

The Good Portrait of the Academic Author

LISBETH THORLACIUS

Abstract

This article aims to give the reader a language with which one can discuss portraits of academics and their usage. Moreover the four most frequently used genres of portraits of academic authors will be introduced. And it will be argued why insight into, and knowledge of these genres is crucial in order to make the correct choice of portrait in the light of the context. The most relevant genres within photography of academics can be found within four categories: The classical portrait, the staged portrait, the situational portrait and the news portrait. When choosing a portrait whether it is for the news, public relations or the back cover of a book it is useful to have a vocabulary about the visual elements concerning photography of academics. Such a language can be provided by semiotics, and in this context I have drawn on aspects of the semiotic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes, and Charles Sanders Peirce.

Key Words: portraits of academics, genres within photography, semiotics

Introduction

We have probably all experienced how our interest for the author grew during the reading of a good fiction or non-fiction book. Repeatedly we must turn to the back-cover of the book in order to study the portrait of the author. The more involved we become in the book the more interested we become in knowing more about this inspiring person who writes to us. Many of us have also experienced disappointment in not being able to get enough information out of a picture either, because it was too expressionless or because it was of too poor a quality; too fuzzy, too poorly lit or maybe framed wrongly. We have not only become more used to pictures of high quality, we have also become more aware of the fact that pictures can communicate things which language cannot. We have to consider these aspects closely when we choose the appropriate portrait of an academic. We have also experienced that a classic portrait of an academic appeared boring when printed in the newspaper, but appropriate for the book. And vice versa, the good news portrait would most likely be the wrong choice for the back-cover of the book. Whether a portrait is experienced as good or bad depends on the context in which it appears. It is therefore important that the author or the picture editor, who often employs pictures of either oneself or others in books, journals and newspapers is able to

Lisbeth Thorlacius, Ph.D, Lecturer, Communication Studies, Roskilde University, P O Box 260, DK-4000 Roskilde, lisbeth@ruc.dk

evaluate and choose portraits on a more competent basis. With a point of departure in semiotics, this article aims to give the reader a language with which one can discuss portraits of academics and their usage. Moreover the four most frequently used genres of portraits of academic authors will be introduced. And it will be argued why insight into, and knowledge of these genres is crucial in order to make the correct choice of portrait in the light of the context.

Genres within Photography of Academics

It is a common mistake not to distinguish between the many portrait-genres, thus forgetting that a portrait is not merely 'a portrait'. When we, the academic author or the picture editor, need portraits for professional usage it is therefore important that we can distinguish between the different portrait genres on a qualified basis in order to choose the appropriate portrait for the appropriate context. For example, it makes a difference whether the picture is to be used on the back-cover of a book, or in the news. The most relevant genres within photography of academics can be found within four categories: The classical portrait, the staged portrait, the situational portrait and the news portrait. It is my conviction that any given portrait of an academic will fit into one of these four categories. I also believe that these four categories have always existed, although they may not necessarily have been known under these particular labels.

When choosing a portrait whether it is for the news, public relations or the back cover of a book it is useful to have a vocabulary about the visual elements concerning photography of academics. Such a language can be provided by semiotics, and in this context I have drawn on aspects of the semiotic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes, and Charles Sanders Peirce.

Paradigms and Syntagmas within Portrait Photography

Saussure defined two ways in which signs are organized in codes. The first is *the paradigm*, which consists of a row of signs, from which we choose our sign. The other is *the syntagma*, which is a combination of signs from different paradigms (Saussure 1974). Saussure developed this theory with reference to linguistics and this theory cannot be transferred to visual analysis without difficulty. Therefore, I have chosen to consider the paradigm as a row of *elements* instead of a row of signs, and the syntagma as a combination of elements from different paradigms.

Any given portrait of an academic author consists of a combination of elements from different paradigms. For example, a portrait of the Danish scientist and Nobel Prize winner Niels Bohr contains an element from a paradigm consisting of *postures*. It furthermore contains an element from another paradigm, a paradigm consisting of *lightings*. If, for example the Niels Bohr portrait is illuminated by hard, bright side lighting, which expresses masculinity, it communicates visually something completely different about the portraitee than if it had been illuminated by even, diffused light, which often is experienced as more feminine. The meaning we attribute to hard side lighting or soft diffused light is a social construction and based on a convention which changes over time. The meaning we ascribe each element in the paradigm is based on rules which we, within a culture have decided upon. Of course, the photographer of, for example, the Niels Bohr portrait cannot be sure that the viewers decode the photograph unambiguously. Results from reception analyses have made clear that we do not read pictures unambiguously. However, this does not change the fact that professional photographers

base their choices on an experience of how a given combination of symbols from a paradigm is usually perceived. For example the photographer knows that if she poses the academic with his hand under the chin, lights the face with side lighting, uses a black background and includes the corner of a rococo chair on the left side of the picture, a large part of the spectators will experience the photograph as a classical portrait of an authoritative, serious and thoughtful person. In other words, professional photographers draw on a corpus of knowledge, based on experience, each time they make a choice regarding postures, lighting, backgrounds, etc.

It is important to recognize the fine nuances that determine the sub-genres of the portrait of the academic author. Traditionally, we expect the portrait of an academic author on the cover of a book to portray the writer as a serious and reflective person, therefore it may cause some confusion of signals if the author is posed similarly to how models traditionally pose in fashion photos. Naturally, this is no problem, provided that it was the intention. In fact, it may in some cases be just the right solution to use a portrait with a composition which is out of the ordinary. It may draw more attention to the writer or the text which the picture is supposed to illustrate. In other cases, it would be a regrettable mistake, because the writer loses credibility among his usual circle of readers. It all depends on the occasion and context in which the portrait is used. What must under all circumstances be avoided is that a portrait, conventional or not, is used without thorough consideration of whether it would be the right choice in the given situation. The qualified guess of the right portrait in the specific context is always preferable.

The Photographer, the Portraitee, and the Spectator

In any portrait, including portraits of academics, there are traces of the photographer's influence, as well as the influence of the portraitee. Furthermore, the spectator will ascribe a meaning to the picture, which neither the photographer nor the portraitee can fully control or foresee. In his book "*Camera Lucida: Reflections on photography*" Roland Barthes introduces these concepts by use of the terms 'operator', 'referent', and 'spectator' (Barthes 1981, p. 9). While they all have influence on the content of the picture, the degree of their respective influence varies. The photographer frames, selects, and decides when to freeze a given expression. In addition, the photographer may include symbols, such as backgrounds, furniture, lights, and digital manipulations. These are all means through which the photographer can put across his interpretation. The portraitee has his or her own conception of his or her physical appearance, or how he or she ought to appear. This conception will also contribute the final product. Finally, the spectator will decode the picture, creating his or her own personal interpretation, based on cultural convention, personal experience, prejudice, etc. These three components are all at work every time we look at a portrait photograph, with the exception of the automate photo, in which case no photographer is present to give his interpretation of the portraitee. Which of the three is dominant will vary. However it can be said that, as a genre, the staged photograph is heavily influenced by the photographer, along with a multitude of possibilities for interpretation on the part of the spectator, while the influence of the portraitee is weaker. The situational portrait is usually the genre which gives the most truthful interpretation of the portraitee (with the reservation that photographs per definition are subjective interpretations of reality), because the portraitee is situated in his or her normal surroundings, with his or her usual experiments. This is provided, of course, that the photographer makes an effort to let the portraitee be the main agent in the picture.

Symbol, Icon, and Index

When it comes to understanding the content of a picture, I consider Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of signs, which consists of a division of the signs into the three categories of *symbol*, *icon*, and *index*, one of the most useful conceptual tools within semiotics (Peirce 1998, p. 5). I have consequently chosen to operate with this part of Peirce's theory in my analysis of portraits of academic authors at a later point in the present article. According to Peirce, the sign refers to something other than itself – that is, the object – and forms meaning in the meeting with the spectator (Peirce, 1955, p. 99). The icon, as a sign, is a direct reference to the object, because of the similarity between the two. For example a picture of the English Prime Minister Tony Blair is an iconic sign, owing to the sign that it resembles the object that it refers to – Tony Blair. As a sign, the symbol bears no resemblance to the object to which it refers, nor does it have any immediate connection with it. The symbol is a sign, whose relationship with the object entirely depends on conventions. In order to be able to read the symbol, a certain knowledge is required of the conventions which a given culture has agreed upon. When we flag on half mast it doesn't look like "grief", and, textually, the connection between the sequence of phonetics c-a-t- and the concept "cat" is something, which has arisen conventionally. The index as a sign has a direct connection with the object in the sense that it is an immediate trace of what it refers to. For example smoke coming out a window is an index of fire, and in terms of textual connexions the language dialects are indexes, because they refer to the senders geographical origin. A portrait photograph is per definition an icon of the portraitee, but to which extent depends a great deal upon the photographer. The photographer's choice of lighting, posing, camera angle, focus, frame, etc. is decisive for the symbolic elements in the final result, as well as being decisive for the extent to which the iconic element features in the picture. The portrait photograph is per definition an index of the fact that the photographing has taken place. At the same time it is the carrier of indexical signs; such as wrinkles on the face, indicating age, puffed up and bloated reddish skin indicating bad health, etc.

The Classical Portrait of the Academic Author

The classical portrait of the academic author is characterized by its simplicity. As the name indicates, the classical portrait is a genre which has its roots a long time back in history. The classical portrait photographer often makes use of what is referred to as the Rembrandt lighting, a term which refers to the way in which Rembrandt would typically choose to illuminate the portraitees in his paintings. This is a classic approach for portrait lighting, one that seems natural and flattering. It is a technique which models the face into a three-dimensional form (London & Upton 1994, p. 250). The classical portrait photographer will most often concentrate on the face, the torso, and the hands. The background is typically kept neutral, so as not to attract too much attention away from the face. Hand props or other stage requisites are rarely added; however, examples do occur of the portraitee holding a small item such as a pipe or a ball pen. The photographer makes an effort to capture the portraitee with an expression that will reveal parts of his or her personality to the spectator, and similar efforts are made to choose the right type of lighting for the particular face. The greatest task of the photographer lies in establishing a relaxed relation with the portraitee before the actual photographing begins. This will typically happen over a cup of tea, a situation which allows the photographer to gain an impression of what the portraitee looks like in a relaxed and natural situation, and what position the person will naturally lapse into when sitting in a chair.

These observations are essential to the photographer, because once the photographing has commenced, the portraitee will inevitably assume a different posture from the one he or she just showed the photographer, a posture which he or she adopts solely in honour of the camera. In this situation it is up to the photographer to rediscover the expression he or she observed before the portraitee got in front of the camera. The classical portrait is by all means arranged, the portraitee is conscious about the fact that he or she is being photographed. The photography sessions most often take place inside a studio with neutral backgrounds; and finally, the final result is often retouched in order to satisfy the portraitee's wishes to disguise any imperfections.

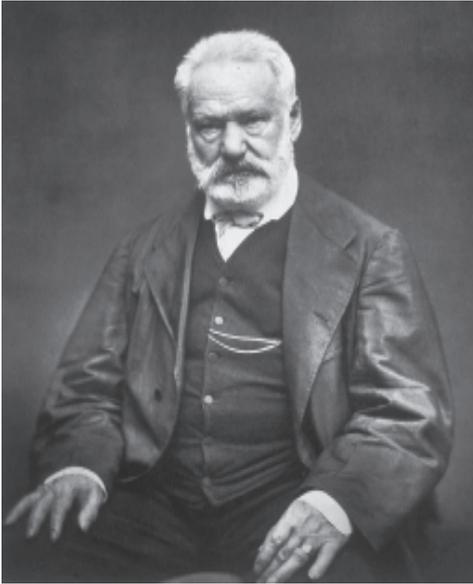


Figure 1.
Victor Hugo, photograph by Etienne Carjat, 1876

To take an example, the classical portrait photograph of the French writer Victor Hugo from 1876 (fig.1) was produced by the French photographer Etienne Carjat. This portrait photograph is an example of how the traditions of portrait painting have been carried on over to photography. The wealth of detail and its characteristic textural effect characterize the picture as a photograph; however, these features aside, the picture bears great resemblance with painted portraits from the nineteenth century. The portraitee displays great dignity in the same way as the painted portrait of the same period, and the photographer makes use of the same lighting technique, Rembrandt lighting: Lighting technique which illuminates the face so that the eye on the shadowy side is illuminated by a triangle of light, adding to the face a three dimensional quality. Finally, there are similarities to the classical portrait painting in the efforts to present Victor Hugo as a serious and reflective writer, and Etienne Carjat has considered it important to reflect a part of the portraitee's personality. The photographer has given the portraitee some space for personal expression; however, this is also an expression of the photographer's interpretation of what ought to be emphasized about Victor Hugo's personality.

The famous portrait of the Danish scientist Niels Bohr from c.1960 (fig.2) displays the physicist in a close-up in completely natural surroundings. It is a portrait which could have been taken in any decade of the twentieth century. Timelessness and simplicity are some of the determining characteristics within the genre of classical portrait photography. Once again, the photographer has selected the Rembrandt lighting and Niels Bohr

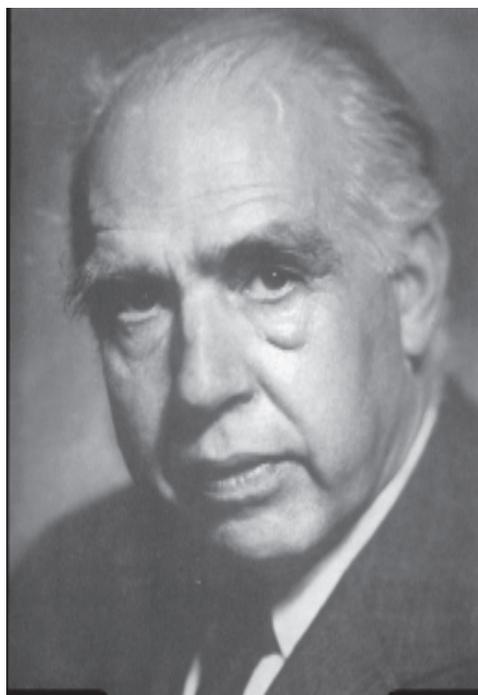


Figure 2.
Niels Bohr, uncredited photographer, c. 1960

is, in accordance with tradition, presented with a certain degree of dignity and seriousness. The photographer has left the face bare, enabling the spectator to scrutinize the face without the distraction of props, dramatic lighting, or other effects. This is a photograph which can be used again and again, because of its neutral expression which does not provoke any particular story controlled by stage requisites included in the picture as symbols. The picture consists of iconic and indexical signs. It is a highly iconic representation of Niels Bohr in that it is an exact registration of what he looks like, with indexical signs in the shape of wrinkles and puffiness around the eyes, indicating the age of the portraitee. It is an easily interpreted photograph, which effortlessly decodes information and interpretations based solely on the face of the portraitee; this partly explains why this particular photograph has become one of the most famous portraits of Niels Bohr. The portraitee looms with great weight in this picture.

In a continuation of the leftwing movement in the late 60s in Denmark and the clashes which, among many other clashes, arose within the university sector, it will come as no surprise that the portraits of the academics did not go unaffected. As well as rebelling against the universities' approach to pedagogy and the academic in the ivory tower, people disfavoured the classical portrait of the academic author. This attitude is clearly displayed in the portraits of academics of the period; and traces of it are still found today among academics with their background in this particular generation.

During the 70s, the passport photo taken in a photo booth at the railway station or the snapshot produced by the spouse during a summer vacation replaced the traditional studio portraits. When considering portraits of academics from this period, a great number of them appear to be symbols of political disapproval of what was considered bourgeois traditions, rather than lifelike portraits as such. The snapshot or the photo booth photographs were preferred as a means of signalling modesty as an academic, and the quality of the picture was of less importance. By placing a casual snapshot or a photograph from a photo booth on the cover of a dissertation, academic authors would demonstrate

their indifference towards the more expensive and more exclusive studio portrait, which was considered part of the bourgeois set of values. In the 90s, the classical, lifelike portrait has had a renaissance, and it is my experience that when academic authors choose to use snapshots of themselves today it is not based on political viewpoints. Rather, it has to do with lack of insight into how much the photograph visually communicates and how important it is to offer the spectator more than a mere imprint of their physical appearance. The picture will be decoded by the spectator, so it is by no means unimportant what picture is on the cover of the book.

In order to illustrate why I find it important to give the professional portrait a higher priority, I would like to draw attention to the two photos (fig.3) and (fig.4). The photo booth photograph (fig.3) of Oluf Danielsen, assistant professor at Roskilde University (Denmark), and the snapshot (fig.4) displaying Anker Brink Lund, professor. Dr. Phil at the International Center for Business and Politics at Copenhagen Business School (Denmark), are both inadequate portraits, each in its own way. The photo booth photograph of Oluf Danielsen is practically inexpressive. The picture is reduced to a simple registration of his physical appearance, instead of revealing aspects of his personality to the spectator. The snapshot of Anker Brink Lund is distinctly deceptive. The particular lighting illuminating the photo alters his facial features to such an extent that it distorts his appearance. In addition to this, the picture is of such a bad quality, that it does not even serve as a registration of what he looks like. The two alternative pictures of Oluf Danielsen (fig.5) and Anker Brink Lund (fig.6) is my attempt, even though these pictures are not examples of masterpieces, to deliver a more accurate representation of what these two authors actually look like and they also serve as examples of portraits of academic authors more characteristic of the 2000's. Both pictures are taken outdoors; a feature which adds to the informal character of the portraitees. Apart from that, I have



Figure 3.
Oluf Danielsen, booth photograph, c. 1990

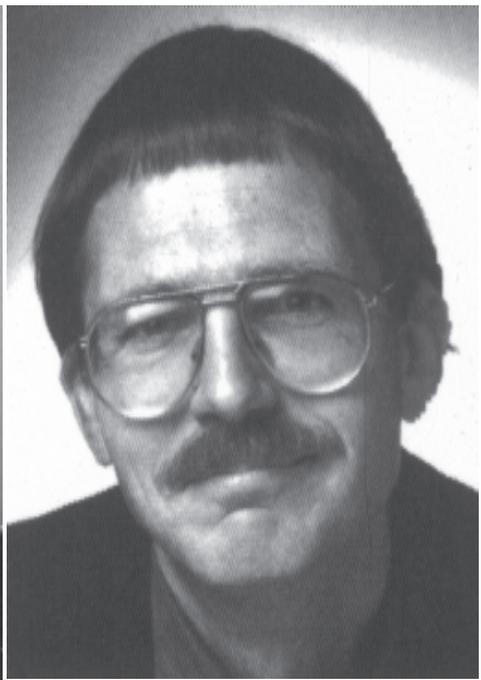


Figure 4.
Anker Brink Lund, uncredited photograph, c. 1990



Figure 5.
Oluf Danielsen, photograph by Lisbeth
Thorlacius, 1996

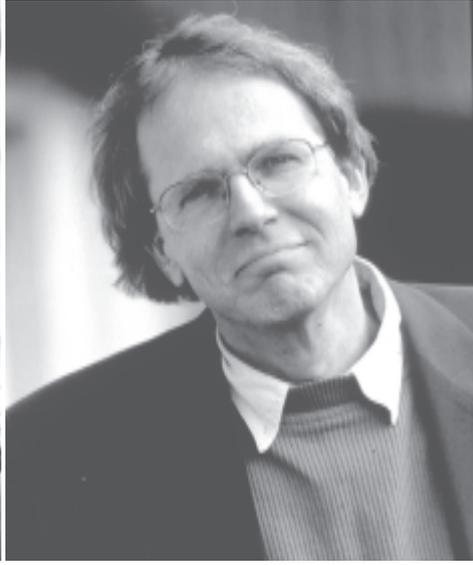


Figure 6.
Anker Brink Lund, photograph by Lisbeth
Thorlacius, 1998

made an effort to register both authors' physical appearance as objectively as possible, trying to avoid too much manipulation. At the same time, it has been my intention to reflect their personalities through facial expressions and body-language. Both pictures are clearly classical portraits, a fact which illustrates that classical portraits are not necessarily taken inside a studio. The studio lightings are, in principle, attempts to copy the different types of light we find in nature.

The portrait of Aage Henriksen (fig.7), professor of Danish literature at the University of Copenhagen taken in 1998, is yet another example of how the classical portrait as a genre is still used within portraits of academic authors. This portrait possesses the usual characteristics of a classical portrait, except from the fact that I have chosen to let the hand below the chin be in movement, as a contrast to the sharply focused face. This detail helps to emphasize the sharp, serious expression.

The Staged Photograph

It is important to notice that the staged photograph and the arranged photograph are not necessarily the same thing. Regrettably, there is a tendency to use the terms indiscriminately, and the difference between them is slowly becoming eroded. Practically every portrait is arranged in the sense that the portraitee is posing, and the surroundings have to some extent been manipulated by the photographer. However, only a few portraits can be labelled 'staged'. In other words, it is important to distinguish between staged and arranged photographs. The term *staged photograph* is a direct reference to the theatre. A stage set with selected stage requisites, spot lights and colour-filters, and actors in costumes. The staged photograph is characterized by its theatrical expression. Examples of staged photographs can be traced back to the invention of photography in 1839; however, the term *the staged photograph* does not occur until the beginning of the 70s in the United States. It is a new genre within art photography with predecessors like Les Krims, Cindy Sherman, and Duane Michaels. It is characterized by displaying people

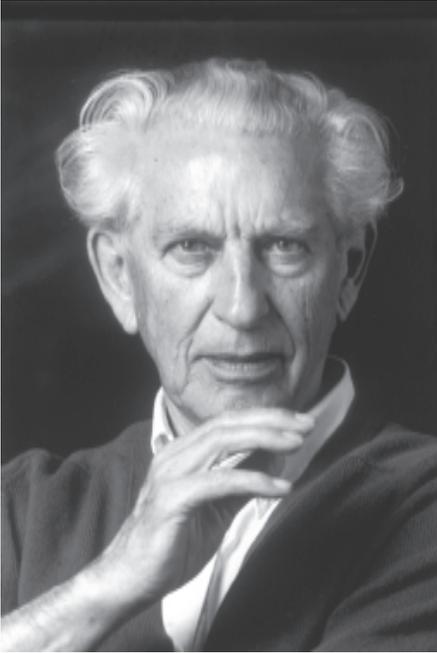


Figure 7.
Aage Henriksen, photograph by Lisbeth Thorlacius,
1998

in very artificial surroundings, emphasizing the artificial look. Another typical feature of the staged photograph is the way the portraitee's personality is dominated by the photographer's personal taste or style. The staged photograph has clearly emerged from art photography, which specifically features the photographer's personal style. In the staged photograph, the photographer is deliberately manipulating the portraitee, and whatever wishes the portraitee might have regarding his or her own appearance in the picture are of no relevance to the photographer. The photographer often makes use of artistic effects such as wide-angle lenses, which distort the picture, or alternative perspectives such as the frog's eye view, which allows us to see things from below. The latter is an atypical perspective and therefore quite an effective way of attracting our immediate attention. Filtered light in all the colours of the rainbow are also characteristic in the staged portrait, adding to the artificial look, thus reminding the spectator that the picture is not meant as an imprint of reality.

By making use of stage requisites or hand props in the picture, thus provoking the association of a stage setting, the photographer emphasizes the fact that we are looking at a staged photograph. The stage requisites furthermore function as symbols, opening the picture to different possible interpretations. The staged photograph usually undergoes manipulation in photoshop and other finishing-treatment. When a photographer chooses to use the staged photograph as a way of portraying an academic it can be very effective, because the picture can function as a story-teller and display the academic author from a self-ironic perspective. However, it is also a genre which contains the risk of embarrassing the author by exposing him or her as untrustworthy. It is therefore essential to consider where and when it would be a good idea to portray an academic author by means of a staged photograph.

There are many examples of staged paintings far back in time, and we find examples of the staged photograph as a genre immediately following the invention of photography in 1839. The painting (fig.8) *The Discovery of Phosphorous* from 1771 by the



Figure 8.
*The Discovery of
Phosphorus*, painting
by Joseph Wright, 1771

American portrait painter Joseph Wright displays the German alchemist Henning Brand in his laboratory just after he discovered and identified the element, phosphorus, in 1669. In accordance with tradition within staged photography, the painting is highly dominated by the painter's interpretation of the scene. Henning Brand is kneeling in thankful prayer and his, otherwise dark, laboratory is illuminated by his new discovery. The painting contains both symbolic, iconic, and indexical signs. The kneeling scientist is a symbol which demands a certain knowledge of biblical allegories of the spectator in order to be decoded. The illuminated laboratory is iconic in the sense that phosphorus is a source of light. All the items in the laboratory, the writings, the alembics, and the writing assistant in the background, are icons and indexes of a science laboratory. As spectators we immediately notice that the painting is not an accurate recording of reality, but rather a staged event. The somewhat artificial illumination gives connotations to the theatre, and Henning Brand appears in the scene a skilled actor.

Figure 9 is a portrait from 1962 by photographer Arnold Newman and portrays professor Walter Rosenblith in his laboratory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This is a staged portrait. There is no doubt in our minds that the picture is staged, because the added effect of the lighting, posing, and the items in the picture; there is an artificial and mocking quality about the picture. Newman has the scientist posing behind his apparatus, which is the first indication that we are dealing with a staged photograph. The presence of laboratory gear in the picture is both an iconic and an indexical sign, drawing our attention towards the fact that this has to do with a scientist. Already in the 60s, Arnold Newman was a pioneer in adding to his pictures a touch of irony, an approach which has become very trendy over the last few decades. The photographer dominates in this picture, presenting the portraitee almost as in a caricature, and the photograph allows for plenty of possible interpretations.



Figure 9.
Walter Rosenblith, photograph by Arnold
Newman, 1962



Figure 10.
Peter Carstensen, photograph by Per
Morten Abrahamsen, 1998

Figure 10 is a portrait of Peter Carstensen from the Technical University of Denmark (DTU) (researcher on the relations between multimedia and users). The picture is one out of a series of portraits of scientists produced by the Danish photographer Per Morten Abrahamsen for the DTU annual report 1998. Per Morten Abrahamsen, who is one of our most celebrated Danish photographers, mainly specializes in staged photography. He is especially known for his staged portraits of politicians, businessmen, and cultural celebrities. In view of the fact that the picture has been published in an annual report, along with an article concerning the current research at DTU, we immediately know that this is intended to be a staged illustration, and not as a snapshot of Peter Carstensen, exercising his abilities as a tight-rope dancer on a weekend afternoon.

The iconic sign of the picture indicates a man trying to balance on a rope tied between two trees, but what does it mean? The proper story in the picture is constructed by means of symbols and demands of the spectator a certain amount of knowledge about research within multimedia design. The term *sustainability* represents one of the key concepts within this branch of science. Furthermore the picture alludes to Peter Carstensen's research on how to balance between users and technology within multimedia design. Once again we have an example of how the photographer's personality affects the content of the picture. This is hardly a mirror-image of the portraitee, because in this picture Peter Carstensen functions as an actor in a story, the interpretation of which lies in the hands of the spectator.

The Situational Portrait

The principal task of the situational portrait is to depict the scientist performing his research. This genre makes an effort to document the natural surroundings of the academic author, and, within the genre, we have both the arranged portrait (not to be confused with

the staged photograph), and the unarranged portrait. Producing an unarranged situational portrait is only possible provided that the scientist is unaware of the picture being taken. Most situational portraits of academics "performing their research" are arranged. The scientist has probably been asked to put on his white coat, though he might not usually wear it for this experiment, even though he ought to. The scientist may also have been asked to set up the particular part of the experiment which looks best in a photograph. Perhaps the scientist or some of his/her equipment has been moved to another location in the laboratory, because the scientist would have his back turned to the camera in the normal position, which would not have resulted in a very good picture. However, it does occur that unarranged situational pictures of scientists are published. Provided that the photographer is able to record the scientist doing his research without his knowing, or that the scientist has grown sufficiently used to the photographer's presence in the laboratory, it is, in fact, possible to succeed in taking natural and unarranged pictures of the working scientist. Unarranged situational portraits are preferable, because they possess a kind of magic which is only obtainable when the portraitee is not aware that he or she is being recorded. If the portraitee is aware that the picture is being taken, the picture will inevitably leave traces of the portraitees awareness of having been staged.

The painting from 1885 (fig.11) displays the French chemist and pioneer within bacteriological research, Louis Pasteur, performing an experiment in his laboratory. The painting is an example of the situational portrait which artists have always striven for. However, this was not possible until the invention of photography. The medium of photography facilitated the production of situational portraits, which froze and rendered situations as direct registrations of reality. Along with the introduction of the 35 mm. camera on the market in the 30s, it became possible for the photographer to move more comfortably and with greater discretion around his, or her, subjects. At the same time,

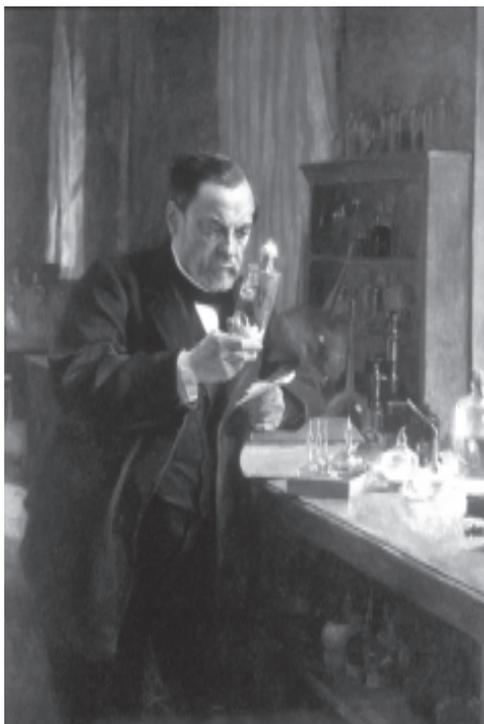


Figure 11.
*Pasteur in His Laboratory in the Ecole Normale
Supérieure in Paris*, painting by Albert Von
Edelfelt, 1885

the faster shutter speeds made it possible to freeze movement in the subject. This union of factors made it possible to photograph situations as they took place in front of the camera. The painting of Louis Pasteur from 1885 is an example of the arranged situational portrait. The fact that Louis Pasteur is posing in an improbable working-position suggests that this is not an accurate reproduction of a natural situation. However, this arrangement allows the viewer to see both the scientist's face and the experiment, because he is turned towards us, holding out the alembic a little, so as to let us have a look at it. In this case, an unarranged situational portrait of the same situation would have been a poor illustration, because Pasteur would have almost had his back turned to us, blocking our view of the experiment.

Despite the fact that it is now technically possible to capture and freeze a situation in an exact imprint of reality, most situational portraits are still to some extent arranged, because they also need to function as good illustrations. They bear a close resemblance to the painting of Pasteur. An example of this is the picture from 1982 (fig.12), displaying a scientist performing an experiment in his laboratory. It is obvious to see that the picture is composed out of consideration for the spectator. He or she must be able to see what is going on in the picture, which is why the portraitee is facing the camera, so that we can see his face. At the same time we can also see the instrument he is working on, the laboratory equipment, and a monitor in the background, displaying diagrams. Had this photograph been a truthful registration of reality, the portraitee would have most likely had his back turned to the camera, thus, to some extent, blocking the view of the equipment surrounding him in the laboratory. In principle, this picture resembles the painting of Louis Pasteur in its effort to create a situational portrait which would also function as a good illustration.

Figure 13 is an illustration of a scientist next to his apparatus. It is a type of portrait which has a lot in common with the classical portrait, in the sense that the photographer has taken the consequences of not being able to make a true situational portrait, thus



Figure 12.
Bioengineering Technician, photograph by Lois Gervais, 1982

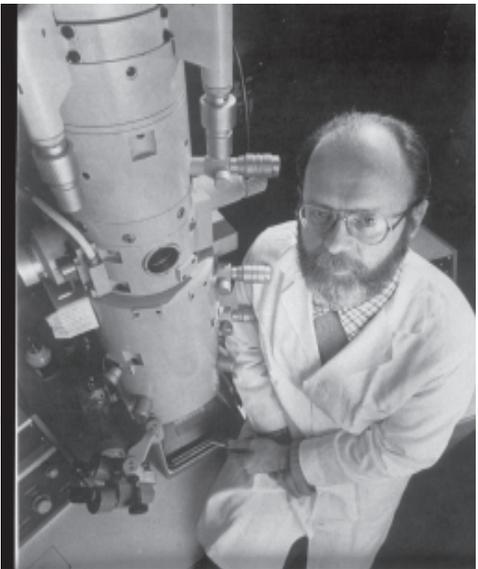


Figure 13.
Untitled photograph by Chip Maury, c. 1980

letting the scientist pose in a way which makes it obvious to us that this is an arranged portrait. However, the fact that the scientist is recorded in his natural surroundings of the laboratory does give the spectator the impression that the slightest movement would return the scientist to his experiments.

The News Portrait

The final category of commonly used portraits of academics consist of the news portrait. The rise of the news portrait really started to take shape in the 30s, along with the introduction of the small and fast 35 mm camera on the market. It became the principal task of news photographers and documentary photographers to capture situations around the world and document them for the rest of us to see. Throughout the times it has been a common conviction among illustration editors of the daily press that the good news photo would generally reflect objectivity and document reality. It was considered entirely unacceptable to arrange a news photo. The photographer must strive to capture the moment without adding hand props or otherwise manipulating the events taking place. Nowadays, we find more and more examples of arranged news photos in the daily news coverage; a development which has lead to much discussion within the news world. Supporters of the arranged press photo are of the conviction that a news photo could never be a truthful imprint of reality anyway, because of the fact that it is the photographer who subjectively isolates an excerpt of reality and decides when to push the shutter and freeze the situation (Tagg 1988). It is a common situation for a news photographer to witness a situation taking place, without being able to registrate it in the heat of the moment. It is therefore very tempting, and not at all unusual, for the photographer to try and reconstruct a small episode. It was real just a moment ago, so why would it become less real, just because you were to reconstruct an almost exact copy of it? Others feel that the photographers who would stage and arrange a news photo are unscrupulous liars whose pictures do not belong in the daily press but rather in a fine arts exhibition. However, there is a consensus among news picture editors, that this kind of photography must not occur in hard news, whereas it is more acceptable in the case of portraits and feature shots.

Regardless of whether the news portrait is arranged or not, it has a special task, which is to attract our immediate attention. In other words, the news portrait is supposed to help catch the reader's attention and turn it towards the accompanying text. The news photographer aims for the good portrait, which in this context is the portrait that is the most suited for attracting the reader's attention. However, this may not always be the one that gives the most flattering impression of the portraitee.

Press photographers are often conceived of as ruthless in their disregard for the portraitee. It is not uncommon that well established academics, who have been maltreated by a news photographer, and feel that they have not been respected, lose their confidence in photographers altogether. Unfortunately, there is no getting around the fact that the most interesting and discussed portraits of academics have often been news photos. Generally speaking, the news photo is much more ground-breaking and daring than the classical portrait, and the news photographer generally considers the classical portrait boring. Because of its daring and unusual expression, the news photo is well suited for attracting our attention; however, this same defining feature sets a limit to the number of times it will be published. The classical portrait, however pure and boring as it may seem at first glance, can be used again and again. Those of a sufficiently high quality may prove inexhaustible.

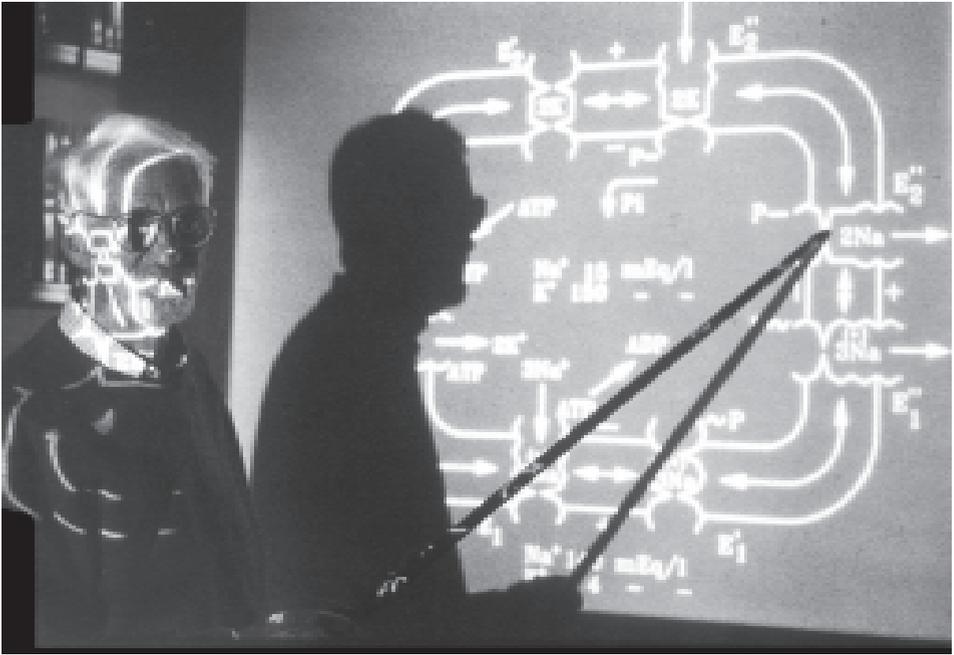


Figure 14.
Jens Christian Skou, photograph by Jonna Fuglsang Keldsen, 1997

The picture (fig. 14) of the Danish Nobel Prize winner Jens Christian Skou won the first prize in the open category of the 1997/98 Danish Press Photo of the Year Contest. It was taken by the Danish photographer Jonna Fuglsang Kjeldsen. Jens Christian Skou is recorded in a typical situation for an academic, in front of the blackboard, accounting for some mathematical formulae. What makes this picture so interesting, and the reason why it attracts our attention so well, is the photographer's interpretation of the situation. Jens Christian Skou is captured in the instant when he walks in front of the projection on the blackboard, the formulae covering his face in an aesthetic, and graphically very successful, composition. The portraitee literally merges with his formulae, an impressive symbolic interpretation of the scientist. The formulae also have indexical qualities, indicating the research which precedes the situation. Since the picture does not reproduce an accurate recording of Jens Christian Skou's physical appearance, it is of little iconic value. Had it been the photographer's intention to provide an accurate picture of Jens Christian Skou, a classical, documentary press portrait would have been more adequate.

Figure 15 from 1930 displays the Danish scientist Niels Bohr lecturing in front of a blackboard covered with mathematical formulae. The picture is an example of the spur-of-the-moment type of photography which objectively mirrors an excerpt of reality as it takes place in front of the photographer. The picture is a valuable piece of documentary because of the way in which it is composed of iconic signs. Indexical and symbolic signs which would need to be interpreted have been avoided. In comparison with Jonna Fuglsang Kjeldsen's picture, this is much more conventional, and not nearly as beautiful; however, as a document of an event, it stands much better chances of survival. In an objective manner, the photographer has managed to freeze a moment of great historic importance. Jonna Fuglsang Kjeldsen's picture is more of a fine art photograph, which

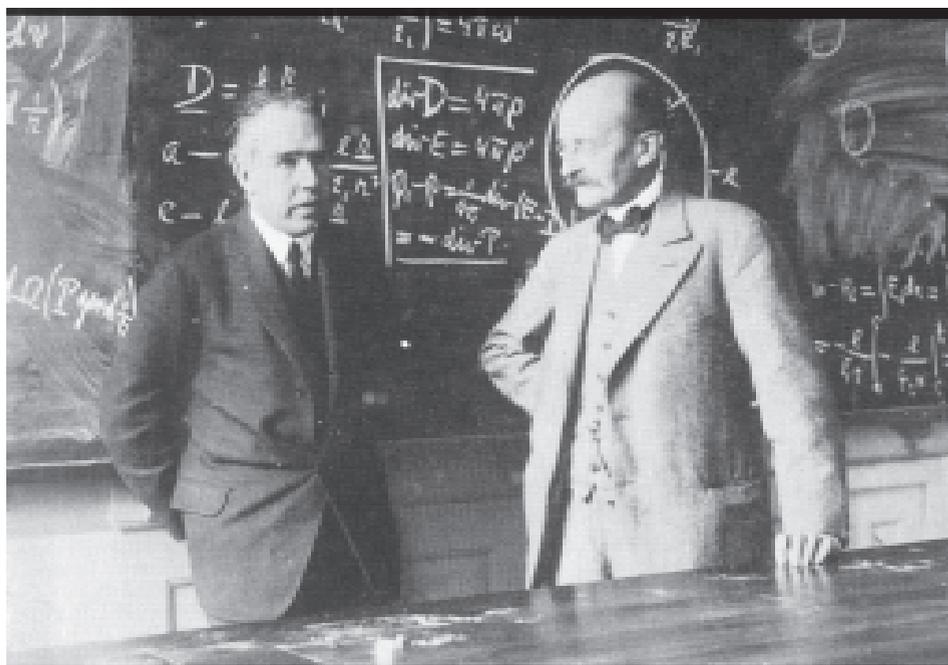


Figure 15.

Untitled photograph of Niels Bohr and Max Planck, uncredited photographer, 1930

the spectator may enjoy for its aesthetic qualities and the way it is open to interpretations. However, even though it is also an imprint of a real event, which has not been manipulated by the photographer, it is not the optimum documentary of an event. The arranged and staged portrait, including portraits of academics, is a new genre which has emerged within press photography; and I consider it a fine supplement to the traditional, documentary press photo. However, it would be problematic if the arranged and staged press photos were to replace the traditional, hard news photographs and documentary photographs.

The Consistency of the Portraits of Academics

This review of the history of the portraits of the academic demonstrates that, in spite of the variations which have emerged over the years, our conception of how to portray an academic has proved rather consistent. The criteria for choosing the right picture for the appropriate context, and the distinctions between the four categories of portraits of academics are guidelines, which in this article have been illustrated in relation to the portrait of the academic. The same criteria and guidelines for choosing photographic effects and genre can be directly transferred to many other contexts, for example when choosing portraits of fictional authors, actors, managers, etc.

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- Figure 1. *Victor Hugo* photograph by Etienne Carjat 1876. In: Naomi Rosenblum. *A World History of Photography*. Abbeville Press: New York. 1984, p. 92.
- Figure 2. *Niels Bohr*, photograph by uncredited photographer, c. 1960 In: Birthe Lauritsen. "Mennesket Bohr." [Bohr The Human Being] *Aalborg Stiftstidende*. Section 3. Saturday September 28.,1985.
- Figure 3. *Oluf Danielsen*. Booth photograph, c. 1990.
- Figure 4. *Anker Brink Lund* photograph by uncredited photographer, c. 1990. In: Anker Brink Lund. *Smitsomme sygdomme i dansk journalistik*. [Communicable Diseases in Danish Journalism] Copenhagen:Munksgaard, 1997.
- Figure 5. *Oluf Danielsen* photograph by Lisbeth Thorlacius,1996. <http://www.ruc.dk/Komm/Ansatte/Vip/Oluf/>
- Figure 6. *Anker Brink Lund* by Lisbeth Thorlacius, 1998. http://www.cbs.dk/cbp/Anker_Brink_Lund
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- Figure 9. *Walter Rosenblith* photograph by Arnold Newman, 1962. In: Kenneth Kobre. *Photojournalism. The Professionals' Approach*. Boston: Focal Press,1980, p. 123.
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Delphi, Greece For the last five years, researchers in twentytwo European countries - COST Action A 20 - have been working together to understand the impact that the Internet has on the practices, the content, the business and the audiences for the press, television and radio. The project is now coming to a conclusion, and one of the aims of this conference is to present the work of network to other researchers.

Dr. Nicos Leandros
COST Action A20
Delphi, Greece
cost20@heliotopos.net or cost-a20@wb.st (academic issues)
<http://www.cost-a20.wb.st>

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Gunilla Jarlbro, Helena Sandberg
Lund University, Sweden
gunilla.jarlbro@soc.lu.se, helena.sandberg@soc.lu.se
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