R.A.S.	
JPS	1861	8	15	239-44	7, no. 112	[More correspondence between	Sandford,	Placement of photography

						photo society and commissioners for International Exhibition, and other letters from societies.	Diamond, Brown, Laulerie, Claudet	
JPS	1861	8	15	255-6	7, no. 112	Photography as a Fine Art	Adolphe Beau	Placement of photography
PN	1861	8	23	395-6	5, no. 155	Photography and the International Exhibition	editor	Has letters from above, plus commentary
PN	1861	9	6	426-7	5, no. 157	The Art Claims of Photography	R.A.	
PN	1861	9	13	431-3	5, no. 158	The Art Claims of Photography	[Simpson]	
PN	1861	9	13	433-5	5, no. 158	Manchester Photographic Exhibition		Ambivalent about <i>Shalott</i> [more on 9/20/61]
PNo	1861	9	15	268-9	6, no. 131	[editorial response to A.H. Wall letter]	[Sutton]	
JPS	1861	9	16	259-60	7, no. 113	Letter from Sandford and Demand for space form	Sandford	Placement of photography
JPS	1861	9	16	267-71	7, no. 113	Letter from C. Silvy in response to Claudet	Silvy	Placement of photography
JPS	1861	9	16	271-2	7, no. 113	The British Association at Manchester		Praises <i>Shalott</i>
BJP	1861	9	16	330-1	8, no. 150	British Association for the Advancement of Science		Doesn't like <i>Shalott</i>
PN	1861	9	20	446-7	5, no. 159	The Lady of Shalott		Long review, ambivalent.
PN	1861	9	20	447-9	5, no. 159	The Art Claims of Photography	A. Claudet	Response to R.A.
PN	1861	9	20	449-50	5, no. 159	An Artist's Reply to R.A.	R.A.S.	
PN	1861	9	20	450	5, no. 159	An Amateur's Answer to R.A.	M.A.	
PN	1861	9	20	450-1	5, no. 159	An Operator's Answer to R.A.	H.A.B.	
A	1861	9	21	385	no. 1769	Fine-Art Gossip		About medals designed for International Exhibition: no for art, but yes for machinery, manufactory, etc.
PN	1861	10	4	476	5, no. 161	Is Photography a Fine Art?	R.A.	
A	1861	10	5	449	no. 1771	Gossip		About space devoted to painting at International Exhibition
JPS	1861	10	15	277-80	7, no. 114	[International exhibition]	Sandford, Newton, Goddard,	
JPS	1861	10	15	280-2	7, no. 114	Photography as a Fine Art	Claudet	Response to Silvy
JPS	1861	10	15	286-7	7, no. 114	Review: "The Lady of Shalott"		
JPS	1861	10	15	288-9	7, no. 114	Photography and the Fine Arts	Coleman Sellers	Repro from American Journal of Photography
PNo	1861	10	15	301-2	6, no. 133	Photography at the International Exhibition. From an American Point of View		
BJP	1861	10	15	355-6	8, no. 152	Photographic Contributions to Art, "The Lady of Shalott."		
PN	1861	10	25	503	5, no. 164	Photography and the Exhibition of 1862		Continued commentary

PNo	1861	11	1	308-11	6, no. 134	The International Exhibition of 1862: What are the Arrangements made for representing photography there?	Jabez Hughes	
PN	1861	11	8	527	5, no. 156	Photography and the [International] Exhibition		Continued commentary
JPS	1861	11	15	308	7, no. 115	Limitation of Art by Photography		Quoting from November, 1861 Fraser's Magazine
JPS	1861	11	15	311-12	7, no. 115	Camera versus Palette	Francis G. Eliot	
PN	1861	11	15	540-1	5, no. 157	Photography and the [International] Exhibition		Quoting different passage from Daily Telegraph article
BJP	1861	12	2	415-6	8, no. 155	Photography at the International Exhibition		Quoting from Daily Telegraph article
JPS	1861	12	16	319	7, no. 116			[Notice that Hugh Diamond and the Earl of Caithness were invited to act as a committee for photography department]
JPS	1861	12	16	332	7, no. 116	Is Photography Fine Art?	Wm J. Newton	
YP	1862			29-?		Annals of Photography for 1862		"Probably in no previous year has photography occupied so large a share of public attention as in the year 1862. This has arisen from a variety of causes, but chiefly from circumstances in connection with the great International Exhibition."
BJP	1862	1	1	13-14	9, no. 157	In Search of an Operator [1]	R.A. Seymour [Alfred H. Wall]	Says photographers made up of all types of men from all various professions. He was a portrait painter whose profession left him.
PN	1862	1	10	13	6, no. 175	Photography and the International Exhibition		
JPS	1862	1	15	347	7, no. 117	Sixth Exhibition of the Photographic Society of Scotland, at Edinburgh		Mentions <i>Shalott</i>
JPS	1862	1	15	358-60	7, no. 117	Photography in its relation to the Fine Arts		from London Review
BJP	1862	1	15	19-20	9, no. 158	A Tribute of Affection		Rejlander
BJP	1862	1	15	30-1	9, no. 158	In Search of an Operator [2]	R.A. Seymour [Alfred H. Wall]	
PN	1862	1	24	37-8	6, no. 177	Photography and the International Exhibition	editor	
PN	1862	1	24	38	6, no. 177	The Late Prince Consort and Photography	editor	
PN	1862	1	31	50-1	6, no. 178	Photographic Allotments at the Exhibition	editor	
PN	1862	1	31	55-6	6, no. 178	Photographic Exhibition at Edinburgh (from JPS)		<i>Lady of Shalott</i> – 'only proves to us that when a first rate photographic artist, with a strong feeling for art, can produce nothing more interesting, the range

									of this branch of photography is limited. With all its technical dexterity, it produces no impression. For rustic and domestic groups...these got-up scenes and artificial scaffolding may be available; for the higher department of art, we are satisfied they never will.' [Editor disagrees.]
BJP	1862	2	1	49-50	9, no. 159	In Search of an Operator [3]	R.A. Seymour [Alfred H. Wall]		
PN	1862	2	7	61	6, no. 179	Proposed Additional Photographic Exhibition			
PN	1862	2	28	97	6, no. 182	Exhibition in Connection with the South London Photographic Society			
PN	1862	3	14	121	6, no. 184	Supplementary Photographic Exhibition			
PN	1862	3	14	127	6, no. 184	The South London Society's Exhibition of British and Foreign Photography	Wall		
JPS	1862	3	15	21	7, no. 119	To the Editor of the Photographic Journal	An Artist	about art photo	
PN	1862	4	17	181	6, no. 189	The South London Photographic Exhibition			
PN	1862	4	17	181-2	6, no. 189	The Photographic Department at the International Exhibition			
PN	1862	4	25	193	6, no. 190	The Photographic Department of the International Exhibition			
PN	1862	4	25	203	6, no. 190	Photographic Department of the International Exhibition	An Exhibitor	On bad physical conditions	
PN	1862	4	25	203	6, no. 190	Photographic Jurors in the Exhibition	A. Claudet		
PN	1862	5	2	205	6, no. 191	The Opening of the International Exhibition			
PN	1862	5	2	206	6, no. 191	The Soiree of the Photographic Society		Mentions Robinson	
PN	1862	5	9	218	6, no. 192	The Photographic Garret		About photographic gallery at International Exhibition	
PN	1862	5	9	222-3	6, no. 192	The International Exhibition – Photography			
PN	1862	5	23	241	6, no. 194	South London Photographic Exhibition			
PN	1862	5	30	255-6	6, no. 195	The International Exhibition – The British Photographic Gallery			
PN	1862	6	6	265	6, no. 196	Who Should Receive the Medals—Artists or Exhibitors?			
PN	1862	6	6	267-9	6, no. 196	The International Exhibition – British Photographic Department			

PN	1862	6	13	277-8	6, no. 197	The South London Photographic Exhibition		
BJP	1862	6	16	232-4	9, no. 168	Exhibition of the South London Photographic Society	R.A.S.	Greatly admires <i>Holiday in the Wood</i> , except visible edges of the negatives. Many anachronisms and other disappointments in <i>Elaine</i> . Likes <i>Shalott</i> .
JPS	1862	6	16	75	8, no. 122	Photography at the international exhibition		
PN	1862	6	20	292-3	6, no. 198	The International Exhibition – The British Photographic Department		
PN	1862	7	4	316-8	6, no. 200	The International Exhibition – British Photographic Department		
JPS	1862	7	15	79-86	8, no. 123	Photography at the International Exhibition		Article and list of awards
JPS	1862	7	15	97	8, no. 123	The Damp Walls in the Exhibition		
PT	1862	7	15	152-3	1, no. 18	Newspaper Critics and Photography		As much effort would be put into a drawing of same subject as <i>Holiday in the Wood</i> . Photography critic defends Robinson; cites criticisms of <i>Lady of Shalott</i> as critical of her hair crimping. <i>Telegraph</i> critic calls them, “radically vicious tricks of legerdemain.”
PN	1862	7	18	337-8	6, no. 202	Awards of Jurors in the Exhibition		
PN	1862	7	25	354-6	6, no. 203	The International Exhibition – British Photographic Department		
PN	1862	8	1	363-4	6, no. 204	The International Exhibition – British Photographic Department		
BJP	1862	8	15	315	9, no. 172	Exhibition of the South London Photographic Society [part two]	R.A.S.	Has been criticized by someone for pointing out inaccuracies of Elaine. Not important.
BJP	1862	8	15	316-7	9, no. 172	Exhibition Gossip. Revision of the Awards and Distribution of the Medals, &c. – French and English Genre Studies	Wall	“As to the objections brought against [<i>Fading Away</i>] by certain morbidly, delicate critics, who seem to think the great mission of a fine art is alternately to tickle them into laughter and soothe them into dreaming indolence, I can only add that I don’t agree with them, and think some of the most sad and melancholy scenes in life are calculated to give birth to the very noblest thoughts, and rouse in us the most humanising feelings.”
JPS	1862	8	15	102-3	8, no. 124	Mr. Bedford’s Exhibition of Photographs (taken by command) of the Tour of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales		
JPS	1862	8	15	109-11	8, no. 124	The “Times” on Photography at the International Exhibition		
JPS	1862	9	15	132-3	8, no. 125	International Exhibition—Instructions to the Jurors in Class XIV		
JPS	1862	9	15	136	8, no. 125	Revised Awards of Jurors in the Exhibition		
PN	1862	9	19	447	6, no. 211	The International Exhibition –		

Revision of Awards								
AJ	1862	10	1	205-6	1	Notabilia of the International Exhibition: The Photographs		Frustration with placement of photos
JPS	1862	10	15	153-5	8, no. 126	Photography at the International Exhibition		
A	1862	10	18	502-5	no. 1825	International Exhibition. Photographs.		Review of photos in International Exhibition, including hating <i>Holiday in the Wood</i> .
BJP	1862	11	1	402	9, no. 177	Photography in Disgrace		
BJP	1862	11	1	414	9, no. 177	"Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society. "Bringing Home the May, etc."		
PN	1862	11	7	534-5	6, no. 218	"Bringing Home the May"		
A	1862	11	22	?	No. 1830	<i>Birket Foster's Pictures of English Landscape</i>		
BJP	1862	12	1	449-50	9, no. 179	Backgrounds:--Their abuse, their use, their principles, and the modes of painting them	Wall	Investive against commercial portrait photographers who use stupid backgrounds. Rejlander and Robinson "apostles of the True": generals of the battle for art photography.
JPS	1862	12	15	190-3	8, no. 128	Report of Jurors, Part I		International Exhibition, 1862
BJP	1863	1	15	31-33	10, no. 182	The Ninth Annual Exhibition of the Photographic Society (London)		<i>Bringing Home the May</i> in well-deserved place of honor over the fireplace. Very favorable review.
JPS	1863	1	15	202-6	8, no. 129	On Some Uses And Abuses of Photography	Sutton	A retrospective look at photography's progress. Cartes of distinguished people, sold at a price within reach of all. Doesn't like works built up or composed entirely by photography after the manner of Rejlander and Robinson. "Can you fancy Tennyson turned photographer, and illustrating his <i>Lady of Shalott</i> by a photograph?" -- <i>Two Ways of Life</i> , "in which degraded females were exhibited in a state of nudity, which all the uncompromising truthfulness of photography. There is no impropriety in exhibiting such works of art as Ety's <i>Bathers Surprised by a Swan</i> or the <i>Judgment of Paris</i> but there is impropriety in allowing the public to see photographs of nude prostitutes, in flesh-and-blood truthfulness and minuteness of detail." -- Artists use stereo photographs for their work and often cut them in half and exchange with each other. Mentions Howlett taking pictures of groups of figures at Derby Day for Frith's painting, "not to use literally into his picture as Robinson or Rejlander would have done, but to work up in his own mind and then reproduce with the true stamp of genius upon them." -- You don't want in art exact resemblance of natural objects, however cleverly arranged and lighted, but a reproduction according to impressions which they have produced on the mind. Art is purely the work of human intelligence.
PN	1863	1	16	25-6	7, no. 228	The Photographic Exhibition		Calls <i>Bringing Home the May</i> "is such a picture as never before was produced by photography." Loves Lady Hawarden images.
PN	1863	1	23	37-8	7, no. 229	The Photographic Exhibition. Second Notice		Discusses studies of Robinson for <i>May: The May Gatherer and The May Queen</i> . Admires both.
ILN	1863	1	24	102-3	42, no. 1185	Exhibition of the Photographic Society		Hates <i>Bringing Home the May</i> . Photography is stuck with models' expressions, unable to change them.

AJ	1863	2	1	38	2	Photography		Questions validity of <i>Bringing Home the May</i>
PN	1863	2	6	61-2	7, no. 231	Art-Photography and its Critics	Simpson	Art critics feel photo encroaches upon painting's territory. Criticism of <i>Bringing Home the May</i> from ILN and Daily News. Photography can present nature according to the impressions of the photographer. Admits photo cannot achieve idealizing goals of high art.
PN	1863	2	6	63	7, no. 231	Photographic Exhibition. Award of Prizes		Robinson gets best composition from life.
JPS	1863	2	16	232-4	8, no. 130	Thomas Sutton, B.A. On Art-Photography	Wall	"Every art which aspires to the distinction implied by the term "fine art" must base its claims upon the amount and degree of intellectual power of doing, then and then only is photography a fine art."
JPS	1863	2	16	234-5	8, no. 130	On Composition Photographs		<i>Bringing Home the May</i>
JPS	1863	2	16	235-6	8, no. 130	Review: "Bringing Home the May"		
PN	1863	2	20	88-90	7, no. 233	An Apology For Art Photography	Rejlander	Objects to Sutton's article. Says his works were mostly for art studies. Doesn't do combination printing anymore. Watercolor on albumen print washes off very easily. Sutton was highly inappropriate in casting aspersions upon his models in <i>Two Ways of Life</i> .
PN	1863	2	20	95	7, no. 233	The Discussion on Art Photography	Robinson	
PN	1863	2	27	98-9	7, no. 234	Photographic Exhibition. Fifth Notice		Robinson cartes: "Two or three of the groups ...we consider the finest card pictures ever issued."
ILN	1863	2	28	217	42, no. 1190-1	Bringing Home the May		Qualifies its criticism of <i>Bringing Home the May</i> from 1/24; reproduces it.
BJP	1863	3	2	112	10, no. 185	Correspondence: Art-Photography	Robinson	
JPS	1863	3	16	244-5	8, no. 131	Thomas Sutton, B.A. On Art-Photography, cot'd		
PN	1863	3	20	134	7, no. 237	A Final Word on Art-Photography and its Critics		
BJP	1863	5	1	188-9	10, no. 189	Backgrounds:--Their abuse, their use, their principles, and the modes of painting them	Wall	
JPS	1863	5	15	286-9	8, no. 133	On Photography as a Fine Art	W.D. Clark	
BJP	1863	5	15	219-20	10, no. 190	Fine Art and Photography	T.W. Harvey	Letter to Rejlander about <i>Two Ways of Life</i>
BJP	1863	7	15	285-6	10, no. 194	In Search Of Truth	Wall	Admires <i>Bringing Home the May</i> . Pictorially perfect. Robinson however lacks in intellect where Rejlander succeeds.
JPS	1863	9	15	347-8	8, no. 137	[Editorial]		Members will get copies of <i>Bringing Home the May</i>
BJP	1863	10	15	400	10, no. 200	Photographic Contributions to Art		<i>Bringing Home the May</i>
BJP	1863	10	15	403-4	10, no. 200	'Composition' Photography: Its Aspects, Advantages, and Disadvantages	Wall	Composition [not combination] photo may not bring income, but it is intellectually superior "gives employment to the intellect." Talks about ignorance and prejudice against composition photo.
BJP	1863	10	15	407-9	10, no. 200	A Few Thoughts about Photographic Societies	Wall	Complains that anyone can join, lessening the intellectual content. All papers should be reviewed by council before presentation. Glut of portrait

								photographers driving prices lower and hurting quality of portraits.
JPS	1863	10	15	383	8, no. 138	Miscellanea		Note on <i>Autumn</i>
PN	1863	10	16	493	7, no. 267	Art in Photography		
PN	1863	10	16	493-5	7, no. 267	Mr. Robinson's New Picture		review of <i>Autumn</i>
JPS	1863	12	15	427-8	8, no. 140	Review: 'Autumn'		
BJP	1864			261	11, no. 220	"Out of Focus"		<i>Athenaeum</i> on Cameron
QR	1864			482-519	v. 116	Photography	Robert Cecil	"Photography is never imaginative, and is never in any danger of arranging its records by the light of a pre-conceived theory." "But when the power which photography confers of dealing with light and shade has received the recognition which greater familiarity will procure for it, no one will deny its title to be ranked as a fine art." It silly that soft focus is artistic. Comb. printing is legitimate, but not necessarily of artistic value.
BJP	1864	1	1	8	11, no. 205	"Composition Photography"	Wall	On <i>Lady of Shalott</i> . He praises the poetry of the conception, but feels that it is an impossible work to carry off by photography; discourages photographer from attempting the impossible. This would only serve to bring ridicule and could only be attempted by ignorant or conceited.
BJP	1864	2	1	39	11, no. 207	The Changes To Photography During The Last Few Years	Robinson	
PN	1864	2	5	62	8, no. 283	The Poets And Photography	Robinson	
JPS	1864	2	15	462	8, no. 142	The Presentation-Photograph for Members		<i>Bringing Home the May</i>
JPS	1864	3	15	1-3	9, no. 143	Photographic Exhibition	Hugh Diamond	In upcoming exhibition medal consideration, groups must be from single negatives. Pictures from painted or touched negatives, and also touched and painted positives, will not be exhibited.
PN	1864	3	18	133-4	8, no. 289	The Forthcoming Photographic Exhibition	[Simpson]	<i>Bringing Home the May</i> was catalogued at twenty guineas. Photographers ought to use any resource they can in face of poor instruments.
PN	1864	4	8	177-8	8, no. 292	Correspondence. The Medals at the Forthcoming Exhibition	Both Sides	Medals should not exclude combination prints and architectural work.
PN	1864	6	3	265-6	8, no. 300	The Photographic Exhibition		How strange that only one work is by a dry process, because there are many that are being improved these days. Cameron's "rather extraordinary specimens of portraiture, very daring in style, and treading on the debateable ground which may lead to grand results or issue in complete failure."
PN	1864	6	24	302-3	8, no. 303	The Photographic Exhibition. Studies and Genre Subjects		Long praise of Robinson <i>Autumn</i> , <i>Somebody Coming</i> , <i>The May Gatherers</i> , and lengthy description and praises of <i>Interior of a Study</i> , which consists of self portrait, head on hand, reading at a table with identified tapestry, portfolio, etc.
AJ	1864	7	1	210	3	The Photographic Exhibition		Likes <i>Autumn</i>
PN	1864	7	8	328-9	8, no. 305	Old Saws And Photographic Instances	Robinson	Swan vs. Pouncy
PN	1864	7	15	339-40	8, no. 306	The Photographic Exhibition. Portraiture		Cameron: "if they had been paintings, would have been styled bold sketches rather than finished works. But as one of the especial charms of photography consists in its completeness, detail and finish, we can scarcely commend works in which the aim appears to have been to avoid these qualities."
A	1864	7	16	88	no. 1916	Fine-Art Gossip		On Cameron – really admires her work

BJP	1864	7	22	261	11, no. 220	"Out of Focus"		Commentary on <i>Athenaeum</i> article on Cameron
BJP	1864	7	29		11, no.	An Appeal To Photographers	Rejlander	A cry for better technique
PN	1864	8	12	385-6	8, no. 310	The Photographic Exhibition. Final Notice		Photographic exhibitions are becoming less popular because they're no longer novel. Exhibitions may need to become for photographers alone, offering incentives for various advances, either technical or pictorials. Or, it may need to become more popular with more colored work and combination prints and others; just don't display things that are seen in all shop windows.
PNo	1864	9	1	226-7	9, no. 202	[Exhibition of the Photographic Society]		Exhibition is a failure because Photographic Society doesn't do enough to encourage photo inventors.
BJP	1864	9	9	341	11, no. 227	On Medals, Exhibitions, &c.	Rejlander	
PN	1864	9	23	459-60	8, no. 316	The Exhibition of the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society, 1864 – The Photographic Department	–	Mentions several Robinson works
PN	1864	9	30	471-3	8, no. 317	On Printing from Several Negatives	Robinson	Goes into great detail about printing different kinds of combination prints
BJP	1864	11	11	449-50	11, no. 236	Why Photographers Should Study Art and Nature	Wall	A little art knowledge goes a long way. Young art students who have mastered those elementary rules of art which regulate the more mechanical conditions of success, plunge at once into practice under the impression that, having all the knowledge essential to attaining the highest pinnacle of success, 'purblind practice' and mere industry will do the rest.
PN	1865	1	6	4	9, no. 331	Exhibition of the Photographic Society of Scotland		Of nearly 700 contributions, over 160 are by various dry processes, mostly collodio-albumen process. 16 wax paper images shown. 12 Fothergill process, 12 hot water process; tannin 37, tannin and malt 9, tannin and honey 5; malt 2. Likes Robinson's <i>Interior of a Study</i> .
BJP	1865	1	13	20	12, no. 245	Exhibition. Photographic Society of Scotland [First Notice]		Cameron's works have "slovenly manipulation and other photographic faults," but admires her general artistic treatment and chiaroscuro. Doesn't like <i>Goodness, Joy, Patience</i> . Model doesn't project these emotions at all. Like's Robinson's works, particularly self portrait and <i>Brenda</i> .
BJP	1865	2	3	60-1	12, no. 248	Exhibition. Photographic Society of Scotland: Artistically Considered. [Concluding Notice]		Praise for Robinson's portraits, particularly his use of light. <i>Welsh Girl</i> and <i>Brenda</i> . Cameron's pictures are fine. Really likes her portraits, especially Henry Taylor, G.F. Watts. Hates portrait of Tennyson.
PN	1865	3	31	147-8	9, no. 343	Collodion in Printing--Stability of Pyroxyline	Robinson	
PN	1865	3	31	149-151	9, no. 343	Doubles, And How to Do Them	Robinson	
PN	1865	5	5	205-6	9, no. 348	The Photographic Exhibition	[Simpson]	First [No. 1860 was] exhibition of <i>Shalott</i> at a Photo Society of London exhibition. "The difficulties are admirably overcome, and the picture is one of rare beauty and power, grandly asserting the pictorial capability of photography. We have seen many paintings illustrating the same poem; but non comparable in artistic power and poetic expression to this photograph." Also likes <i>Evening, Welsh Girl, Brenda</i> .
BJP	1865	5	12	249	12, no. 262	Soiree of the Photographic Society		Cameron particularly
PN	1865	5	12	217-8	9, no. 349	The Photographic Exhibition. Second Notice		Robinson awarded medal for artistic works.

PN	1865	5	12	221-2	9, no. 349	Photographic Exhibition-Report of the Exhibition Committee		“Admiring the enthusiasm of Mrs. Cameron, the committee much regret that they cannot concur in the lavish praise which has been bestowed on her productions by the non-photographic press, feeling convinced that she herself will adopt an entirely different mode of representing her poetic ideas when she has made herself acquainted with the capabilities of the art.”
BJP	1865	5	19	267-8	12, no. 263	Exhibitions. The Photographic Society’s Exhibition		Cameron: “Never has any photographer been subjected to greater criticism than has this lady. . . . would that we could impress on Mrs. Cameron that something more than artistic grouping and posing is required in a photograph—that execution is as necessary as conception of a subject, and that good posing does not compensate for slovenliness of manipulation.” Many tears and stains in the prints.
A	1865	5	20	690	No. 1960	Fine-Art Gossip		Cameron: Glowing review: “not a photographer in the ordinary sense.”
PN	1865	6	2	254-5	9, no. 352	The Photographic Exhibition. Portraits, Examples of New Processes, &c.		Negative opinion of Cameron’s portraits. She needs to improve her technique.
BJP	1865	6	16	313-4	12, no. 267	A Few Thoughts About Photographic Art Progress	Wall	Art photography hasn’t come very far. Cameron “consisting in the main of a piece of light or dark drapery pulled about the figure or over the head of some person in modern costume, which is concealed with some difficulty by much tucking in here and pulling out there, and in the photographing thereof with a lens turned out of focus.” Likes Rejlander the best; he has received a thorough education as an artist.
BJP	1865	6	23	332-3	12, no. 268	Exhibition. Photographs at the Dublin Exhibition [Fourth Notice]		Complains that same girl in Robinson’s works is used too often.
BJP	1865	8	4	402-3	12, no. 274	Excellence versus Cheapness—An Appeal to Photographic Portraitists	Wall	An excellent article on the market forces bringing prices of portraits down (and laments the subsequent loss of quality). “We make portraits as others manufacture pins; so much money per gross, so much time, and no more, for the making.” Doesn’t blame <i>cdv</i> or the photographers directly, as he was in that position and is familiar with their plight. The least competent and most desperate will survive because they have to, whereas those with more talent and capital have the ability to change professions. Blames the talentless and desperate ones for the mischief. Public taste can be raised by a common effort by good photographers.
BJP	1865	8	4	404-5	12, no. 274	Photography as a Fine Art	from <i>Photographic Notes</i>	Argument of ‘photography is mechanical’ camp is that works by hand require the imagination. Counter argument is: how can a really poor drawing be better, solely because of imagination, than an excellent photograph?
BJP	1865	8	11	411	12, no. 275	Photography—Commercial and Artistic	[J. Traill Taylor]	Demand for commercial portraiture has dropped, as well as prices. Gloomy outlook. Hardly worth time for photographer to artfully compose portraits. Carte mania brought many more practitioners to the field, and when the mania subsided they lowered prices. Good portraitists were compelled to make cartes. People bought cartes almost to the exclusion of any other type, but it was a fad, so it couldn’t last. There will always be a need for inexpensive portraits. They have almost totally supplanted the cheap colored woodcut on the cottage walls of the poor—photos much better (Rembrandts compared to effigies painted on sign-posts).

									“Among the poorer classes the civilising influence of cheap photography has been ignored or greatly underrated. It humanizes the semi-barbarous mind, and accustoms it to forms which have, at least, some resemblance to humanity; it cultivates the social affections, and, although the effect cannot be estimated by statistics, its civilising power is, nevertheless, a great a pleasing fact.”
BJP	1865	8	11	413-4	12, no. 275	Concerning Art-Photography	Geo. H. Slight		“However inartistic a photograph of natural scenery may be, we have at once, on looking at it, a feeling that it is at least true.” Photos of subjects of imagination jar with the truth of photography. Combination prints are ‘splendid specimens of deception.’
PN	1865	8	11	377-8	9, no. 362	Photographs at the Dublin International Exhibition [Third Notice]			Series of eight portraits from same negative by Mayall, illustrating enlarging. From two inches tall to just over life size. Robinson combination prints: difficult to determine if they’re combinations. “This, we take it, is the especial characteristic of Mr. Robinson’s productions which distinguishes them essentially from almost all other attempts to produce genre pictures in photography. Refers to <i>Autumn, Bringing Home the May, Holiday in the Wood, Somebody Coming</i>
PN	1865	8	11	378-9	9, no. 362	On The Selection Of A Subject, and its Management	Robinson		Tells of two students photographing a landscape. One has a huge stone carried into a stream to break up the light reflected. Altering nature for the aesthetic. Also added a rustic figure to the landscape.
PN	1865	8	18	392-4	9, no. 363	The Sphere and Scope of Photography in Art	Respice Finem		Art photo is possible and combination and composition work are acceptable. [<i>Autumn or Bringing Home the May</i>] “We have actual English scenery such as is to be found in Warwickshire; we have English rustic figures engaged in common English rural occupation. Every part is true in detail, and the whole is harmonious and true in keeping.” Yet, photography NOT suited to picturing the imagination. <i>Two Ways of Life</i> showed naked women.
PN	1865	9	1	409-10	9, no. 365	Pictorial Photography and Combination Printing	Simpson		The argument against combination printing that uses poor examples is a poor argument.
BJP	1865	9	8	462	12, no. 279	Rejlander in Type	Rejlander		
JPS	1865	9	15	153-7	10, no. 161	The Legitimacy of Combination-Printing	Respice Finem		Comment from editor Hugh Diamond that he thought the question as to combination printing’s validity had been settled. He sides with Respice Finem. Diamond also quotes from PN editorial that basically declares combination printing valid because of photography’s technical shortcomings.
BJP	1865	10	27	548-9	12, no. 286	Exhibition of the North London Photographic Association [concluding notice]			On <i>Bringing Home the May</i> : “We should have preferred seeing more juvenile buoyancy of feeling, more life and motion, more exuberance of spirits and frolicsome gladness, and less funereal solemnity in the group than there is. This would have given an increased charm to this work.”
BJPA	1866			92-4		Photography as the Handmaid of Art	Rejlander		Only about how photography can serve as a time saver for painters
YP	1866			45-6		Desultory Reflections On Photo & Art	Rejlander		Photography as a fine art, but not high art. It can capture emotion of sitter.
BJP	1866	1	19	29-31	13, no. 298	Errors in Pictorial Backgrounds [Painted backgrounds]	J. Werge		Photographers’ backgrounds do not use same perspective as the sitter’s real (studio prop) surroundings. Landscape backgrounds are too small in scale,

								so that the trees and castles look like children's toys. This comes from painted portraiture conventions, where such differences are intentional. Photography is too realistic a medium to accept such disparities. His solution is based upon the assumption that the lens is always level with the eyes, and that this places the horizon line at the same point.
BJP	1866	1	26	44	13, no. 299	Correspondence: Photography and Art	M. Carey Lea	Responding to Wall's reaction to a letter he wrote. Contends that there is a general feeling of hostility by some artists towards photography, and the photography has been treated "not as a sister, but as a sort of castaway founding, whose very existence was a bore and a nuisance."
PN	1866	1	26	Frontis-piece	10, no. 386	Photo-A Mountain Dew Girl: Killarney	Robinson	With article about Woodbury process
BJP	1866	2	9	61-2	13, no. 301	Practical Art Hints: The Dangers and Difficulties in What is Called "Composition Photography"	Wall	Wall's response, several months later, to the renewed question on the validity of combination printing. Characterizes those who champion it as standing on the tops of molehills when the fine art photography's potential is up on the mountain tops. Though several beautiful composition prints have been made since the patchwork controversy, he hasn't changed opinion. He calls combination prints 'sketches' because they have about 1% chance of succeeding. There are differences in tone between different negatives because they were taken at different times. "It is perversion and degradation to an art like ours to make its truth and unity subservient to conventional tricks, shams and mechanical dodges."
BJP	1866	2	9	66-7	13, no. 301	Artists and Photographers:--A Reply to Mr. Lea's Letter on Photography an Art	Wall	Art has been very supportive to photography; gave birth to it and many artists have played active roles in improvement and in photo societies. Caution against readers following Werge's advice on perspective in backgrounds.
PN	1866	2	9	61-2	10, no. 388	On the Study of Art by Photographers	[Simpson]	"The absence of special art tuition for photographers has been loudly bewailed. The effect of these complaints from those assuming a knowledge of art has been the production of a vague want in the minds of many who know nothing of it, and who, knowing nothing, invest it with a kind of mystery not to be penetrated by the uninitiated." Art cannot really be taught, because much of art is felt rather than thought.
PN	1866	2	16	74-5	10, no. 389	Mr. Wallis's Lecture on Elementary Art		Chief of the Art Department at the South Kensington Museum. Photographs should have a central point of interest, not inherently part of photography. Shows Robinson <i>Early Spring</i> as a positive example. Backgrounds—the simplest are the best, all detail being avoided. Most photo backdrops put as much detail as possible grouped into a small space. Lighting can achieve roundness, most important in photography.
PN	1866	2	16	76-7	10, no. 389	The Glass Room and Its Contents	Robinson	
PN	1866	2	16	82-3	10, no. 389	Study of Art by Photographers	Anti-Humbug	Much art writing is too esoteric. Long quote from Wall that demonstrates how he ignores art rules and soars into aesthetic ecstasy.
BJP	1866	2	23	83	13, no. 303	Photography and Perspective	[J. Traill Taylor]	Agrees that there are problems, but points out inaccuracies in Werge's article: all portraits would have to be taken from the same height and the same distance from the background; for taller and shorter sitters, one could not raise or lower the camera. Clearly this would not render proper perspective. Suggests conventional backgrounds or backgrounds 'divested from all pictorial pretensions.'

BJP	1866	2	23	95	13, no. 303	Correspondence: Mr. Rejlander's Glass Room	Wall	Disputes what Robinson had to say about Rejlander's studio in London.
BJP	1866	2	23	96-7	13, no. 303	Correspondence: Perspective	Werge	Today's backgrounds are inadequately done for photography: one horizon line, and all lines point to it. If you go take a carte portrait outside, it will verify his main points. Also, it will prove that you shouldn't have too many objects in the background.
BJP	1866	3	2	107	13, no. 304	Correspondence: Perspective in Backgrounds	Wall	Points to an error in Werge's calculations, which do not take into account distance (they actually do, but state that the distance is always the same in studio portraiture). Backgrounds are not tricks or dodges because they do not pretend to be real; they are glaringly artificial. "Backgrounds, which are palpably conventional, are neither tricks, shams, nor mechanical dodges! They are simply what they openly profess to be, <i>backgrounds</i> . They never pretend to be pictures, never weakly and childishly attempt deception where they have not the slightest power of deceiving."
BJP	1866	3	2	109	13, no. 304	Correspondence: Work versus Words	Robinson	Editor (J. Traill Taylor) writes Rejlander about the dispute; Rejlander backs Wall's version. Robinson's letter goes on to complain about Wall making it his business to attack Robinson and all that he does. Wall has behaved fairly while criticizing Robinson's works. Moreover, he says that he hasn't published all of the criticisms of Robinson's work, that they are much stronger than Wall's criticisms, and that he has received much MORE critical than favorable reviews. Admits that favorable reviews have predominated in what HAS been published. Feels Robinson should be willing to withstand criticism if one courts criticism. Chastises both at the end for always carping at each other.
PN	1866	3	2	107	10, no. 391	Correspondence: Talent—Mystery in Art—Lighting	An Artist	Feels that some of art is esoteric. Editor [G. Wharton Simpson] feels that An Artist is mistaken.
BJP	1866	3	9	115-6	13, no. 305	Practical Art-Hints: Elementary Perspective as Applied to Photographs	Wall	Basic perspective in photography. Some composition photographs have multiple perspectives, each from the different negatives. Examines one without naming it [but seems clearly to be <i>Autumn</i>]. Identifies different points of view for the four figures. Also complains about poor perspectival choice on a seascape and backgrounds on cartes.
BJP	1866	3	9	121	13, no. 305	Correspondence: Perspective in Backgrounds	Werge	Wall is a 'controvertist.' He is right in his article, and does not get into distance because it is not necessary. Extensively quotes Wall's article on backgrounds in "Technology of Art as Applied to Photography" (1861) which says the same thing he did in terms of placing camera lens and horizon line at the same height.
PN	1866	3	9	109-11	10, no. 392	On Backgrounds in Portraits	[Simpson]	What is the object of the background? Daguerreotypists used an "invisible background", that "simply consisted of an even tint of unobtrusive dark grey, produced by the use a revolving screen covered with a blanket or cloth with a shaggy nap, the constant motion of the screen producing a spotless, textureless surface, so little conspicuous that it was styled invisible." An even background isn't satisfying. Painters used different ones for different classes of sitters. Since photographers cannot make their own backgrounds generally, they have to use the same ones for 'the peer and the peasant alike' and that the backgrounds must be therefore devoid of special character 'to

									suit any without incongruity.?
PN	1866	3	9	111-2	10, no. 392	Modern Portrait Painting and Photography	from Lowes Dickinson		Glosses an article in <i>Contemporary Review</i> on “Modern Portrait Painting” that discusses influence of photography on contemporary portrait painting. Notes a strong influence, for better or for worse. It’s a question whether photography is “acting upon a few minds unconsciously impressed by the clear manifestations of important truths hitherto smothered under broad conventionalisms.” Its effect upon the art of our generation has been great, not perhaps altogether good. So far it has certainly given an undue impulse to the merely imitative faculty, while the imagination has been in abeyance. It has displaced a great deal of bad art. A photograph of the Coliseum or of Notre Dame is better worth having than the incorrect lithographs that used to stand for them; And although we may regret the temporary eclipse—for such we trust it is—of miniature painting, we have little reason to deplore the annihilation of that cheap art of portraiture wherein ‘you paid your three guineas, and took your chance as to whether you came out yourself or somebody else.’ Portrait painters haven’t taken advantage of photography, as there is a “want of strong individuality” in modern portrait painting.
BJP	1866	3	16	127-8	13, no. 306	Matters of Fact Versus Truth In Art	Wall		Facts, especially when isolated, are not enough for the truth of art. Quotes Paxton Hood, “A photograph is not true merely by virtue of the facts it embodies, unless these facts are relative to their unity as <i>parts of the whole truth</i> . Just as a person may speak nothing but facts and yet tell lies, because such facts are only parts of truth, so even a photograph may, by giving prominence to imperfect truths, and suppressing all but the more commonplace facts of nature, convey an impression utterly false to nature.”
PN	1866	3	16	124-8	10, no. 393	Matters of Fact <i>Versus</i> Truth in Art	Wall		Full version of speech to South London Photo Society – much longer than in BJP. Critics only see what they are capable of seeing, and no more. You can’t hold backgrounds to same standards as landscape paintings. It will never look like a real background.
PN	1866	3	16	129-30	10, no. 393	Proceedings of Societies: South London Photographic Society			Secretary and Chairman strongly oppose the tone and content of Wall’s paper.
PN	1866	3	23	134-5	10, no. 394	On Backgrounds in Photographic Portraits	[Simpson]		What is truth in a background? There are many false backgrounds in use, with too much detail, or incongruous detail, such as carpeted rooms, only divided by a balustrade from a rocky shore or a black heath. Encourages backgrounds that have little definition, without anything to direct attention to itself. Strikes out, presumably at Wall, writing about Robinson’s <i>Autumn</i> .
BJP	1866	4	6	165	13, no. 309	Exhibition. Photographic Society of Scotland			Rejlander’s pictures “are so far removed from the ordinary routine of portraiture, that it was perhaps best to devote a special medal for that which is, perhaps, <i>sui generis</i> ; otherwise, had he got the medal for the best portrait, we might have had the advocates of the clean, conventional, cut-and-dry style of portraiture either wondering what could be seen in such pictures to deserve this recognition.”
JPS	1866	5	15	50	no. 169	Mr. Robinson's New Pictures			
PN	1866	6	29	305-6	10, no. 408	Critical Notices: Portraits and Pictures. By H.P. Robinson (Marion and Co.)			Improvement in Dallmeyer’s lens; positive review of genre pieces and portraits; <i>Waiting for the Boat</i>
PN	1866	8	24	398-9	10, no. 416	Photography as a Fine Art			From <i>The Intellectual Observer</i> . Photography cannot capture reality, due to

									focusing and due to color. Cameron might be the closest photography can get to fine art.
PN	1866	10	12	482	10, no. 423	Views of the English Lake Scenery. By Nelson K. Cherrill			
JPS	1866	10	15	120-1	no. 174	North London Presentation Print			About <i>Waiting for the Boat</i> as a presentation print for North London Photo Association
JPS	1866	10	15	122	no. 174				Note on "Waiting for the Boat"
H	1866	12	15	247	18, no. 16	Art Photographs	Robinson		
BJPA	1867			61-2		Coquetry			interview with Rejlander
YP	1867			50-1		What Photography Can Do In Art	Rejlander		Many make the mistake of assuming that if photography were an art then ALL photographs would be art. Art is making thought visible. If an image evokes emotion it doesn't matter what medium it is in.
H	1867	3	15	340-2	18, no. 22	The Use Of Light	Robinson		
BJP	1867	4	26	195-6	14, no. 364	On Taking Picturesque Photographs	Wall		Alludes to the word's multiple and vague meaning. Based on nature, "confine myself to merely pointing out some of those more common effects of natural scenery which we call 'picturesque,' as suggestive matter for brother photographers who are going out with the cameras in the bright days fast coming."
PN	1867	7	5	315-6	11, no. 461	Critical Notices: Sleep: A Pictorial Photographic Composition. By H.P. Robinson			<i>Sleep</i> . A lengthy favorable review. Robinson has captured moonlight well and tapestry adds depth. Photography makes art photography difficult, but that Robinson succeeds. He has overcome literalness of photography.
BJP	1867	11	22	555-6	14, no. 394	Exhibition Soiree of the London Photographic Society			<i>Sleep</i> : "appears to have been printed from several negatives"
ILN	1867	11	23	574	?	Exhibition of the Photography Society			Glowing review of Cameron; praises her lack of focus
AJ	1867	12	1	275	6	Minor Topics of the Month			Glowing review of <i>Sleep</i> , "No artist could, by his pencil, give us so truthful a picture."
YP	1868			28-30		Common Errors Concerning Photography	Robinson		
AJ	1868	1	1	15	v. 7	The Photographs of Rejlander			"Of Mr. Rejlander's pictures...we have no hesitation in saying that they are full of beauty and full of mind...His object has evidently been to realise some idea that he has dreamed out from the subject before him... In a word, they are works of Art, and contain many highly original thoughts."
PN	1868	1	24	40-1		Pictorial Effect in Photography	[Simpson]		Introduction to Robinson work. Photographers need to learn art principles in order to see nature more properly.
A	1868	2	15	258	No. 2103	Fine-Art Gossip			Hates Cameron fancy title works, likes her portraits of real people.
AJ	1868	3	1	58	No. 7	Minor Topics of the Month			Loves Cameron work--not a bad photo
JPS	1868	3	16	1	13, no. 191	Photographic Society			Robinson to make a presentation print for members
PN	1868	9	4	424-5	12, no. 522	Short Essays on Photography & Art; "Wanted--A Man"	Robinson		
PN	1868	9	18	447-8	12, no. 524	Critical Notices. "Returning Home:" A Pictorial Composition. Photographed from Nature by H.P. Robinson			Loves <i>Returning Home</i> . Describes a gleaner rushing home before a thunderstorm overtakes her.
IP	1868	11	13	492-3	v. 1	The Photographic Society of	[Wall]		Criticizes Robinson <i>Returning Home</i> "no artist critic could see it without at

						London		once detecting its tricky artificiality and untruthfulness.” And Cherrill’s landscapes, “If Mr. Cherrill will, or can, take advice from one who staunchly opposes the ‘clique’ he clings to...”
H	1868	11	15	219-20	20, no. 14	Wet Collodion Without Water	Robinson	
BJP	1868	11	20	554-5	15, no. 446	[Exhibition of the Photographic Society of London]	Ecce Veritas	Robinson’s group of children, “is a very beautiful photograph.” Rejlander: “many are full of deep feeling and refinement in their conception, and his artistic ideas are generally well carried out as far as the arrangements go. But, how is it that his photographic manipulation is so inferior to his artistic ability?”
IP	1868	11	20	500-1	v. 1	The Moral of the Conduit Street Exhibition	[Wall]	“If the most accomplished and skillful artists cannot work apart from nature without failure, there is small hope of inartistic photographers achieving success by such means. It must remain an open question, as to how much the dodges of double printing and made-up compositions can be successful; but the moral of those exhibited this year is unquestionably— <i>don’t</i> .”
IP	1868	11	27	513-5	v. 1	The Late Conduit-Street Photographic Exhibition	Wall	Long invective against Robinson and his followers who praise him thoughtlessly.
IP	1868	12	4	525	v. 1	The Late Conduit-Street Photographic Exhibition. Subject Pictures	Wall	In comparing Robinson’s <i>Returning Home</i> with Slingsby’s <i>Rest</i> “the one large, loud, noisy and pretentious; the other quiet, simple, and aiming only at the honest truth; the one seeking effect by all sorts of undisguisable artificial dodges and mechanical contrivances; the other aiming at the same end, by using more legitimate means, and trusting to fidelity of representation, and an eye for nature’s real beauties...”
IP	1868	12	18	555-7	v. 1	The Late Conduit-Street Photographic Exhibition	Wall	Messrs. Robinson and Cherrill exhibited some excellent portraits; but a very pretty and natural group of beautifully arranged children was irretrievably spoilt as a work of art by the cut-out effect of a printed-in background... Why will these gentlemen so obstinately adhere to the clumsy, inartistic, and purely mechanical dodge, ‘combination printing?’ so called,
PN	1868	12	18	601-2	12, no. 537	Watching the Lark		
YP	1869			42-4		The Truth Of Photography And Retouched Negatives	Rejlander	
AJ	1869	1	11	355-6		Reviews: Pictorial Effect in Photography		
PN	1869	1	15	25	13, no. 541	Combination Printing	[Simpson]	Supports combination printing.
JPS	1869	1	16	203-9	14, no. 201	On Combination Printing	Nelson K. Cherrill with comments afterward by Rejlander and Bedford	Says it’s an invaluable tool. Most use it for cloud effects. Use to depict scenes from the imagination. Compares combination art photographer to architect rather than to bricklayer. Thanks Rejlander for pioneering the field, but doesn’t think ‘imaginative’ art is really in the true sphere of photography, particularly representing abstract ideas. <i>Fading Away</i> as depicting last moments of consumptive woman’s life. Much discussion at the time of its suitability of subject with the realistic medium of photography. “It was because the subject would be considered so awful and so painful if it were to be rendered simply photographically that Mr. Robinson chose it to try to show that the amelioration of art could be introduced into even the commonly supposed unplastic art of photography.” Combination printing cannot help those who do not know how to compose good pictures. Points out that critics found lots to criticize on work of group

								children but that they missed the fact that a rock in the foreground wasn't really a rock. Francis Bedford also praises Robinson and Cherrill for their efforts that "had been so unfairly cavilled at and misjudged." Remembers learning some of Grundy's photos of boats had been shot using models. Thinks it wrong for Cherrill "to point a moral for the indiscriminating critics who were fond of pointing out imaginary faults and could not detect real ones."
IP	1869	1	29	45-6	v. 2	The Late Demonstration in Favor of Combination Printing	Wall	Renews his argument against combination printing as false to nature. Doesn't understand how <i>Fading Away</i> proves how a photograph can be about more than mere reproduction of an object. Truth factor of photography is all important. Criticizes Cherrill for his admission of the fake rock. Feels that painters WOULD paint an entire scene at once if the COULD, and that they work from memory, whereas a photographer cannot.
IP	1869	1	29	55	v. 2	Replies and Discussions. Combination Printing	J.A.	Points out that Robinson is new VP of Photographic society. And that PN supports him as well.
IP	1869	2	12	79	v. 2	Replies and Discussions. Combination Printing	Artist	All three denounce combination printing and 'the clique'.
IP	1869	2	12	80	v. 2	Replies and Discussions. Patchwork	Photography	
PN	1869	7	30	362	13, no. 569	Critical Notices		<i>Over the Sea & Sea Gulls</i>
PhP	1869	8		f, 253-7	6, no. 68	Our Picture - Mr. Robinson's Method of Working		
AJ	1869	9	1	291	8	Minor Topics of the Month		Positive <i>Over the Sea</i> review
PN	1869	9	3	429	13, no. 574	Mr Robinson and His Method of Working		
PN	1869	9	24	464-5	13, no. 577	Sea Gulls	J.H. Johnson	
PN	1869	11	12	539-40	13, no. 584	The Photographic Exhibition		Feels that Blanchard has taken portraiture almost to the level of Adam-Solomon. <i>Two Ways of Life</i> is exhibited again. Robinson and Cherrill display <i>Over the Sea</i> and a controversial seagull picture as well as some beautiful landscapes.
IP	1869	11	19	522-3	v. 2	The Photographic Exhibition in Conduit Street	Wall	Says that Robinson's gulls picture has taken some abuse.
IP	1869	11	19	525-6	v. 2	Art-Criticism and Art-Photography	Wall	Surprised at a favorable review by an art critic of a combination print [quite possibly 9/1 AJ's pro <i>Over the Sea</i> review]; art critic responds that art criticism would be wasted on most photography, that you can't judge photography on painting's level.
IP	1869	11	26	535-6	v. 2	The Photographic Exhibition in Conduit Street	Wall	Loves some Rejlander works. Doesn't like Slingsby imagery this year, though he called him an artist last year.
PN	1869	11	26	567-9	13, no. 586	The Exhibition of Photographs in Conduit Street		Loves Robinson landscapes, all with printed-in skies." "But now they are something much more than this: they are, in virtue of their completeness in natural truth, as well as in artistic composition, exceedingly noble <i>pictures</i> . <i>Entomologists, On the Common, the Edge of the Wood</i> .
ILN	1869	11	27	546	55, no. 1568	Exhibition of the Photographic Society		Positive Cameron review; plus <i>Over the Sea</i> ; questions combination printing, skies; Rejlander
IP	1869	12	3	546-7	v. 2	The Photographic Exhibition in	Wall	<i>Over the Sea</i> is a photograph "which has been almost universally denounced

						Conduit Street		for its glaring want of truth and keeping.” Points out that the foliage on the cliff overlooking the sea probably doesn’t grow there. Light and shadows contradict one another.
IP	1869	12	3	547-8	v. 2	The “Times” Review of the Photographic Exhibition	Thomas Sutton, B.A.	Long passage quoted from <i>The Times</i> , unfavorable to Robinson, and glossed by Sutton. “Go to nature with an artist’s eye and a cultivated taste, and select with judgment your point of view, and effect of light and shadow. Then copy nature exactly as you find her, after making your selection, and endeavour to improve your processes to such a point as to enable you to copy her correctly and fully.” Truthfulness the most important characteristic.... Year after year rolls by, and still the list of combination painters may be numbered on your ten fingers...”
PN	1869	12	3	578-9	13, no. 587	The Photographic Exhibition		Feels that <i>Two Ways of Life</i> didn’t receive much positive press at the time because it asserted that photography could be the equal to painting. Also, the semi-nude woman.
ILN	1869	12	4	570	55, no. 1569	Early Summer by Slingsby		While not liking combination prints, still likes it when well done
IP	1869	12	10	557	v. 2	Pencil Jottings	R.A. Seymour [Wall]	Reproduces boy figure from a Robinson photo in the 1869 exhibition.
BJPA	1870			148		Addressed to an Art-Critic	Rejlander	
YP	1870			28-30		The Sky: How To Photograph It And Why	Robinson	
YP	1870			45-6		Something For Photographers To Undertake	Rejlander	
PhP	1870	1		14-5	7, no. 73	Pictorial Effect in Photography (review)		
PhP	1870	11		400	7, no. 83	Editor’s Table		<i>The First Hour of Night</i>
PN	1870	11	11	529-30	14, no. 636	The Exhibition of Photographs, and Coversazione		16 x 12 marine views by Robinson and Cherrill.
PN	1870	11	18	541-2	14, no. 637	The Exhibition of Photographs in Conduit Street. Genre and Art Studies		Robinson <i>Trysting Tree</i> not as good as previous efforts. <i>Load of Ferns</i> and <i>Down to the Well</i> would be better with a more attractive or more picturesque model. Rejlander has a scene from Plato’s Dialogue, <i>Crito</i> .
PN	1870	11	25	553-4	14, no. 638	The Exhibition of Photographs. Landscapes		Fine seascapes by Robinson, technical tours de force. Beached <i>Margent of the Sea</i> with a flight of seagulls. <i>First Hour of the Night</i> : loves it, though the moon has been criticized for its size, its position and its isolated brightness. Critic loves the seascape itself. Also loves <i>Evening on Culverden Down</i> .
PN	1870	11	25	558-9	14, no. 638	[The Press and the Photographic Exhibition]??		Mechanics’ Magazine insists seagulls were added to the negative.
BJPA	1871			113-4		The Photographic Press	Rejlander	
YP	1871			7		Hints And Maxims	Robinson	
YP	1871			29-31		A Hint From America	Robinson	
YP	1871			65-6		Stray Thoughts On Photography And Art	Rejlander	
PN	1871	3	31	153	15, no. 656	Correspondence. Pictures Returned from the International Exhibition	Robinson and Cherrill	Lists all their work which has been rejected by the exhibition. Includes their best sunset and sea effects, and <i>Sleep</i> .

PN	1871	4	6	166-7	15, no. 657	Photography and the International Exhibition	G.C. Wallich	Suggests having a [salon des refuses]
PN	1871	4	14	177	15, no. 658	Photographs at the International Exhibition	Robinson and Cherrill	Apologize for raising suspicions
PN	1871	4	21	181-2	15, no. 659	Photographs at the International Exhibition		Explains that novelty was a major part of the judges' decisions.
PN	1871	11	17	541-2	15, no. 689	The Photographic Exhibition		Comments on the skies of Robinson and Cherrill being well matched to the landscapes. No doubt nature could have done no better.
BJP	1871	11	24	553	18, no. 603	The Photographic Exhibition [Second Notice]		With two exceptions, Messrs. Robinson and Cherrill have this year confined their attention to portraying scenes and views on heaths. The two exceptions are a magnificent large portrait of <i>A Bridesmaid</i> (38) and <i>A Bridal Group</i> (44).
PW	1871	12	1	380	1, no. 12	All the World Over		Robinson submitted a work to an exhibition under a different name to see if he was winning medals by name alone. He won anyway.
PN	1871	12	8	579-80	15, no. 692	The Photographic Exhibition. Studies and Landscapes		Robinson and Cherrill's landscapes: "but if they claim no interest from locality, they aim at some interest derived from association with a thought or subject. One illustrates a Quiet Evening, another Repose, and whilst these suggest rest, others suggest action, as Returning Home from School and the Blackberry Gatherers..."
BJPA	1872			116-7		Hints Concerning the Photographing of Criminals	Rejlander	
YP	1872			24		How To Show The Photograph	Robinson	
YP	1872			81-2		Stray Thoughts On Photography And Art Photography	Rejlander	
PN	1872	1	26	41	16, no. 699	Retouching and Exhibitions	Robinson	
PN	1872	6	28	311	16, no. 721	Talk In The Studio		Robinson and Cherrill open new studio in Tunbridge Wells. Front room is exhibition room of portraiture. Larger exhibition room upstairs.
PN	1872	7	26	353	16, no. 725	The Tools We Use	Robinson	
PN	1872	11	29	566	16, no. 743	The Photographic Exhibition		Almost all landscapes are done by combination printing. "A visitor to the exhibition, examining Messrs. Robinson and Cherrill (<i>Waiting at the Stile</i>) and knowing it to be produced in several negatives, discovered sunlight on the figure and its absence on the stile and foreground of the picture. As the figure, stile and foreground were produced on one negative, all with the same light, the oddity is clearly in the criticism, and not in the picture, in which a really cultivated eye will perceive harmony and truth of effect as a leading characteristic."
PN	1872	11	29	571-2	16, no. 743	Graduated Backgrounds	Robinson	
PN	1872	12	6	581-3	16, no. 744	The Exhibition	Robinson	
BJP	1873	3	28	149	20, no. 673	The Bengal Photographic Exhibition		Praises Robinson & Cherrill <i>Waiting by the Stile</i> .
PN	1873	8	22	407		Genre Pictures	Rejlander	
BJP	1873	10	24	504-5	20, no. 703	Exhibition of the Photographic Society [First Notice]		Mrs. Cameron's heads, "which have always found favour with artists, if not with others." <i>Preparing Spring Flowers for Market</i> "is perhaps the cleverest of all the clever combination pictures produced since <i>Bringing Home the May</i> ."

PN	1873	10	24	506-7	18, no. 790	Exhibition of 1873 [quoted portion says it's from JPS]		Likes <i>Preparing Spring Flowers for Market</i> . Perhaps the cleverest of all the clever combination pictures produced since " <i>Bringing Home the May</i> "
PN	1873	10	31	518-20	18, no. 791	[The Press and the Photographic Exhibition]??		<i>Morning Advertiser</i> loves <i>Preparing Spring Flowers for Market</i> . "in which a peasant mother and her girls are seated at their work among fruit and flowers, in a lovely beam of light that streams through a rose-clad lattice, is the most remarkable instance of this class of work." (519)
PN	1873	10	31	523-4	18, no. 791	The Photographic Exhibition. Visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales		Landscape by Robinson & Cherrill.
BJP	1873	11	7	529	20, no. 705	Exhibition of the Photographic Society [Third Notice]		Likes <i>Preparing Spring Flowers for Market</i> (is the best of their entries). Thinks that the backgrounds for <i>A Gleaner</i> and <i>The Passing Stranger</i> "persist in coming to the front—a kind of pseudoscopic effect being produced."
ILN	1873	11	8	443	63, no. 1784	The Winter Exhibitions: Photography Society		<i>Preparing Spring Flowers for Market</i> : courageous but vain combination prints. ENGRAVED
BJPA	1874			145-6		Art Backgrounds versus Artificial Backgrounds	Rejlander	
PhP	1874	1	3	f. 90-3	11, no. 123	Our Picture		<i>Preparing Spring Flowers for Market</i>
BJP	1874	4	3	165	21, no. 726	The Secret Enamel Process	Robinson and Cherrill	Robinson and Cherrill complain of ill treatment by editor of BJP in reporting conflict b/w them and Watson in terms of their improvement of his enamel process, which seems to be a financial success. Robinson and Cherrill couldn't really claim full patent in US, so they asked Watson to join with them, who refused. Watson is now applying for patent in US. Robinson and Cherrill upset with this. Editor clearly sides with Watson.
BJP	1874	4	10	?	21, no. 727	The Enamel Scandal	W.T. Watson	Feels that Robinson and Cherrill haven't really done much to alter his process; just that they do it very well, whereas the products of a poor practitioner would not look as good as theirs. Refuses to have anything to do with their sale of his process.
BJP	1874	5	8	221	21, no. 731	Notes on Passing Events	Peripatetic Photographer	Criticizes, generally, Robinson for his role in the enamel controversy. Doesn't begrudge anyone from patenting a process, but thinks it strange that Robinson had always shared all of his knowledge, boasting he had no secrets, and now seeks four thousand US dollars for the patent rights.
AJ	1874	11		349-51	13	Art Notes and Minor Topics		How Robinson & Cherrill always take the medals
PhP	1874	11	1	322-3	11, no. 131	Details of Watson's Enamel Process	Robinson & Cherrill	Robinson & Cherrill publish Watson's process(!) He's asking for \$25. They say if anyone can make as good enamels as they had, they will relinquish their claim.
PN	1874	11	13	547-8	18, no. 845	The Press Estimate of the Exhibition		Excellent commentary on Cameron, and detail vs. general effect in portrait photography.
PT	1875	1	3	60-1	5, no. 51	Our Foreign Make-Up: Softness and Gradation	Robinson	
APB	1875	4		123-4	6, no. 4	Poetry and Photography		Review of Cameron's <i>Idylls of the King</i>
PN	1875	9	3	427-9	19	Mssrs Robinson And Cherrill's Studio at Tunbridge Wells		
PT	1876	5	1	110-1	6, no. 65	Permanency and Fading	Robinson	
ILN	1876	9	16	278	69, no. 1938	Fine Arts: The Photographic		About how combination photos are futile but likes photo generally

						Society		
PN	1877	6	8	271-3	21	Correspondence--"Conveying a Photographer's Pictorial Ideas into Paintings	Robinson	
PhP	1877	7	1	218-23	14, no. 163	The Tables Turned	Robinson	
PN	1877	8	10	383	21, no. 988	Talk in the Studio. The Forthcoming Exhibition		Robinson will contribute <i>When the Day's Work is Done</i> . Positive review.
PhP	1877	10		298-300	14, no. 166			Exhibition review with JMC
PhP	1877	10		298-300	14, no. 166	Photography Recognized as a Fine Art		
BJP	1877	11	2	523-4	24, no. ?	Has Photography Any Claim to be Considered a Fine Art? [part 1]	Andrew Bowman	(written in 1870) defends combination printing; saying critics found seams in Robinson prints that didn't exist.
PN	1877	11	2	522-3	21, no. 1000	The Photographic Exhibition. Subject Pictures		Loves <i>When the Day's Work is Done</i> . Says that some photographers dress up pretty girls as beggars, but that this is not vulgar or deceptive at all.
AJ	1877	12		350		The Photographic Society		Positive review of <i>When the Day's Work is Done</i> , "if this be taken from life"
PN	1877	12	7	586	21	M. Scotellari and Rembrandt Effects	Robinson	
PN	1878	1	2	55, 67, 74	22	Cherrill "On Ceramic Enamels"		
PhP	1879	1	10	293-4	16, no. 190	Pyramidal Forms	Robinson	
PhP	1879	1	11	330-2	16, no. 191	The Blind Fiddler as a Study	Robinson	
PhP	1879	1	12	358-9	16, No. 192	Mr. Robinson on Accessories	Robinson	
ILN	1879	3	8	216	74, no. 2073	Woodcut from a photo by Robinson		
PN	1879	10	10	486-7	23, no. 1101	The Photographic Exhibition		Robinson sends only <i>Between the Lights</i> : unambitious and unpretentious, yet successful painting-like effects by photography.
PN	1880	2	6	69-70	24, no.	Portraiture without a studio	Robinson	
PN	1880	5	14	236-7	24, no.	The New Power	Robinson	
PN	1880	6	11	278-9	24, no.	Mr. H.P. Robinson At the Great Hall Studio, Tunbridge Wells		
PN	1880	10	8	486-7	24, no. 1153	The Photographic Exhibition		Robinson sends four: <i>In Maiden Meditation Fancy Free</i> " – Also reviews favorably <i>At Gwysaney Hall</i> , taken on steps, and <i>Dorothy</i> , in interior.
PN	1880	10	15	493-4	24, no. 1154	"Combination" or Otherwise	Robinson	
PT	1881	1	12	441-2	11, no. 132	Our Editorial Table [Review of <i>The Art and Practice of Silver Printing</i>]		
PN	1881	10	14	481-3	25, no. 1206	The Photographic Exhibition		"To the landscape photographer Mr. Robinson unites the rare quality of an artist who is able to impart animation to his pictures; he not only produces a charming sketch from nature, but heightens the effect by thoughtful composition. In this way he secures a double interest." Medal for <i>The Old Boat</i> . Her Ancestor, an interior at Gwysaney Hall. Also, <i>Can I jump it?</i>
PN	1881	10	14	486	25, no. 1206	Notes		Overhears genial writer O.P.Q. Philander Smiff saying that "there is poetry in them" about <i>The Old Boat</i> and <i>Can I Jump It?</i>
JPS	1882	1	20	76-7	4, no. 4	Foregrounds	Robinson	

PN	1882	7	7	387	26, no. 1244	Picture Making with Mr. H.P. Robinson, At Gwysaney Hall, North Wales		
PN	1882	10	13	609-11	26, no. 1258	The Photographic Exhibition		Loves <i>A Merry Tale</i> . Also likes <i>Artist and Model</i> , <i>Her Ladyship</i> and <i>Lady Mary</i> .
PN	1882	10	13	618-20	26, no. 1258	The Photographic Exhibition [reviews from newspapers]		<i>The Times</i> on Robinson, "But, truth to tell, there is always a terribly artificial look about Mr. Robinson's groups of picturesquely-attired maidens in more or less conventional attitudes; and clever as the groups are, they always seem to carry with them a taint of the theatre into the woods and fields, where we find them planted. This objectionable feature is emphasized when, as in the present exhibition, half-a-dozen such pictures are placed together showing, apparently, the same girls in the same dresses, enacting different little rustic dramas in different scenes." From <i>Morning Advertiser</i> "[Robinson] No one but a real artist could have produced examples of such surpassing loveliness. Skies are usually printed separately from the landscape, and it is not always that the particular cloud-form or effect of atmosphere selected adapts itself kindly to the foreground objects and distance; but Mr. Robinson is too appreciative and refined an artist to err in this respect."
PN	1883	8	17	513-5	27, no. 1302	The Brussels Exhibition		Admires <i>What Luck?</i> , <i>Launch of the Deal Galley-Punt</i> and <i>Nor'Easter</i>
PN	1883	10	12	641-3	27, no. 1310	The Photographic Exhibition		<i>Under The Haycock Fast Asleep</i> "Robinson's artistic ability has lost none of its cunning, and that he is still to the fore as our highest authority in picture making." <i>Nor'Easter</i> , "The figure, alone in the landscape, imparts a deep pathos to the picture that the spectator cannot fail to appreciate."
PN	1883	10	12	650-2	27, no. 1310	The Photographic Exhibition [from <i>The Times</i>]		"Robinson work seems to reveal the limitations as well as the possibilities of the art of photography, pictorially considered."
PN	1883	10	19	supplement	27, no. 1311	Under a Hay-cock Fast Asleep [image]	Robinson	Rustics in landscape with rakes, find two children asleep in pile of hay.
PN	1884	1	4	11-12,	28, no. 1322	Chapters on Landscape: Chapter 1-- in the Field	Robinson	
PN	1884	1	11	26--7	28, no. 1323	Chapters on Landscape: Chapter 2--What to Photograph	Robinson	
PN	1884	1	18	41-2	28, no. 1324	Chapters on Landscape: Chapter 3--Models	Robinson	
PN	1884	2	1	73-5	28, no. 1326	Chapters on Landscape: Chapter 4--The Genesis of a Picture	Robinson	
PN	1884	2	1	139-40	28, no. 1330	Chapters on Landscape: Chapter 8--Animals	Robinson	
PN	1884	2	8	90-1	28, no. 1327	Chapters on Landscape: Chapter 5--Subjects. The Origin on Ideas	Robinson	
PN	1884	2	15	105-6	28, no. 1328	Chapters on Landscape: Chapter 6--On Sea and Shore	Robinson	
PN	1884	2	22	122--3	28, no. 1329	Chapters on Landscape: Chapter 7--The Sky	Robinson	
PN	1884	3	7	154-6	28, no. 1331	Chapters on Landscape: Chapter	Robinson	

						9-- Old Clo'		
PT	1884	5		269-71	14, no. 161	Our Editorial Table.		Review of <i>Picture-Making by Photography</i>
PN	1884	7	11	437-8	28, no. 1349	In Search Of The Picturesque	Robinson	
PN	1884	7	25	467-9	28, no. 1351	Brush And Camera In Wales	Robinson	
PN	1884	8	1	493	28, no. 1352	The Itinerant Painter	Robinson	
PN	1884	9	5	571-2	28, no. 1357	Wind	Robinson	
PN	1884	10	10	641-5	28, no. 1362	The Pall Mall Exhibition. Pictures and Apparatus		Robinson receives medal for <i>Mill Door</i> picturing a bag of meal being loaded upon a donkey. Also likes <i>He Never Told His Love</i> . Also <i>He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not, Come Across, The Cuckoo, The Gilly Flower, A Chat with the Miller, Music of the Birds, Finding the Calves, Yn Cymraeg a Saesneg [In Welsh and English, later known as Trespass Notice], The Stream in Summer</i> . Also contains a photograph of the hanging of the exhibition.
PN	1884	10	10		28, no. 1362	Supplement. "He Never Told His Love"	Robinson	large reproduction
PN	1884	10	10	649-50	28, no. 1362	Hints on Posing and the Management of the Sitter. Chapter 1--The Head	Robinson	
PN	1884	10	17	662-3	28, no. 1363	Hints on Posing and the Management of the Sitter. Chapter 2--The Head Vignette	Robinson	
PN	1884	10	24	677-8	28, no. 1364	Hints on Posing and the Management of the Sitter. Chapter 3--The Three Quarter Length - Men	Robinson	
PN	1884	11	7	707-8	28, no. 1366	The Pall Mall Exhibition. Fifth Notice		Likes Emerson's <i>Confessions</i> . Also <i>After Dinner Rest Awhile, Tug of War, and What's O'clock</i> – delightful illustrations of child life
PN	1884	11	7	708-10	28, no. 1366	Hints on Posing and the Management of the Sitter. Chapter 4--Three-Quarters Length - Ladies	Robinson	
PN	1884	11	14	726-7	28, no. 1367	Hints on Posing and the Management of the Sitter. Chapter 5--Full-Length Figures	Robinson	
PN	1884	11	21	741-3	28, no. 1368	Hints on Posing and the Management of the Sitter. Chapter 6--Groups	Robinson	
PN	1884	11	28	757-9	28, no. 1369	Hints on Posing and the Management of the Sitter. Chapter 7--Outdoor Groups	Robinson	
PN	1884	12	5	778-9	28, no. 1370	Hints on Posing and the Management of the Sitter. Chapter 8--Children	Robinson	
PN	1884	12	12	803-4	28, no. 1372	Hints on Posing and the Management of the Sitter. Chapter 9--Expression in	Robinson	

						Portraiture		
PN	1884	12	26	818	28, no. 1373	Northampton Photographic Exhibition. Second Notice		Likes Robinson <i>Cukoo</i> , which was also in Pall Mall Exhibition
PN	1884	12	26	820-1	28, no. 1373	Hints on Posing and the Management of the Sitter. Chapter 10--Suggestion and Interference in Posing	Robinson	
PhP	1885	1		6-8	22	Our Picture		Review of several Robinson Wales images
PN	1885	1	2	3-4	29, no. 1374	Northampton Exhibition. Third Notice		Mentions liking several Robinson images: <i>Wayside Gossip</i> , <i>The Mill Door</i> , <i>The Stream in Summer</i> , <i>The Music of the Birds</i> , <i>Come Across</i> , <i>He Never Told His Love</i> , and <i>Nor' Easter</i> .
PN	1885	3	6	147-8	29, no. 1383	Artistic Feeling in Photographs. Part I	Wall	Art critics who base their denial of photography as art based on its mechanical production make the mistake of confusing its method of production with the results.
PN	1885	4	3	218-9	29, no. 1387	Artistic Feeling in Photographs. Part II	Wall	William Collins, R.A. sees a picturesque cottage boy that he thinks useful for painting of character. The mother brings him to the studio the next day, dressed up nicely and hair combed, etc. Her preferred type, as higher social standing. He rejects them. Wall feels that people place too much emphasis on clothing, which is too bad. Photographers have to rely on nature solely, and thus have to see his pictures before he depicts them. Actors almost always look artificial. Except for Rejlander, especially his <i>Did She</i> which Rejlander observed and re-staged.
PN	1885	5	1	276-7	29, no. 1391	Artistic Feeling in Photographs. Part III-Portraiture	Wall	Feels that artistic portraiture is difficult; needs sensitivity of photographer to naturalness of pose and expression.
PN	1885	6	5	357-8	29, no. 1396	Artistic Feeling in Photographs. Part III-Portraiture – Continued	Wall	Children. Naturalness encouraged.
BJP	1885	7	17	453-4	32, no. 1315	Mr. H.P. Robinson		Bio profile. Talks about how he has in recent years worked in new line of landscapes containing figures, “nearly all of them telling a story or having sufficient incident”
PN	1885	8	14	517-8	29, no. 1406	Artistic Feeling in Photographs. Part V-Figures in Landscapes	Wall	Add interest and sentiment
PN	1885	9	4	563-4	29, no. 1409	Artistic Feeling in Photographs. Part V (Continued)-Figures in Landscapes	Wall	Animals
PN	1885	10	9	641-2	29, no. 1414	The Photographic Exhibition [First Notice]		Likes <i>Dawn and Sunset</i> , <i>Valentine</i> , <i>Hope Deferred</i> , and <i>Who could have thought it?</i>
PN	1885	10	9	643-4	29, no. 1414	Who Should Have the Honour?	Robinson	
PN	1885	10	9	645-7	29, no. 1414	Artistic Feeling in Photography. Part VI-On the Treatment of Skies and Clouds	Wall	Remembers the white skies and printed-in skies with cotton-wool. Many felt white skies to be superior.
PN	1885	10	23	673	29, no. 1416	The Photographic Exhibition [Third Notice]		Includes reproduction of Emerson <i>A Dame's School</i>
PN	1885	10	23	674-6	29, no. 1416	The Photographic Exhibition—No. I	Wall	Includes long commentary on <i>Dawn and Sunset</i> . Ambivalent. Doesn't much like other Robinson.
PN	1885	10	30	694-6	29, no. 1417	The Photographic Exhibition-No	Wall	Composition and pose

						II		
PN	1885	11	6	714-6	29, no. 1418	The Photographic Exhibition-No III	Wall	
PN	1885	11	13	725-6	29, no. 1419	The Photographic Exhibition-No IV	Wall	Feels that art is the future of photography, for this show's successes and failures are both in art.
PN	1885	12	18	803-5	29, no. 1424	Artistic Feeling in Photography. Part VI--On the Treatment of Skies and Clouds [continued]	Wall	Talks about how art photographers have great control over putting in their skies. But one has to be consistent. Linear and aerial perspective both pertain to clouds, which some ignore.
BJPA	1886			66-7		Reduction of Over Intensification	Robinson	
YP	1886			34-5		The Uses of Accidents	Robinson	
PrP	1886	1	5	113	7, no. 77	Growth Of Picture Making	Robinson	
PN	1886	3	5	148-50	30, no. 1435	Artistic Feeling in Photography. Part VII--The Power of Lines	Wall	
PN	1886	3	19	187-8	30, no. 1437	Photographing, a Pictorial Art	Emerson	Read at Camera Club. Criticizes art critics for ignoring science. Says photo can be art, but not all photographs, nor all paintings are fine art.
PN	1886	5	7	298-9	30, no. 1444	Stray Thoughts Concerning Photography, No. I	Robinson	
PT	1886	5	7	244-5	16, no. 242	Stray Thoughts Concerning Photography No. I	Robinson	
PN	1886	6	11	371-2	30, no. 1449	Stray Thoughts Concerning Photography, No. II	Robinson	
PT	1886	7	16	373-4	16, no. 252	Stray Thoughts Concerning Photography No. II	Robinson	
PN	1886	7	30	483-4		Rejlander's Photographic Art Studies--Their Teachings and Suggestions. Chapter I--Introduction	Wall	
PN	1886	8	13	516-7	30, no. 1458	Stray Thoughts Concerning Photography, No. III	Robinson	Response to Emerson's Camera Club paper. Likes some Naturalistic painting very much—but says it's difficult and it doesn't have composition; depends solely on color and handling. Feels photography should not follow it because photography has neither color nor handling.
PN	1886	8	27	559	30, no. 1460	H.P. Robinson's "Stray Thoughts"	T.F. Goodall	Response to Robinson's critique of Emerson. Feels he misrepresents modern school of painting, which doesn't rely upon antiquated notions of composition but looks instead directly at nature.
PN	1886	8	27	548-9		Rejlander's Photographic Art Studies--Their Teachings and Suggestions. Chapter II--Two Ways of Life	Wall	
PT	1886	8	27	444-6	16, no. 258	Stray Thoughts Concerning Photography No. III	Robinson	
PN	1886	9	3	563-5		Rejlander's Photographic Art Studies--Their Teachings and Suggestions. Chapter III--Pose and Expression	Wall	
PT	1886	9	3	469-71	16, no. 259	Success	Robinson	

PN	1886	9	24	618-20		Rejlander's Photographic Art Studies--Their Teachings and Suggestions. Chapter IV-- Studies and Stories	Wall	
APB	1886	9	25	559-61	17, no. 18	Success	Robinson	
PN	1886	10	8	652-3		Rejlander's Photographic Art Studies--Their Teachings and Suggestions. Chapter V--Studies and Stories (Continued)	A.H. Wall	
JPS	1886	11	26	20	11, no. 2	Calling the Cows [Illustration]	Robinson	
PN	1886	12	3	771-2		Rejlander's Photographic Art Studies--Their Teachings and Suggestions. Chapter VI-- Photographic Children	Wall	
PN	1886	12	31	834-6		Rejlander's Photographic Art Studies--Their Teachings and Suggestions. Chapter VII-- Allegorical Figures and Studies from Pictures	Wall	
AAnP	1887			44-6		Things to See To in Landscape Photography - Address to a Beginner	Robinson	
PN	1887	2	18	101-3		Rejlander's Photographic Art Studies--Their Teachings and Suggestions. Chapter VIII-- Domestic and Fancy Subjects	A.H. Wall	
PN	1887	6	10	362-4		Rejlander's Photographic Art Studies--Their Teachings and Suggestions. Classical and Comic Subjects	Wall	
PN	1887	6	17	369	31, no. 1502	Emerson's Pictures from Life		<i>From field and fen</i>
PT	1887	6	17	310-2	17, no. 300	Letters on Landscape, Addressed to an American Friend-No. 1	Robinson	
PT	1887	7	8	345-7	17, no. 303	Letters on Landscape, Addressed to an American Friend-No. 2	Robinson	
PT	1887	8	5	394-6	17, no. 307	Letters on Landscape, Addressed to an American Friend-No. 3	Robinson	
PT	1887	8	5	f. 391-2	17, no. 307	Portrait of Robinson	Robinson	
PN	1887	8	19	514-5	31, no. 1511	Emerson and Goodall's "Norfold Broads" and Emerson's "Pictures from Life"		
PN	1887	9	2	546-8	31, no. 1513	Rejlander's Photographic Art Studies--Their Teachings and Suggestions.	A.H. Wall	

PT	1887	9	2	441-2	17, no. 311	Letters on Landscape, Addressed to an American Friend-No. 4	Robinson	
PT	1887	9	2	449	17, no. 311	Correspondence: Portrait of Robinson	Robinson	
PT	1887	9	9	454-5	17, no. 312	Letters on Landscape, Addressed to an American Friend-No. 4 [sic]	Robinson	
PT	1887	9	23	492	17, no. 314	Letters on Landscape, Addressed to an American Friend-No. 5	Robinson	
PN	1887	10	7	625	31, no. 1518	The Exhibition of the Photographic Society		On Emerson's <i>Poacher</i> "well illustrates this worker's endeavor to break through the old convention, which ordains that every photograph should show each object with preternatural clearness. The streak of light in the east warns the poacher that he must cease operations, and the picture is realistic in a high degree."
PN	1887	10	7	635-6	31, no. 1518	Press Opinions of the Photographic Exhibition		from <i>The Times</i> , on Carolling (I believe), "but at a closer inspection raises questions of perspective and lighting in different parts of the picture."
PT	1887	10	28	538-40	17, no. 319	Letters on Landscape, Addressed to an American Friend-No. 6	Robinson	
PT	1887	12	2	600-1	17, no. 324	Letters on Landscape, Addressed to an American Friend-No. 7	Robinson	
PT	1887	12	23	641-3	17, no. 327	Letters on Landscape, Addressed to an American Friend-No. 8	Robinson	
PT	1887	12	30	665-8	17, no. 328	Letters on Landscape, Addressed to an American Friend-No. 9	Robinson	
AAnP	1888			81-2		Figure, Landscape and Combination Printing	Robinson	
IAA	1888			3-5	1	A Famous Lady Photographer	Talbot Archer	Cameron
IAA	1888			475-7	1	Art Or Accident	Robinson	
AJP	1888	1		1-2	10, no. 1	Genre Photography	John Bartlett	
PN	1888	1	27	52-3	32, no. 1534	Reviews. Emerson's "Hatmakers"		
PN	1888	3	2	129	32, no. 1539	Emerson's latest collection of photographs		
APB	1888	9	22	563-6	19, no. 18	A Famous Lady Photographer	Talbot Archer	cot'd
AAnP	1889			54-7		So Natural	Robinson	
IAA	1889			196-8	2	Fog Or Focus?	Robinson	
PN	1889	1	11	24	33, no. 1584	Members of the Solar Club...		
PN	1889	2	8	89-90	33, no. 1588	Figure in Landscape and Genre	Graham Balfour	<u>Rules</u> – art requires rules but these should change and adapt over time; genius can contradict some rules. Photo has two sets of rules, from art and science. Photography cannot depict imaginary (what is not in front of the camera) and <i>should</i> not depict what eye cannot see. Also doesn't like depictions of what eye cannot see – heron at rest on a pond (we could never get that close) FAKERY – Robinson tells how he almost used stuffed bird in

									photo, but chose not to. CAN depict re-staging of event, such as story telling by Robinson. Fails in not being able to conceal its art, however. Imaginary impossible; Robinson has told of a critic changing his mind on the subject. Painters can do it because they see them with inner eye, but they succeed rarely, not even Waterhouse in his Shalott of 1888. Anachronistic dress is a problem, but not so much in rustic dress, since it stays consistent. Story telling is the best thing to do with photography.
PT	1889	2	8	72-3	19, no. 386	Correspondence	Robinson		
PN	1889	2	15	101-4	33, no. 1589	Figure in Landscape and Genre, cot'd	Graham Balfour		
PT	1889	2	15	77, f	19, no. 387	Ophelia [by Robinson]			Includes reproduction
PN	1889	3	8	148-9	33, no. 1592	Art in Relation to Photography	Wm Cobb		
PN	1889	3	15	163-5	33, no. 1593	Figure in Landscape and Genre, cot'd	Graham Balfour		
AP	1889	3	29	209-10	9, no. 234	Reviews -- <i>Naturalistic Photography</i>	Robinson (unsigned)		
BJP	1889	3	29	221	36, no. 1508	<i>Naturalistic Photography</i> [Review]			Negative review
JPS	1889	3	29	76	13, no. 6	Review: <i>Naturalistic Photography</i>	Editor		Positive review
JCC	1889	4		87-90	3, no. 31	Science and Art	Emerson		From Camera Club Conference, March 26, 1889; with a report of the discussion afterwards at the C. Club of all the papers
AP	1889	4	5	222-3	9, no. 235	Short Chapters on Art-Photography Chapter 1	Robinson		Says art rules are necessary but are general guidelines only
AP	1889	4	12	234-6	9, no. 236	Camera Club Conference			Brett's and Emerson's papers discussed
AP	1889	4	12	236	9, no. 236	Letter to the Editor – Adam Salomon [Robinson portrait of Salomon in May 3, 1889 issue of AP]	Robinson		
AP	1889	4	12	237	9, no. 236	Letter to the Editor –“ <i>Naturalistic Photography</i> ”	F.R.C.S.		
PN	1889	4	12	239-41	33, no. 1597	The Relation of Photography to the Pictorial Art	John Brett, A.R.A.		From Camera Club Conference, March 26, 1889
PN	1889	4	12	246-8	33, no. 1597	Depth of Focus	Conrad Beck		From Camera Club Conference, March 26, 1889
AP	1889	4	19	250	9, no. 237	Camera Club Conference			About Emerson
AP	1889	4	19	255-6	9, no. 237	Short Chapters on Art-Photography, Chapter 2	Robinson		
AP	1889	4	26	270	9, no. 238	Naturalistic Photography and Composition	Emerson		
AP	1889	4	26	270-2	9, no. 238	Photography as a Practical Art, No 1	J. Fortuné Nott		
PT	1889	4	26	207-8	19, no. 397	Art in Photography	Robinson		
PT	1889	4	26	213-4	19, no. 397	Our Editorial Table: <i>Pictorial Effect in Photography</i>			

PT	1889	4	26	214	19, no. 397	Our Editorial Table: <i>Naturalistic Photography</i>		
JCC	1889	5		132	3, no. 32	Reviews. <i>Naturalistic Photography</i>		Positive review
JCC	1889	5		132	3, no. 32	Correspondence	Emerson	Gripping about Robinson
C	1889	5	1	295-6	3, no. 36	Impressionism and Photography: Dr. Emerson's New Book	(editor)	Negative review
AP	1889	5	3	286-7	9, no. 239	Photography as a Practical Art, No II	J. Fortuné Nott	
AP	1889	5	3	288-9	9, no. 239	Short Chapters on Art-Photography, Chapter 3	Robinson	
AP	1889	5	3	283-4	9, no. 239	Letter to the Editor—Dr. Emerson on Mr. H.P. Robinson	J.P. Geldart	
PN	1889	5	3	289-90	33, no. 1600	Dr. Emerson's <i>Naturalistic Photography</i>		Positive review
AP	1889	5	10	306-7	9, no. 240	Photography as a Practical Art, No III	J. Fortuné Nott	
AP	1889	5	10	306	9, no. 240	Letter to the Editor—Emerson V. Robinson	J. Haigh Greenwood	
AP	1889	5	17	325-6	9, no. 241	Short Chapters on Art-Photography, Chapter 4	Robinson	
AP	1889	5	17	322	9, no. 241	Letter to the Editor—In Search of the Naturalistics	Anon	
AP	1889	5	17	322-3	9, no. 241	Letter to the Editor—Naturalistic Photography	Houston Stewart Chamberlin	
AP	1889	5	24	337-9	9, no. 242	Photography as a Practical Art, No IV	J. Fortuné Nott	
AP	1889	5	24	334	9, no. 242	Notes [praising Robinson's "Short Chapters"]		
AP	1889	5	31	354-5	9, no. 243	Short Chapters on Art-Photography, Chapter 4, cot'd	Robinson	
AP	1889	5	31	352	9, no. 243	Letter to the Editor— <i>Naturalistic Photography</i>	Nemo	
JCC	1889	6		140-1	3, no. 33	"A Certain Amount Of Softness" Mr. Robinson's Reply to Dr. Emerson	Robinson	Advocates a certain amount of softness, of focus throughout the depth of the picture, and not just on one plane. That necessarily removes possibility of any one plane being in extremely sharp focus. Thinks there can be too much focus and too little.
AP	1889	6	7	367-8	9, no. 244	Photography as a Practical Art, No V	J. Fortuné Nott	
PN	1889	6	7	380-2	33, no. 1605	Dr. Emerson's <i>Naturalistic Photography</i>	Emerson	
APB	1889	6	8	349-50	20, no. 11	Bibliography	Editor	Positive review of <i>Naturalistic Photography</i>
PN	1889	6	14	396	33, no. 1606	Dr. Emerson's <i>Naturalistic Photography</i>	Robinson	

PN	1889	6	14	396-7	33, no. 1606	Dr. Emerson's <i>Naturalistic Photography</i>	Lyd. Sawyer	
PN	1889	6	14	397	33, no. 1606	Dr. Emerson's <i>Naturalistic Photography</i>	T.C. Hepworth	
AP	1889	6	14	384-5	9, no. 245	Short Chapters on Art-Photography, Chapter 5	Robinson	
AP	1889	6	21	400-1	9, no. 246	Photography as a Practical Art, No VI	J. Fortuné Nott	
AP	1889	6	28	421-2	9, no. 247	Short Chapters on Art-Photography, Chapter 6	Robinson	
AP	1889	7	12	24-5	10, no. 249	Short Chapters on Art-Photography, Chapter 7	Robinson	
AP	1889	7	26	54-5	10, no. 251	Short Chapters on Art-Photography, Chapter 8	Robinson	
JCC	1889	8?		161	3	Mr. Robinson and Dr. Emerson	Robinson	
AP	1889	8	9	88-9	10, no. 253	Short Chapters on Art-Photography, Chapter 9	Robinson	
PN	1889	8	9	513-4	33, no. 1614	Definition	Robinson	
BJP	1889	8	16	536-7	36, no. 1528	The Occasional Failure of Exhibitions	Robinson	
BJP	1889	8	16	542-3	36, no. 1528	<i>Picture Making by Photography</i> [Review of second edition]		Favorable review
AP	1889	8	23	121-3	10, no. 255	Short Chapters on Art-Photography, Chapter 10	Robinson	
BJP	1889	8	23	563	36, no. 1529	Naturalistic Photography	Graham Balfour	Response to review of Robinson book
BJP	1889	8	30	579	36, no. 1530	Naturalistic Photography	Robinson	Response to Balfour's letter
JCC	1889	9		166-8	3, no. 36	Limitations in Art, Especially in Photography	Rev. T. Perkins	
AAP	1889	9		121-2	1, no. 3	Our English Letter	Emerson	About Photographic Review and Cameron
AP	1889	9	6	156-7	10, no. 257	Short Chapters on Art-Photography, Chapter 11	Robinson	
BJP	1889	9	6	595	36, no. 1531	Naturalistic Photography	Graham Balfour	Response to Robinson's response
BJP	1889	9	13	610	36, no. 1532	Naturalistic Photography	Robinson	Response to Balfour's response
BJP	1889	9	13	610-1	36, no. 1532	Naturalistic Photography	George Davison	Response to Robinson's response "It is not in man, even if f-64 man, to overlook the unnaturalness of joinings in photographic pictures and the too-visible drawing room drapery air about attractive ladies playing at haymakers and fishwives. Naturalism does not stand or fall upon a question of how much or how little softness of focus is admissible, but it certainly is diametrically opposed in its view to the much worship of register marks, and to all <i>unnaturalism</i> in figures and their attire. Its creed is, <i>Truth, and the best of everything</i> . This differentiates it from the ordinary school, which, instead of considering exclusively the actual colouring, harmonies, tone, feeling, character of a subject, imparts what is termed imagination into the work, and

								treats much of the colouring, drawing and selection from a consideration of theories or conventional ideas deduced from an analysis of the works of former successful painters.”
BJP	1889	9	20	626	36, no. 1533	Naturalistic Photography	Robinson	Response to Davison’s response. Defends using dressed models as more consistent that what he would find in nature.
BJP	1889	9	20	626-7	36, no. 1533	Naturalistic Photography	Graham Balfour	Response to Robinson’s response
BJP	1889	9	27	642	36, no. 1534	Naturalistic Photography	George Davison	Combination printing as untruth wherein foregrounds are out of harmony and truth with backgrounds, along with artificiality of models that remind one of the stage rather than that of the country. Naturalism’s truth won’t allow dressing up of ladies as rustic folk.
AAP	1889	10		163-5	1, no. 4	Our English Letter	Emerson	About August convention, BJP, Robinson and Dallmeyer
JCC	1889	10		171-2	3, no. 37	Limitations in Art, Especially in Photography	Rev. T. Perkins	Cot’d from September
JCC	1889	10		172-5	3, no. 37	Mr. H.P. Robinson’s Pictures at the Club		
JCC	1889	10		175-6	3, no. 37	Limitations in Art Photography; Reply to Rev. T. Perkins	George Davison	
PQ	1889	10		19-26	1, no. 1	Influence of Photography on Art, and its Consequences	A.M. Rossi	
PQ	1889	10		68-73	1, no. 1	Artistic Focus	Graham Balfour	
BJP	1889	10	4	658	36, no. 1535	Naturalistic Photography	Robinson	Response to Davison’s response
BJP	1889	10	11	674-5	36, no. 1536	Naturalistic Photography	George Davison	“the falsities of combination landscapes, the mockery of ladies charading as rustics, and conventionalism in composition...” Naturalism vs ordinary schools of photo: “The one finds its admiration for representations of nature excited by the truth with which the subtleties of a beautiful scene are rendered, the other lays greater stress on the decorative cleverness with which the space devoted to the picture is filled by lines and masses. The one finds its poetry in the scene, the other claims that it is added from without. Etc... “Naturalism is a revolt from the domination of conventionalism in composition and in colour.” “Composition to the naturalistic artist is a far more important and subtle matter than these mere pie-crust rules.” “...it is not combination of cloud and landscape which is objected to as so heinous a crime, but landscape combinations with other landscapes. The printing in of clouds is sometimes a necessary evil.” There is little difference between dressing up ladies as fisher-maidens as historical or fanciful personages.
PN	1889	10	11	658-60	33, no. 1623	Mr. H.P. Robinson’s Photographs at the Camera Club	Robinson	Letter from Robinson read by Davison to Camera Club. Agrees with Davison when he writes that photographers need to look at landscape more carefully for its beauties, but feels that photographers need to look at art to learn what is beautiful in nature. “This writer recommends the practice of poetry to those who know nothing of the grammar of the language in which they are expected to express themselves.” “It is sometimes said that I never go beyond the structure of a picture in my endeavours to teach art; in fact, that I do not teach art at all. This is quite true. I endeavour only to teach the means by which it is produced. <i>Fading Away</i> —a critic in the <i>Daily</i>

							Davison	
AP	1889	11	22	337-8	10, no. 268	The Natural in Photography	Outis	
AP	1889	11	22	338	10, no. 268	Mr. H.P. Robinson and the Camera Club	Edward Clarke	
AP	1889	11	29	356-7	10, no. 269	Notice on Emerson's "English Letter"		
AP	1889	11	29	359	10, no. 269	The Natural in Photography	J. Gale	
AP	1889	11	29	359-60	10, no. 269	The Natural in Photography	Impisi	
AP	1889	11	29	360	10, no. 269	The Natural in Photography	Ilisley R. Codman	
AP	1889	11	29	360	10, no. 269	The Natural in Photography	Thomas L. Buck	
AP	1889	11	29	360	10, no. 269	Mr. Davison, Mr. Robinson, and Mr. Clarke	Robinson	
AP	1889	11	29	365-6	10, no. 269	Dr. P.H. Emerson's "English Letter"	Emerson	Slightly edited version of the original in AAP from November
AAP	1889	12		239-41	1, no. 6	Our English Letter	Emerson	On Dallmeyer
AAP	1889	12		241-2	1, no. 6	False Rendering of Photographic Images by the Misapplication of Lenses	Dallmeyer	On Emerson's criticisms
AAP	1889	12		242	1, no. 6	[notice on second edition of Robinson's <i>Picture Making and Photography</i> which includes additional chapters on Naturalistic Photography and Instantaneous Photography]	Emerson	Attack on Robinson
AP	1889	12	6	373-4	10, no. 270	Our Views [attacking Emerson's English Letter]		
AP	1889	12	6	376	10, no. 270	The Natural in Photography	G. Davison	
AP	1889	12	6	377	10, no. 270	The Natural in Photography	Eustace Calland	
AP	1889	12	6	377	10, no. 270	The Natural in Photography	Aremac	
AP	1889	12	6	377	10, no. 270	The Natural in Photography	Edward J. Feilden	
AP	1889	12	6	377	10, no. 270	The Natural in Photography	Outis	
AP	1889	12	6	377	10, no. 270	Dr. Emerson as a Critic	Ralph Robinson	
AP	1889	12	6	377-8	10, no. 270	Dr. Emerson as a Critic	R.B.	
AP	1889	12	6	377	10, no. 270	Dr. Emerson as a Critic	Justice	
AP	1889	12	20	411	10, no. 272	Focus	Phocus	
PN	1889	12	27	878-9	33, no. 1634	Artistic Feeling	A.J. Theat	
BJPA	1890			386-7		Sight Memory	Robinson	
YP	1890			54-5		Likeness	Robinson	
JCC	1890	1		24	4, no. 40	Reviews. <i>Naturalistic Photography</i>		Review of 2 nd edition

PQ	1890	1		105-17	1, no. 2	The Use of Nature and Idealism in Art	Robinson	
PN	1890	1	3	9	34, no. 1635	Oscar Gustav Rejlander	Robinson	Met Rejlander in 1858; became friends. Says Rejlander used combination printing occasionally for the rest of his life until Jan. 1875. Talks about work "O.G.R introduces himself as a volunteer to H.P.R." during the middle of one controversy. Says Rej. never really cared for perfection in photography – used dirty plates and chemistry.
PT	1890	1	3	36349	20, no. 433	A Visit to HP Robinson at Tunbridge Wells, England		Mentions studio built for <i>Dawn and Sunset</i> cost 200 pounds, but it 'paid him in the end.'
PrP	1890	1	9		1, no. 9	Photography As A Business	Robinson	
PN	1890	1	10	27	34, no. 1636	Notes [on Rejlander]		
AAP	1890	2		72-5	2, no. 2	Our English Letter. O.J. Rejlander [sic]	P.H. Emerson	Rejlander is not as good as Cameron. Sentimental, affected and artificial. Feels almost all he did was bad and theatrical.
AP	1890	2	28	136	11, no. 282	Sun Artists	Robinson	
AAP	1890	3		112-3	2, no. 3	Mr. Harbord's Letter	Emerson	Taking offense at Harbord's critique of Emerson
AAP	1890	3		113-4	2, no. 3	Dr. Emerson's Critique	Davison	Taking offense at Harbord's critique of Emerson
AAP	1890	3		115	2, no. 3	[review of] <i>Naturalistic Photography</i>		
PQ	1890	4		207-16	1, no. 3	The Limits and Possibilities of Art Photography	George Davison	
AP	1890	4	18	274	11, no. 289	Dr. P.H. Emerson's "English Letter"	D. Harbord	
AP	1890	9	12	181-3	12, no. 310	Without a Camera	Robinson	
PN	1890	10	3	763	34, no. 1674	The Exhibition of the Photographic Society [From <i>The Times</i>]		Platinum has become a common printing method. References controversy between old and new style photographers in terms of detail. Of the impressionist photographers, says that Davison's images are beautiful, rendered with a pinhole camera.
AP	1890	10	10	257-8	12, no. 314	Hands Off! – A Criticism	An Amateur	
AP	1890	10	10	258-9	12, no. 314	The Present State of Focus Question	Robinson	
AP	1890	10	17	270	12, no. 315	"Hands Off!" ETC.	George Davison	
AP	1890	10	17	270	12, no. 315	"Hands Off!" ETC.	Another Amateur	
AP	1890	10	17	271-2	12, no. 315	The Present State of Focus Question: A Reply to Mr. H.P. Robinson	Alfred Maskell	
PN	1890	10	7	798-9	34, no. 1676	The Photographic Society's Exhibition		Loves Robinson's <i>A Strange Fish, Against the Wind, A Race with Grandad</i> .
AP	1890	10	24	288	12, no. 316	Mr. Davison on "Hands Off"	Hands Off	
AP	1890	10	24	288-9	12, no. 316	The Present State of Focus Question: Another View	P.H. Emerson	
AP	1890	10	31	306	12, no. 317	The Focus Question	Robinson	
AP	1890	10	31	306	12, no. 317	The Focus Question	Alfred Maskell	

AP	1890	11	14	341-2	12, no. 319	Mr. Robinson and Mr. Maskell	P.H. Emerson	
AP	1890	11	21	359	12, no. 320	Dr. Emerson Again	Robinson	
AP	1890	11	21	359	12, no. 320	Mr. Maskell's Illustration in the Photographic Quarterly	Alfred Maskell	
PT	1890	11	21	580	20, no. 479	Notes and News		
PN	1890	12	5	940-1	34, no. 1683	Literary Notices. <i>Wild Life on a Tidal Water</i> . By P.H. Emerson		Admires Emerson's images "There is also great force in the argument that photography should not always quit its own field of art, to imitate the methods of sculptors or painters."
BJP	1890	12	26	821-6	37, no. 1599	Impressionism in Photography	George Davison	Discussion follows
BJPA	1891			498-9		Will It Do?	Robinson	
YP	1891			53-5		Excursions	Robinson	
BJP	1891	1	23	49-50	38, no. 1603	Naturalism or Impressionism	editor	
BJP	1891	1	23	54-5	38, no. 1603	A Renunciation	Emerson	
PN	1891	1	23	62-3	35, no. 1690	Dr. Emerson's Renunciation of Naturalistic Photography	Emerson	
BJP	1891	1	30	70-1	38, no. 1604	A Reply to Dr. Emerson's "Renunciation"	George Davison	
AP	1891	1	31	71-2	13, no. 330	"Exit Emerson"	Robinson	
AP	1891	1	31	77-8	13, no. 330	A Renunciation	Emerson	
AAP	1891	2		65	3, no. 2	Dr. Emerson and His Teachings	Thomas Bolas	
BJP	1891	2	20	117-8	38, no. 1607	Impressionism in Photography – On Mr. Davison's Paper	Vindrx	
BJP	1891	2	20	120-1	38, no. 1607	Dr. Emerson's Reply to Mr. Davison	Emerson	
AAP	1891	3		108	3, no. 3	Dr. Emerson and Naturalism		
PN	1891	4	3	257-9	35, no. 1700	Quite Another Thing. Concerning Some Photographic Societies	Robinson	
PN	1891	4	3	273-4	35, no. 1700	The Storm in the Naturalistic Crater	Emerson	
PN	1891	4	10	277-8	35, no. 1701	After the Storm		
AAP	1891	5		177-8	3, no. 5	Mr. H.P. Robinson and the Proposed Photographic Institute		
AP	1891	6	19	443-4	13, no. 350	Notes on Perspective Drawing and Vision	Emerson and Goodall	
AP	1891	7	3	3	14, no. 352	"Meditation" image by Emerson	Emerson	
MA	1891	8		310-6	14, no. 9	The Artistic Aspects of Figure Photography	P.H. Emerson	
BJP	1891	8	7	502-4	38, no. 1631	Notes on Perspective Drawing and Vision – Replies to Various Criticisms	Emerson and Goodall	
PT	1891	8	14	411	21, no. 517	Artistic Photography		
PQ	1891	10		1-7	3, no. 9	The Transition Period	Robinson	

AAnP	1892			144-6		The Use And Abuse Of Models	Robinson	
BJPA	1892			533		Studies	Robinson	
YP	1892			20-1		How to Make Pictures	Robinson	
PQ	1892	1		96-105	3, no. 10	Impossible Photography	Robinson	<p>On illustrating poetry : “These myths are very lovely when left in the mist, but they won’t bear the fierce light of the lens; the poetry is consumed under the burning glass. You cannot embody a myth from nature with a camera, or revivify the dead in photography.”</p> <p>It may be said that painters produce these subjects, then why should not photographers also? The reply is that painters embody their imagination of these subjects, the photographer can only show what is before the lens. The painter may help the carrying out of his idea by the use of models, the photographer can only represent the models.</p> <p>...Still earlier than Mrs. Cameron I had my Elaine and Lady of Shalott, and should have had Merlin too if I could have captured him; but he refused to sit, except for a fee I could not afford at the time. He was a mercenary old man, and cared nothing for art. The <i>Lady of Shalott</i> was a large photograph and a serious effort. At that time the pre-Raphaelite painters were as plentiful as impressionists are now. Their art, unlike impressionism, was not merely a smile at the public, but quite serious, and I tried to make a pre-Raphaelite picture in photography. Truth was fortunately not necessary, nor six months’ study. All that was wanted was a weird effect, with some awkward lines in it, for the P.R. Brotherhood did not believe in composition. I made the barge, crimped the model’s long hair, P.R. fashion, laid her on the boat in the river among the water lilies, and gave her a background of weeping willows, taken in the rain that they might look dreary; and really they were very expressive. I nearly wrecked the whole thing by making the model try different positions. I think I succeeded in making the picture very pre-Raphaelite, very weird, and very untrue to nature—I mean imaginative; but it was a ghastly mistake to attempt such a subject in our realistic art, and, with the exception of an Ophelia, done in a moment of aberration, I never afterwards went for themes beyond the limits of the life of our day.”</p>
PT	1892	3	4	120-1	22, no. 546	Where Are We Now?	Robinson	
AP	1892	4	1	263		Camera Club Conference		
PN	1892	4	1	213-5	37, no. 1752	Paradoxes of Art, Science, and Photography	Robinson	
PT	1892	4	8	184-6	22, no. 551	Picture-Making in the Studio, Part 1	Robinson	
PT	1892	5	13	252-3	22, no. 556	Picture-Making in the Studio, Part 2	Robinson	
PN	1892	5	27	344	36, no. 1760	The Enjoyment Of Photography	Robinson	
PN	1892	6	10	376-7	36, no. 1762	Editorial: Fading Away		
PT	1892	6	24	331-2	22, no. 562	Paradoxes of Art, Science and Photography, Part 1	Robinson	
PT	1892	7	1	339-41	22, no. 563	Paradoxes of Art, Science and Photography, Part 2	Robinson	

BJP	1892	7	22	468-9	39, no. 1681	Individuality In Photography	Robinson	
PN	1892	8	19	536-7	36, no.	Two Sides Of Photography	Robinson	
PT	1892	9	2	452-4	22, no. 572	Individuality in Photography	Robinson	
PT	1892	9	2	457-9	22, no. 573	Picture-Making in the Studio, Part 3	Robinson	
PT	1892	9	23	481-3	22, no. 575	Picture-Making in the Studio, Part 4	Robinson	
YP	1893					Rough Paper	Robinson	
PN	1893	1	6	8-10	37, no. 1792	Rambling Papers. No. 1—Concerning Honours and Rewards	Robinson	Medals at exhibitions are too plentiful and cheapen the honor beyond recognition.
PN	1893	2	3	72-3	37, no. 1796	Rambling Papers. No. 2—About Criticism	Robinson	Gripes about poor criticism
PN	1893	3	3	136-8	37, no. 1800	Rambling Papers. No. 3—More About Criticism	Robinson	It's the easiest talent to criticize someone, difficult to critique well.
PN	1893	3	31	200-2	37, no. 1804	Rambling Papers. No. 4—Wanted, A New Style	Robinson	New Style demanded for portraiture. Not so easy, says Robinson. Only cdv really successful. Talks about other card photograph formats. Later "a large firm advertised ten for ten shillings, and all was soon over... The size of the figure got larger—an attempt to give a little more than your neighbour for the money—under the mistaken notion that quantity is better than quality. This absurd exaggeration was continued, until the head got too big for the card. Thus the photographer lost his hold of the "splendid guinea" and he began to take shillings. Once on the toboggan, the bottom of the slide was soon reached, and very low indeed the remuneration has become."
PN	1893	5	5	280-1	37, no. 1809	Rambling Papers. No. 5—The Promise of May	Robinson	Look for picturesque views in nature
PN	1893	6	2	344-6	37, no. 1813	Rambling Papers. No. 6—The Photographic Salon	Robinson	Salon exhibition for photography as a fine art. [Linked Ring] No longer wants mixed exhibition with pictures, experiments and tools. No awards to be given. Don't want to set up opposing exhibition to Photo Society, just that they don't have much interest in art photography.
PN	1893	7	7	424-6	37, no. 1818	Rambling Papers. No. 7—A Word on Ourselves	Robinson	Feels there is too much interest in technical things, rather than in the images themselves.
PN	1893	8	4	488-9	37, no. 1822	Rambling Papers. No. 8—False Purity	Robinson	"Truth should be classed with the other materials, whether paint, brushes, canvas, cameras, or prepared plates." Defends tricks in photography [i.e. combination printing], saying every art has some.
PN	1893	9	1	552-4	37, no. 1826	Rambling Papers. No. 9—Amateurs and Professionals	Robinson	Feels that speculators are hurting the business, bad professional photographers who take cheap portraits and lower quality and prices. Also doesn't like large London firms paying so poorly for local photographs. Encourages photographers to charge more for rights to an image to newspapers.
PN	1893	10	6	632-4	37, no. 1831	Rambling Papers. No. 10—In an Exhibition	Robinson	Mocks those who focus too much on the means of making a photograph and not the image itself. Feels people make too much of his methods and not his intention nor his performance.
PN	1893	10	13	649-50	37, no. 1832	Photographic Salon [Linked Ring exhibition]. Dudley Gallery		Talks about how matte papers are commonplace now, as well as drawing paper, linen, canvas and silk. Likes Robinson <i>Weary Waiting</i> and his stormy

PrP	1897	4		97-102	8, no. 88	Autobiographical Sketches, Chapter II	Robinson	
PrP	1897	6		161-6	8, no. 90	Autobiographical Sketches, Chapter III	Robinson	
PrP	1897	8		231-7	8, no. 92	Autobiographical Sketches, Chapter IV	Robinson	
PrP	1897	10		289-96	8, no. 94	Autobiographical Sketches, Chapter V	Robinson	
PrP	1897	12		353-9	8, no. 96	Autobiographical Sketches, Chapter VI	Robinson	
BJPA	1898			747-8		The Hand Camera Once More	Robinson	
PrP	1898	2		29-34	9, no. 98	Autobiographical Sketches, Chapter VII	Robinson	
AP	1900	3	23	223		An Incident	Robinson	
AP	1901	3	1	163-4	33, no. 856	In Memoriam		
BJP	1901	3	1	132-3	48, no. 2130	Death of Mr. H.P. Robinson		
	1901					Catalogue of Pictorial Photographs by the late H.P. Robinson	Ralph W. Robinson	
BJPA	1907			625-6		Obituary: A.H. Wall		

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